



Courtesy Geneva Photo Co.

V.F.W. Auxiliary (1966).

in the post club rooms in the Picard building north of the Signal office. In 1949, they moved to the basement of the Odd Fellows building, and early in 1954 moved into their own building.

Goldie Tull, department president of Kearney, Veral F. Meyers, department president of Hastings, and Evelyn Harbolt, district senior vice-president of Superior, together with the officers of the Superior Ladies Auxiliary, were present to organize and initiate members. Eighteen were initiated and four others were unable to attend.

Charter members were: Alice C. Price, Hendricka Thole, Nellie Bell, Rose Leonard, Helen Marsh, Ruby Miller, and Augusta Rischling.

The object of this organization is fraternal, patriotic, historical, and educational. The Auxiliary contributes to the maintenance of a home at Eaton Rapids, Michigan, for the benefit of widows and orphans of V.F.W. members. It sponsors the Buddy Poppy sale each year, raises money for various drives such as cancer research, polio, tuberculosis, etc., and contributes time and funds to worth-while community projects.

The first regular meeting of the Auxiliary was held July 14, 1947, with Augusta Rischling as president. Eighteen members were present to receive pins, among whom were: Lottie Van Sant, Hendricka Thole, Evelyn Tomlinson, Marie Bassett, Minnie Clark, Nellie Bell, Anna Belle Mason, Rose Leonard, Eileen Mitchell, Dorothy Rosenquist, Augusta Rischling, and Betty Jean Clark.

Presidents of the V.F.W. Auxiliary have been the following: Augusta Rischling (1947-49), Mildred Miller (1949-50), Augusta Rischling (1950-51), Evelyn Heater (1951-52), Edith Peterson (1952-55), Mabel Ernst (1955-56), Clara McGee (1956-57), Delores Jirkovsky (1957-58), Felicienne (Becker) Neville (1958-59), Edith Peterson (1959-60), Marjorie Doremus (1960-61), Mabel Ernst (1961-63), Alyce Domling (1963-65), Clara Magee (1965-66), and Berneice Willcoxon (1966-67).

The Auxiliary has now (1967) a membership of approximately 78.

Woman's Club

The Geneva Woman's Club developed from the Culture Club which had a limit of 20 members. The Culture Club was



Photo from Lillian Sloan

Woman's Club Initiation (May, 1961). Left to right: Ethel Corbitt, Lillian Sloan, Florence Reinsch, Delia Fisher, Marguerite Lynn, Helen Ewalt, Velma Lauber, Mabel Fox.

organized in September, 1911, and federated with the Nebraska Federation of Woman's Clubs as a Culture Club in December, 1911.

Mrs. Pearl Burns and Mrs. Roe Moore suggested that the club reorganize to allow more women the opportunity to join. Thus, the club reorganized in July, 1919, took the name of Geneva Woman's Club, and opened its membership to all who were interested in woman's club work. There was a total of 144 charter members.

The members of the Culture Club for the year prior to its becoming the Geneva Woman's Club (1918-1919) were: Mrs. Mary Blakely, Mrs. Pearl Burns, Miss Pearl Brown, Mrs. Alta Brown, Mrs. Josephine Bixby, Mrs. Laura Carlson, Mrs. Mildred Cellar, Mrs. Ruby Chenoweth, Mrs. Lou Donisthorpe, Mrs. Sophia Ertel, Miss Josie Hamilton, Mrs. Iva Hansen, Mrs. Bess Hess, Mrs. Lou Huston, Mrs. Roe Moore, Mrs. Cordelia Phillips, Mrs. Minnie Pierce, Mrs. May Reeve, Mrs. Allie Richeson, Mrs. Edith Spangler, Mrs. Ella Stephenson, Miss Cora Stewart, Mrs. Aurilla Ward, Mrs. Minnie Warner, Mrs. Sarah Wilson.

The constitution committee for the new club was: Pearl Burns, Ruby Chenoweth, Rosalie Peterson, Roe Moore, and Cordelia Phillips. The newly organized club had five departments—Mothers', Literary and Art, Nature Study, Book Review, and Music.

The object of this organization is to promote culture in the homes and to assist any movement aiming toward the betterment of social and commercial conditions of the community and to strengthen, by organization, individual and philanthropic measures.

One of the club's most outstanding projects was its sponsorship of the building of the Geneva Club House. This club house was constructed in 1942 at the Geneva City Park under the leadership of the Geneva Woman's Club. They also maintain and operate the building, which is used for a variety of activities.

One of the club's charter members, Mrs. T. B. Moore, has had the honor of serving as vice-president of the Fourth District of the Nebraska Federation of Woman's Clubs from 1923 to 1925; she also served during the next four years as a district board member.

The club presently has only three departments: Book Review, Junior Women, and Literary and Art. In 1967, it had a total of 100 members; all ministers are included as honorary members.

Following is a list of presidents of the club: Mrs. Pearl Burns (1919-21), Mrs. C. S. Stover (1921-23), Mrs. C. B. Nicholson (1923-24), Mrs. G. R. Borland (1924-25), Mrs. L. L. Fisher (1925-27), Mrs. W. E. Fiegenbaum (1927-28), Mrs. T. B. Moore (1928-29), Mrs. C. L. Shaw (1929-30), Mrs. L. S. Devoe (1930-31), Mrs. Howard Hamilton (1931-33), Mrs. Ben Koehler (1933-34), Mrs. L. H. Kerl (1934-36), Mrs. George L. Koehler (1936-38), Mrs. H. A. Rosenau (1938-39), Mrs. H. B. Simon (1939-40), Mrs. J. Bixby (1940-41), Miss Delia Fisher (1941-43), Mrs. William M. Sloan, Mrs. Guy Case (1943-44), Mrs. W. A. Biba (1944-45), Mrs. J. Bixby (1945-46), Mrs. K. C. Brinkman (1946-47), Mrs. J. W. Hammond (1947-48), Mrs. Guy Brown, Sr. (1948-49), Mrs. Clarence Newman (1949-50), Mrs. Bert Lynn (1950-51), Mrs. Robert Kritner (1951-52), Mrs. L. O. Swails (1952-53), Mrs. Bert Lynn (1953-54), Mrs. Clyde Ewart (1954-55), Mrs. Robert Waring (1955-56), Mrs. K. C. Brinkman (1956-57), Mrs. Marvin Asseln (1957-58), Mrs. James B. Barbur (1958-59), Mrs. John L. Sloane, Miss Delia Fisher (1959-60), Miss Delia Fisher (1960-61), Mrs. Porter Sloan (1961-63), Mrs. C. L. Cramer (1963-64), Mrs. Porter Sloan (1964-65), Mrs. Charles Picard (1965-67), and Mrs. Vera Lovegrove (1967-68).

RECREATION, ENTERTAINMENT, AND SPORTS

Even though the town and the surrounding territory were developing rapidly, the people seemed always to have time for various activities. The following items, condensed from newspaper accounts, indicate in chronological order the types of entertainment and recreation from year to year.

1879—July: A Fourth of July dance was held at the C. A. Warner farm in Chelsea precinct. Six to eight sets could dance at a time. Music by Messrs. Luke and Miller; F. C. Chamberlain called. Dance and supper—\$1. Dance started at 4 p.m. Floor managers were James Bridgewood, H. S. Heiderstadt, and M. C. Matson.

1883—Home Dramatic Club organized; will give entertainment the first night the new Opera House is ready.

1884—The clerk was ordered to notify the proprietors of the skating rink that a license fee of \$25 per annum would be required hereafter while the same is used as a hall or place of amusement.

January: Mrs. J. B. Finch gave a temperance lecture at the Geneva Opera House. Will Dempster's juvenile band furnished music.

May: Memorial Day was observed county-wide at Fairmont. Geneva had 60 teams and two brass bands in the parade. Grafton sent 30 wagons and a band.

1886—The Fourth was celebrated in grand style in Geneva. Mr. Chapin of Lincoln was the orator of the day.

1887—The charity ball at Geneva was largely attended. The proceeds were \$35.35. The prize was won by Miss Nellie McClosky.

1889—Blind Boone gave a concert in the Ward Opera House and drew the largest crowd ever in the building.

1890—June: The Salvation Army pitched their tent in Geneva Thursday evening and will hold a three-week series of meetings.

July: The Hose Companies were granted the exclusive privilege of running booths and stands on the Fourth of July—they are to furnish at their own expense two policemen for that day and night and to erect no stands on the street.

1892—January: The home talent operetta, *Trial by Jury*, was given at the Ward Opera House. It was a great success.

1893—Professor Tillotson, noted baritone soloist, will give one of his unique entertainments at Ward's Opera House Monday evening, April 17. The *Republican* hopes our people will turn out in mass and give the blind professor a rousing audience.

A very large crowd attended the Decoration Day exercises in Geneva. In the parade were the band, Company G, 300 G.A.R. members, 80 W.R.C. ladies, 50 Odd Fellows, 100 A.O.U.W., and 300 carriages and buggies.

December: There is a skating rink in the northwest part of town between the B. & M. and Elkhorn tracks.

1894—January: The skating club appeared and asked permission to use the city hose to fill their pond.

June: Geneva businessmen raised \$600 for a Fourth of July celebration.

1895—A race between a man riding a bicycle and a team of horses drew a large crowd at the fair grounds at Geneva. The bicycle rider won.

1896—The Nebraska Wesleyan quartet gave a program at the Geneva Methodist church. Frank Farmer of Exeter was member of the quartet.

The Geneva Bicycle Club was grading the bicycle track around the courthouse square.

A popular form of entertainment was the phonograph. These machines were taken about the county, drawing large crowds.

May: The Fillmore County Agricultural Society held a meeting at the office of the secretary, J. D. Hamilton, to discuss the racing question. It was finally decided to have both county races and open races.

The Fourth was celebrated at Geneva. The crowd numbered around 7,000. The parade was in charge of A. J. Beals as marshal. The Grafton band, Company G, patriotic floats, and business floats made an interesting parade. Rev. G. W. Fifer was the speaker.

1897—Dan Haskins, who ran a bicycle shop in Geneva, got a new tandem bicycle, to rent out to boys and girls.

W. H. Gregg, a blind man, lectured at the Geneva Opera House on how the blind were being educated at the state school at Nebraska City.

A team of York whist players defeated Geneva players in a match in Geneva. Members of the Geneva team were Messrs. Bruner, Russell, Hutchens, Koehler, and Sandrock.

The Geneva Choral Union met to study the "Anvil Chorus" under the direction of Professor Worley.

Campbell Bros. Circus pulled into Geneva and gave two performances at 10 and 20 cents. The balloon ascension given with the show was fine.

1899—The new opera house in the Fraternity Temple in Geneva was opened with a home-talent production of *Kathleen Mavourneen*.



Photo from Delia Fisher

Fraternity Temple, about 1900. The new Opera House was on the third floor.

1901—Fred Emerson Brooks, well-known poet, appeared in Geneva on the high-school lecture course.

1902—The Canadian Jubilee Singers pleased a crowded house at the Methodist Church.

1903—*Uncle Tom's Cabin* showed at the Geneva Opera House and drew a good-sized crowd.

April: A balloon ascension by a woman drew a large crowd to Geneva. Afterward there was a ball game between Geneva and Bruning.

The council approved the application of Harry Glasscock for a bowling alley.

November: The first moving-picture entertainment was given at the Opera House. A speaker explained the pictures as they were shown.

1904—Geneva Volunteer Fire Department has made arrangements for a carnival and asked the privilege of the streets from Tuesday, August 2, to Saturday, August 6, inclusive.

1905—The skating rink will be open hereafter only on Tuesday evening, Thursday evening, Saturday afternoon, and Saturday evening.

1907—The Geneva orchestra, consisting of 12 pieces, gave a concert at the Christian Church for the benefit of the ladies' band.

1910—License fee for picture show is \$25 per year.

1913—January: A large audience gathered to hear the Kaffir Boy Choir, appearing on the high-school lecture course.

1914—*The Time of His Life* was presented by Geneva home talent for the benefit of the Mothers' Club.

April: The Geneva Equal Suffrage Club sponsored a play, *The Marriage of the Midgets*, with a cast of children.

1917—Forty-five singers met at Prof. H. R. Grant's studio in Geneva to organize a community chorus.

The Geneva Chautauqua was well attended and the program was considered very good. (Note: Chautauquas brought many fine programs to the people in the Middle West and were a popular medium of entertainment for many years. The programs included outstanding speakers, musical groups, Negro singers, comedians, and the magician, who was always a great favorite with everyone.)

1918—Mr. Dow closed his Jolla Theater at Geneva and the town was left without a picture show.

The Geneva Progressive Temperance Party held a mass meeting at the courthouse with speeches and music.

1920—May: Dr. Ole Theobaldi, famous violinist, gave a concert in Geneva.

1921—The Geneva Woman's club presented a cantata, "Golden Valley," with a cast of local people, at the Congregational Church.

1923—April: A packed house, mostly children, saw Cho-Cho, the health clown, at the Geneva city auditorium.

1926—October: The Lewis Stock Co., old favorites, opened an engagement at the city auditorium. More than 100 people were turned away because of lack of seating capacity.

1927—February: Permit granted to operate and charge for moving-picture show on Sunday but not to conflict with the hours of church services.

1928—January: A rabbit hunt by Geneva men netted 229 rabbits.

1937—The courthouse grounds were being reseeded to grass and many new trees were set out. The croquet grounds used by the old-timers for 40 years disappeared.

1938—Ivan Ertel was granted a bowling-alley license.

1940—January: The skating pond provided by the city of Geneva was proving a popular place as freezing weather put the ice in good condition.

1942—The Ewalt Amusement Co. of Geneva opened the season at the Fourth of July celebration in Logan, Iowa.

1944—July: An American Legion junior baseball team was organized at Geneva with Jack Adams as business manager and Orval McDonald as field manager.

1947—The Easter egg hunt, postponed one week because of bad weather, attracted hundreds of youngsters to the courthouse park. The Geneva Community Club had hidden 1,800 eggs for the event.

Tom Ewalt's circus, Bell Bros., left its winter quarters in Geneva for the summer annual tour.

1954—September: A free square dance was held Friday evening, September 24. Music was furnished by Don Machan and his band, one of the best-known square dance bands in the Midwest. The dance was held on the pavement between the Geneva State Bank and the Picard building.

History of the Geneva City Band (1875-1958)

The first known record of any band activity in Geneva was in 1875 when Silas B. Camp came to town after having taught music in Beatrice in 1873-74. Mr. Camp organized a band that year and was active in this work until 1904. Not much is known of the first few years of this band, but in 1882 a history of Nebraska states that Geneva, a town of 500 people, had three bands: Geneva Cornet Band, Company G Martial Band, and a juvenile band. Probably some members were active in more than one band, and, as far as is known, Mr. Camp was the inspiration and motivating influence behind the entire band program as well as the director of all three bands. Company G had been organized in 1881, indicating that the Martial Band was a fairly new organization in 1882.

In December, 1882, the *Geneva Review* reports: "The Geneva Cornet Band rendered some very fine pieces of music on Christmas afternoon. This band is one of the finest in the state and our citizens may well be proud of them." On New Year's Day, 1883, the Geneva Cornet Band came out in uniform and paraded the streets playing some of their best music, after which a photograph of the band was taken. On January 11, 1883, the band furnished music for a Geneva

Literary Society entertainment and, according to the *Review*, "Their music was no small feature of the program." Mr. Camp and the band continued quite active, often rehearsing several times per week. February 16, 1883, the band gave an entertainment at Grafton, which was very graciously received. The *Review* stated in the March 29th issue that the boys were rehearsing every night and would give one of the best entertainments that the community had ever heard. The band continued active but little of their work has been recorded until 1886 when Fred Ekwall organized a band at Martland, directed by Silas B. Camp, which played considerably in that part of the county, even marching in a parade in Geneva within a year of its organization. Mr. Ekwall reported that in 1886 at an Easter service held in the Geneva Methodist Church, Mr. Camp played a cornet solo, "The Holy City." Later that year at a concert given by the band, the citizens of Geneva, in token of their appreciation of Mr. Camp's services, presented him with a new baritone horn.

In 1896, an election year, much community activity was centered around the Republican and Democratic political campaigns. The *Geneva Republican* reported that "After each of the Republican parades Silas Camp was on hand and got the bands together and turned out an astonishing quantity of music and the quality was pretty good also." This would indicate that there were at least two bands in Geneva at that time although very little is known of their activities. The *Republican* further reported that every band in the county participated and furnished "Republican" music all day. The July 4th celebration of 1900 included a parade, led by the Fairmont Band behind Company G. There is no mention of a Geneva band, although Silas B. Camp was on the speakers' stand and furnished part of the program. There were in the parade a ladies' band, and a Rube band, both probably composed of Geneva musicians, but the Woodmen Picnic, held August 9, 1900, used both the Exeter and Fairmont bands, suggesting that the band activity in Geneva was not too strong.



Courtesy Geneva State Bank
All-Girl Band (about 1900). *Back row, left to right:* Ollie Tilzey, Besse Stultz, Tillie Voigtlander, Millie Scott, Blanche Woodworth, Laura Mozee. *Middle row:* Martha Putlitz, Carrie Mozee, Addie Allen, Ora Kelly. *Front row:* Mrs. Martha Sisler, Silas Camp (*band leader*), Mrs. Ben Woodworth.

In the formation, organization, and direction of the first band in Geneva, Silas B. Camp was the outstanding personality both in instruction and inspiration. Mr. Camp's ability and pleasant personality contributed much to interest others in securing instruments and giving time and effort in rehearsal to build a really good band. After Mr. Camp's departure to Idaho in 1904, the band movement was temporarily suspended and the July 4th celebration at Geneva included a parade ½ mile long led by Professor Mitchell's band from Hebron and Major Pendelton's Drum Corps and Martial Band from York. Various civic activities in Geneva used bands from York, Hebron, Fairmont, Exeter, and Sutton for the next several years, but the desire for a Geneva band was always quite strong and in July, 1907, a number of local musicians held a meeting and the *Nebraska Signal* gave the following report:

"A Band Proposed for Geneva

"A number of Geneva young men would like to participate in the organization of a town band. For the most part at least they have their own instruments. So long as they are willing to provide their own instruments, they feel that the citizens of the town would be willing to co-operate with them. They have appointed Charles B. Reeve to represent them in this matter and Mr. Reeve is presenting the matter to the people through the newspaper.

"The kind of co-operation the young men need most is assistance in employment of a competent band instructor. They desire to make

their organization creditable if they form an organization. To do this it will be necessary to hire an instructor and that will take some money. The *Signal* will be pleased to publish the names of all who are willing to contribute to such a fund and the amount of such contributions. Anyone who desires further particulars can obtain them from Mr. Reeve or any of the others interested."

On June 19, 1907, the Brotherhood of St. Paul Orchestra, so named because the members held their rehearsals in the Brotherhood Room of the Geneva Methodist Church, held a musicale at the church. This was repeated on July 2, 1907. The Brotherhood Band also held rehearsals fairly consistently for several years without a professional director. Ted Nicholas and one or two other members were acting directors at various times. And although the band improved steadily, outside organizations were used for picnics, fairs, and other occasions until around 1913, when Professor A. A. Leroy from Hebron was hired to direct and give instruction in music, both instrumental and vocal. Mr. Leroy was a very active individual and during his three years at Geneva his band played at the State Fair at least once, at the Ak-Sar-Ben Exposition in Omaha and at a large number of picnics, fairs, and other occasions. Professor Leroy was a talented cornetist and he set a high standard of musicianship for his musicians to follow. He also directed the Geneva Brotherhood Orchestra and instructed in band for a while at the Girls' Training School. In 1916, he received an offer to go to York for a similar position and, as Geneva could not match the offer, he accepted it.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal
Brotherhood Band (1907). *Front row, left to right:* Will Layman, Len J. Davis, Alvah Nicholas, Ted Nicholas, Lloyd Ekley, Jason D. Shackelford, Wayne Moore. *Second row:* Paul W. Curtiss, Mike Ekley, Don Donovan, Lester Nicholas. *Back row:* Emmett Sherrard, Wayne Sherrard, Cal Sherrard, Charles B. Reeve, Arthur D. Curtiss, Alfred Rosenquist, Edwin Lyle Cumberland, Wilbur Sherrard.

In the organization of the Brotherhood Band and for several years afterward, the personality and friendly efforts of such men as Arthur D. Curtiss, Charles Reeve, W. S. Nicholas, and others played a prominent part. Mr. Curtiss had come to Geneva from Fairmont, opened a law office here, and took an active part in civic, church, and community affairs. In the band his congenial affability and persistent efforts to make the organization succeed had a most favorable effect on the younger men associated with the band and contributed much toward the band's success. Mr. Reeve was a local businessman, very active in civic, church, and community affairs. He played clarinet in the band and violin or 'cello in the orchestra. Mr. Reeve took a leading part in the organization of both Brotherhood Band and Orchestra and gave generously of his time and effort to insure their success. Mr. Nicholas and three of his boys played in the band. His son Ted, a fine cornetist, directed the band for a time while he was still in high school. The Nicholas family, like the Curtisses and the Reeves, were associated actively with the band for many years. Mr. Curtiss and Mr. Nicholas have both passed on. Mr. Reeve, although removed to California, kept up a very active leadership in the music of his church and Sunday School until his death at Orange, California, November 26, 1965.

Soon after the departure of Professor Leroy, Professor Hasse R. Grant of Auburn, Nebraska, was hired. He came in time to help finish out the concert season and to provide music for the County Fair. Professor Grant had a studio on second floor of the Citizens State Bank Building and gave lessons in instrumental and vocal music, music appreciation, theory, and harmony. He was a fine tenor soloist and took an active part in all his productions. His instrument was clarinet.

During his three years in Geneva he promoted an active program of high-class music, both vocal and instrumental. Each year a concert was given at the city auditorium to raise funds for the band and most times a guest musician was invited to play with the band. One of these occasions featured Buck Ewing, a clarinet virtuoso from Lincoln.

At the 1916 July Fourth celebration in Geneva, music was furnished by the Geneva City Band, and at this time the band was

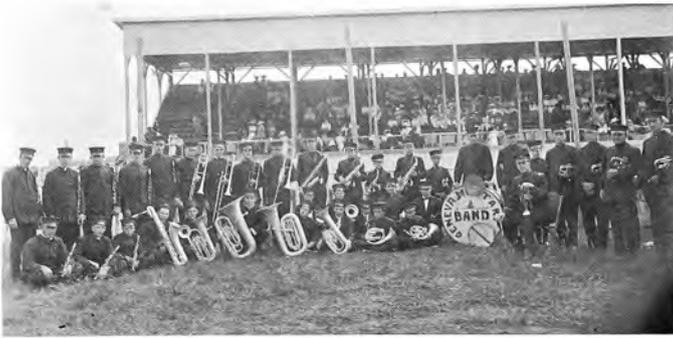


Photo courtesy of Ben Fussell
 Geneva Military Band under direction of Prof. A. A. Leroy (about 1915). *Front row, left to right:* Cal Sherrard, Don Moore, Lester Nicholas, John E. Curtiss, Wayne Sherrard, Joe Ruzicka, Cass Camp, John H. Koehler, John Peterson, Thomas Otis, Chauncey Potter, Professor Leroy (*next to bass drum*). *Second row:* Nelson Potter, Eugene Manning, Royal Woods, Walter Creston Swails. *Back row:* Fred M. Fussell, Ralph Allen, Oakley Hosack, Virgil Bentley, Hugh Hadsell, Edwin Lyle Cumberland, Wilbur Sherrard, Russell Myers, *unknown*, Arnold Lake, Warren Edgecombe, Donald Lamb, George Smith, Cliff McKimney, Clarence Bolton, Ross Lincoln, Ben Koehler, Len Davis, Leo Dinneen, Raymond Kenney, Paul W. Curtiss.



Photo from Mrs. Hugh Hadsell
 Geneva Orchestra (about 1915). *Back row, left to right:* Oakley Hosack, Owen Smith, Melvin Ralston, Paul Curtiss, Warren Edgecombe. *Seated:* Charles B. Reeve, Hugh Hadsell, Lester Nicholas, Frank Reeve, Dr. George Carlson.

organized for a more efficiently activated program. The City Amusement Committee met and elected the following officers: president, Charles B. Reeve, and secretary, John E. Curtiss. Some of the money for the maintenance of this organization was secured through taxation and some through public subscription. This continued to be the system used to finance the band until approximately 1930, when the city council adopted an amusement tax. Since then this has been the support of the city summer band program.

On December 21, 1916, the Hallowell Concert Company was secured to give a benefit concert for the Geneva City Band. This group was composed of personnel of exceptional merit. The vocal music instructor of Geneva City Schools, Miss Claire Owens, stated that it was the finest musical program ever presented in the city. This group was all male except for one woman drummer.

At the benefit program given on February 21, 1918, the band and orchestra were assisted by the High School Boys' Glee Club. The program included "Garden Dance" by Vargas, sung by the Glee Club, and the overture, "Garden of Eden," played by the band.

Although conditions during World War I were to disrupt the band program considerably, the *Signal* carried the note that the Geneva Band of 22 musicians was giving concerts every Wednesday evening in the park with Professor Grant directing. During those times the band sometimes consisted of as few as eight musicians but, as Alfred Elder later reported, they never missed a concert. Alfred had come to Geneva in 1918 when he purchased the McCall Jewelry and Music Store and, as there was a shortage of bass players, Alfred played bass horn in the band for many years. He also played a most important part in promoting the finances of the band. Much of the fine spirit of good will which prevailed through the depression years when money became very scarce, was directly due to the efforts of Alfred Elder.

Professor Grant left in 1919 and the directorship of the band was handed to a young man just home from the service, Paul W. Curtiss. Paul had started his musical career on his father's tenor horn in the Brotherhood Band. He made rapid progress and while he was in high school his father presented him with a new cornet which was his pride and joy. Paul enlisted in the army and was stationed at Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Washington, D. C. He had a brilliant

career in the Army Band and at the end of the war was quite proficient. Paul gave this job everything he had and from 1919 to 1951 he directed the City Band. In 1925, a group of high-school band members, led by Burdette Higginbotham, asked Paul to organize a high-school band. Paul agreed, and served the first year without compensation. Since that time the Geneva High School Band has been an important and active part of the educational program of the Geneva schools. During Paul's tenure as band instructor at Geneva High, beginners' band practice was held immediately after school twice a week and the advanced band rehearsed from 7 P.M. to 8:30 on Mondays and Wednesdays. Mr. Curtiss achieved considerable success with the band. He produced some fine bands as well as some exceptional musicians. But even more important than this, Paul set an example of fine Christian morals and a pleasant personality which made him the friend of every boy and girl who played under his direction. He played many outside jobs with the city band at fairs, picnics, and other occasions. Paul and his band were an important part of the Fillmore County Fair every year since 1925. Paul also directed bands at various times at Tobias, Davenport, Shickley, and Fairmont. He also directed the Tehama Shrine Band at Hastings for several years and the Sesostri Shrine Band at Lincoln from 1946 to 1950. He was in great demand to play in Shrine and American Legion bands on convention trips and played in Los Angeles, Miami, Atlantic City, Chicago, Kansas City, Omaha, Denver, and other places. In 1949, Paul entered Lincoln General Hospital for surgery and his son, John Arthur, directed the band that year. In 1950, Byron Havlicek assisted. On March 19, 1951, Paul passed on, leaving many friends to mourn his death.

In May, 1951, the Geneva school system secured Herman L. Larsen of Marquette, Nebraska, to take over the band program. Mr. Larsen commenced his work by preparing for the summer concert season, the high point of which was the dedication of the new bandstand at the Geneva City Park, as a memorial to Paul W. Curtiss. At this ceremony musicians came from all over this part of the country to honor their deceased friend. The Burlington Band of Lincoln chartered a bus and brought most of the fellows Paul had played with while connected with that organization. Wayne Sherrard, director of Bands at Illinois Normal School, directed two numbers, and Harold Chatelain, director of the Fairbury Municipal Band, also directed a number. This band consisted of 96 musicians, including Paul's brother Val of Lincoln and Paul's two sons, Arthur and Charles. Arthur played a solo.



Photo from Mrs. Hugh Hadsell
 Paul W. Curtiss



Photo from Mrs. Hugh Hadsell
 Geneva's portable bandstand—used from 1937 till 1951. It was pulled onto Main Street every Wednesday night during the summer for concerts.

Mr. Larsen directed the city band during the summer season of 1951 and then organized the first full-time band program in the Geneva schools. The senior band met four times a week in addition to marching rehearsal, and group or sectional rehearsals were held during the day. The younger folk work one or two days a week in addition to small group sessions during the school day. Mr. Larsen also instructs in boys' vocal work. Herman, like his predecessor, displays not only a fine ability as a musician but also a most likable and friendly personality. He has a great deal of influence on many of the young people of this community and they have profited greatly from their association with him.

From about 1941 to the present a significant change has taken place in the membership of the Geneva City Band. For many years prior to World War II the band had been composed largely of adults, mostly men, with a few women. But with the accelerated expansion of industrial development just before the war a number of the fellows left Geneva to find employment and those who stayed at home were so busy that adult participation in the band concerts dropped considerably. Gradually high-school students were brought into the group to fill vacancies. From 1931 to 1941, high-school students were admitted into the band only after graduation or to fill vacancies, and then only when they displayed exceptional ability. Although this system was continued for some time, the need for these younger people became so great that by 1951 only a few college students and a couple of adults remained on the roster. Since then the high-school band has taken over the summer band program and the members are admitted by invitation from the director. We note this change with some regret and we miss the former feeling of community pride on the part of our adults in playing in the band each summer. But we appreciate the wide acceptance and participation in the band by our school pupils. Twenty years ago not more than 60 or 70 people composed both beginners' and high-school and city bands. Now nearly 200 students are actively engaged in band work. Many superior ratings have been received by the band in high-school competitions, both as a band and in small group and individual competitions.

An important point in connection with the history of the band movement from its inception to the present is that continuously the organization has been directed, influenced, and guided by men of the highest caliber. Through the years the influence of men like Silas Camp, Arthur Curtiss, Charles Reeve, W. S. Nicholas, Ted Nicholas, Professor H. R. Grant, Hugh Hadsell, Professor Leroy, Paul Curtiss, Alfred Elder, and Herman Larsen have made a deep and lasting impression on the lives of many young men and women who have grown up in our community and gone out into the world to be better citizens for having known and experienced the guidance and influence of these men.

In closing, we salute this organization whose primary object is to provide musical entertainment for the community but whose greatest contribution has been the building of high ethical standards and good character in many of our young people.

—Ben D. Fussell

Golf

The spring and summer of 1920 marked the beginning of golf playing at the county fairgrounds in Fillmore County. What activity there was at that time took place on the quarter stretch and was mostly just knocking the ball from one end of the stretch to the other.

The first club was started the following year with nine paid members. The membership fee was \$5 a year. But as the years passed, the club grew, the grounds were improved, a ground keeper was employed, greens were located and sanded, and a team of horses purchased to operate the ground-keeping machinery the club had purchased.

The club prospered for several years and was a really going affair until the dry years of the thirties, when operations practically ceased. Through the prosperous years several tournaments were held, attracting golfers from many counties. At one tournament there were 112 entries.

The original club paid the Fillmore County Agricultural Society \$200 as rent for the use of the grounds. The following year the rent



Photo from Nebraska Signal

Geneva Golf Course on Fairgrounds in center of picture (1962).

was reduced to \$100, but at that time the members of the club refused to pay for the use of the grounds and began looking for another location.

The board wisely decided to waive all charges for the use of the grounds, noting that by the time when the fairgrounds had to be cleaned for the annual fair, the job had been done and that expense had been eliminated.

During World War II the fairgrounds were rented for pasture. In the spring of 1947, the community expressed a strong desire for the revival of golf. A group of men persuaded Paul H. Farmer to accept the presidency and the club was organized.

The west half of the fairgrounds was all plowed and seeded to blue grass that spring. For two years only 5 holes were played, then 9 holes were established again.

The location and the greens have been changed twice since the revival of the game in 1947.

The German Lutheran parsonage on the gravel road 4 miles S of Grafton was bought by the golf club in the fall of 1958 and moved to the fairgrounds and placed at the SW edge of the race track. During 1958 the house was completely remodeled into a club house. In the spring of 1959 the lawn was seeded and sidewalks built around the new club house.

The membership has grown from 87 to a 1967 membership of 134.

THE COUNTY NEWSPAPER

The *Nebraska Signal* is the result of the combination of 16 newspapers published at one time or another in Fillmore County. On February 14, 1894, Frank O. Edgecombe purchased the *Geneva Republican*, then in its 20th year, from M. V. King & Son. On the same day he purchased the *Geneva Journal*, published by J. A. Loudermilch. In 1896, he purchased the *Nebraska Signal*, which had been established in 1881 by Dr. J. B. Brazelton at Fairmont. Mr. Edgecombe moved the *Signal* plant to Geneva and combined it with that of the *Republican-Journal*. To get away from the hyphenated name, he retained instead the name of the *Nebraska Signal*.

Other papers which were ultimately consolidated with the *Signal* included the *Fillmore County Republican*, *Fillmore County Journal*, *Fairmont Dispatch*, *Geneva Gazette*, *Grafton Sun*, *Strang Reporter*, *Shickley Herald*, *Ohioa Ohioan*, *Milligan Review*, *Fairmont Chronicle*, *Geneva Daily*, *Milligan Times*, *Exeter Enterprise*, and *Ohioa Spotlight*.

The early-day newspapers had no telephones or typewriters, the type was all hand set, and in the first few years the papers were printed on hand presses. When the *Republican* was started, there were only a few frame buildings in the business section of Geneva.

Weekly newspapers in those days were highly personalized. The papers editorially were the publishers' personal organs. Political beliefs were taken very much to heart. There were some very virulent writings in those days. Editors attacked their "esteemed contemporaries" with little provocation.

When Mr. Edgecombe came to Geneva, his first two years were times of drouth and depression. In the fall of 1894, hot winds destroyed the entire corn crop, and 1895 was a very dry year. As times got better, improvements in the printing equipment were made. Hand composition was replaced by the purchase of typesetting machines. The improvements have continued, and the *Signal* now has one of the best-equipped small-city plants in the state. The newspaper has for several years been printed on a Duplex web press, which prints, folds, and trims the paper and delivers it ready for mailing.

In the summer of 1949, a new front was put on the *Signal* building. The building was erected in 1890 and was not suited to modern business. The new front not only makes a greatly improved appearance,



Courtesy of Nebraska Signal

Signal office—left, 1896; right, 1963.