

but also the editorial and news room has been enlarged and working conditions are better. The office front is all glass. The old sidewalk, with railings around two openings in the walk, was torn out, the holes filled, and a new walk laid. From the walk to the office floor level, glass bricks were used to give more light in the press room in the basement. The business office was given an asphalt tile floor.

Frank O. Edgecombe, newspaper publisher in Geneva for more than 50 years, built the *Signal* from a small beginning into one of the better-known newspapers of the state and nation.

"The blind editor from Nebraska," as Frank was known, was born on a farm in Ohio on February 13, 1864. In April, 1865, his parents came to southeast Nebraska and settled on a farm near Rulo. When he grew up, he attended the Methodist college at York and was graduated with the class of 1884. (This college was later merged with Nebraska Wesleyan University.)



Photos from Tyler Edgecombe

Three generations of the Edgecombe family who have published the *Signal*. Left to right: Frank O. Edgecombe, Tyler Edgecombe, and John Edgecombe.

After a few years in the banking business in Rulo, Frank Edgecombe bought a half interest in the Falls City *Journal* in 1889. In 1890, he retired completely from the bank and bought out the other half interest, moved to Falls City, and was in the newspaper business for keeps.

In 1892, when he was 27 years old, he lost his sight through a hunting accident. A group of hunters was walking through a stubble field in western Nebraska, and powder from a shot from one gun hit Mr. Edgecombe in the face, causing immediate and permanent blindness.

After 23 days in an Omaha hospital, where he got his first experience in being read to and in dictating to a stenographer, he returned to the *Journal* office in Falls City to resume his work.

Two years later he sold the Falls City paper and bought the two competing newspapers in Geneva and moved his family here. This was to be his home for the rest of his life.

Frank Edgecombe won many honors for his newspaper. He served as president of the Nebraska Press Association and the National Editorial Association, and was always a leader in forward movements in his profession.

His son, Tyler Edgecombe, was graduated from the School of Agriculture of the University of Nebraska in 1907 and the university in 1911. He worked on the old Beatrice *Daily Express* until 1913, when he returned to Geneva to be associated with his father at the *Signal*. Tyler assumed control of the *Signal* in 1941.

The new publisher was well grounded in newspaper fundamentals, having been indoctrinated with the life and the business from the time he was able, as a boy, to help out in the shop. He explained that he studied agriculture at the university to be able to be of better service to his rural area and to be able to understand and grow with the main industry of his county and state.

The new publisher advocated and adopted modern business principles in his operation of the *Signal*; but in doing so, Tyler did not alter the community-service ideals set up by his father. The *Signal* is still a strong booster for community betterment. Its policies stress service to subscribers, advertisers, and the area in general.

Following in his father's footsteps, Tyler has long been active in N.P.A., also serving a term as president of the association. He is a past president of the Geneva Chamber of Commerce and of Geneva Rotary, has headed the four Masonic bodies of Geneva, and is active in various other civic capacities.

Tyler's son, John Edgecombe, joined the *Signal* in 1947 after spending three years in the Army Air Force and attending the University of Missouri's Linotype School. He is now a partner in the business and serves as advertising manager.

Howard W. Hamilton joined the *Signal* staff in 1948 as news editor and has edited the editorial page since 1950.

The *Signal* has presently a circulation of 3,965, third largest among weekly newspapers in Nebraska.

Some interesting early newspaper history was supplied by Mrs. Marcus Alexander of Pomona, California, in a letter which the *Signal* published on April 14, 1930:

"In the spring of 1883, we arrived in Fairmont: mother, brother Leo, cousin Leota Merrill, and myself, blind for Geneva. There

being no railroad there, we took the hack, with Ed Nuttals as driver.

"Father [T. Wilkins] came ahead of us from our home in Bedford, Iowa, to look around for a print shop. Dr. M. Propst of Blockton, Iowa, came a short time ahead of father. After arriving, Dr. Propst was taken quite sick and father nursed him back to health. Then Dr. Propst's family, consisting of his wife and two sons, Waldo and Clyde, came to live in Geneva. Later, Carl came with his uncle, Dan Propst.

"Father liked the looks of this little burg, so he bought the *Review* from Arthur Scott. Arthur and his brother Ernest had bought it from M. M. Neeves in 1882. Father changed the name from *Review* to *Fillmore County Republican*. Mr. Neeves had published the first newspaper Geneva had. Father had a job printer by the name of John Thompson from Sigourney, Iowa, come and take charge as foreman.

"Quoting from Mrs. Arthur Scott, who is still living in Lomita, California: "The *Review* was located in the center of the block south of the Jameson Hotel, in a story-and-a-half frame building. A family lived upstairs."

"The Scotts moved the shop to the east block over a hardware store. This building was a story-and-a-half frame. While it was still located in the upstairs room, Father bought it from Scott.

"The Citizens Bank was building a new frame building where the brick building now stands. Father had to have more room, so he rented the second story and moved the outfit there. About this time the little town began to grow, and it wasn't long until the Burlington began to lay ties and rails. The first train that rolled in was a freight engine, a freight car, and a caboose. I have a picture of that train. I do not remember the year.

[Two weeks later, in the *Signal* for April 28, 1930, Mrs. A. J. Brown of Geneva gave the date as June 7, 1886.]

"When we got settled over the Citizens Bank, I took it in my head to set type. This was long before the typesetting machine came out. It was talked about, but Father said it could not be done, setting type by machinery. I was taken in the print shop and was called the 'devil's' (printing office slang). I don't remember the date we had to move the shop from the bank building, as the building was sold to Nick Longly. To make room for the new building, Mr. Longly moved the building to a corner lot across from the library. It is still called the Longly Building, but now is half a block north of the corner.

"Father built a new building across the alley north from what is now the R. A. Smith store. The office was downstairs and we lived upstairs. That was when Mark and I were married. I do not know if it still stands there or not.

"Robert Crowley came to work for us there. Father put in a new printing press and job press. We used an old Washington hand press before we moved. It was my job to stand there and ink the forms after each paper was printed. . . .

"Father, T. Wilkins, sold the *Fillmore County Republican* to M. V. King and son Oran November 5, 1889. Then in 1894 Frank Edgecombe bought it and a few years later changed the name to *Nebraska Signal*."

## PROFESSIONAL ROSTER

### Doctors

Among the first doctors to locate in Geneva were Dr. Richard Dailey and Dr. G. R. Hart. Dr. Dailey, born in Madison, Indiana, began the study of medicine in that state in 1874, and commenced the practice of medicine in Geneva in the spring of 1877. Dr. Hart came to Fillmore County and located on a homestead on Turkey Creek in Geneva precinct in July of 1871; however, he did not move to Geneva until the fall of 1878. He began his practice in Ford County, Illinois. The following list of Geneva doctors, their birthplaces, and year of registration in Fillmore County is as complete as possible from available records.

1881: G. R. Hart, Pennsylvania; Richard T. Dailey, Indiana; N. E. Oliver, Pennsylvania.

1882: H. L. Smith, New York; C. J. Harris, New York.

1883: George Mozee, Indiana; William T. Mozee, Kentucky; Ben B. Mozee, Kentucky.

1884: Morgan Propst, Virginia.

1885: Samuel M. Herb, Illinois.

1886: W. H. Davis, Canada.

1887: F. E. L. Hester, Indiana; Thomas C. Canine, Indiana.

1888: L. D. Bailar, Ohio.

1889: William H. Dempster, Illinois; Abner G. McGrew, Pennsylvania; J. T. Baird, Canada.

1892: G. W. Corman.

1894: Flora G. Harbaugh (Mrs. C. M. Barnett).

1897: George W. Johnson, Virginia; Ora S. Stephenson.

1900: Joseph Bixby, G. D. Pendell, A. J. Kaufman.

1901 to 1967: Archibald Murphy; W. C. Beaven, Osteopath; Frank A. Bates, Osteopath; Frederick L. Beck; Joel C. Hickman; Royal Woods; Nathan H. Blakeley; Claire Owens; Charles Curtis Wallingsford; Claus C. Delfs; Blanche R. Bailar, Chiropractor; Aaron Guengerich, Chiropractor; D. C. Stansberry; J. M. S. Chesshir; Clarence S. McKee; Harold A. Rosenau, Osteopath; William S. Musfelt; Edith Y. Ridpath, Chiropractor; Alfred H. Elder, Optometrist; W. E.

Fiengenbaum, Optometrist; W. P. McCall, Optometrist; D. C. Anderson, Optometrist; A. A. Ashby; Charles F. Ashby; Vincent S. Lynn; Edward J. Hinrichs.

Of the latter group, Drs. Albert A. and Charles F. Ashby, H. A. Rosenau, Edith Ridpath, D. C. Anderson, and Vincent S. Lynn are in active practice in 1967.

### Dentists

R. M. Hazlett (1879), A. Mathews (1886), G. L. Stone (1882), J. C. Clark (1888), A. F. Cogswell (1894), J. W. Puckett (1898), Woodson T. Smith (1896), Charles C. Mozee (1897).

1900 to 1967: Robert Chenoweth (1900), Oliver Waldeman (1900), Waldo Propst (1901), J. H. Jackson (1902), L. H. Warner (1910), Clyde B. Cross (1913), George L. Carlson (1915), D. D. Donovan (1917), John Q. Adams (1925), Bud J. Bukacek (1929), Lewis Kerl (1930), David A. Portwood (1959).

Drs. Lewis Kerl, J. Q. Adams, and D. A. Portwood maintain dental practices in Geneva in 1967.

### Veterinarians

W. H. Fauver (1890), J. M. Dunn (1893), F. Power (1893), J. Herriot (1894), H. N. Woller (1894), I. W. McEachran, John A. Barger, Harry Nothomb, L. C. Shaw, William F. Carter (from April 1, 1962), Carl Richard Johnson (August, 1964, to January, 1965).

Dr. McEachran was the first licensed veterinarian in Geneva, having received his license in 1905. Dr. William F. Carter remains in active practice in 1967.

### Lawyers (in practice, 1967)

Robert Waring, John C. Gewacke, Grady Corbitt, Thomas J. Keenan, Ray Cellar, Howard Hamilton, Ed Steinacher, Walter O'Neal.



Photo from Geneva State Bank

Fillmore County Bar (1895). Back row, left to right: William Waite, deputy sheriff; Hon. W. G. Hastings, presiding; E. A. Cary, reporter; Bright B. Ogg, sheriff; F. B. Donisthorpe; John J. Burke, deputy district clerk; H. F. Putlitz, district clerk; H. P. Wilson. Seated: John Barsby, county attorney; Robert J. Sloan; A. Sandage, bailiff; D. Carson; James W. Christy; Frank W. Sloan; Charles A. Fowler; Charles A. Sloan.

### Other Occupations

**Painters** (1967): Raymond Schupbach, Ray Jirkovsky, Frank Gibbons, Alvin Rizer.

**Plumbers** (1967)—licensed by City Clerk: Joe E. Schelkopf, Dean Garrett, Harrison Karr, Koehler & Co.

**Electricians** (1967)—persons and businesses licensed by City Clerk: James S. Matejka (Geneva Electric), Fred Schaldecke, Joe E. Schelkopf, Don Cuda, Andrews Electric, Kaneb Terminal (Fred Versemann), John Wilkins Construction (Wayne Churchill), Koehler & Co., Gambles, Gehrke Construction Co.

**Contractors** (1967): W. A. Biba Engineering Co., Nichols Construction Co., Maurice A. Nichols Construction Co., Kiestler & Walker, John W. Wilkins.

**Masons** (1967): Melvin Schnegelberger, Virgil Verhage.

**Carpenters** (1967): Virgil Reichert, Richard Oliva, W. W. Biegert, Dean Heath, Gehrke Construction Co. (Delfs Gehrke and Lawrence Peterson), John Wilkins Construction, Steve Watmore, Koehler & Co. (Lewis McCreath, company carpenter).

**Morticians** (1967): Robert Kritner, Paul Farmer.

**Auctioneers** (1967): Iryl Shaner, Kenneth (Bill) Shaner, Rex Shaner, Don Kimbrough.

## BUSINESS HISTORY

The following summary is from the *Bulletin* for January 3, 1884:

**Geneva** This town is the county seat of Fillmore County, and is located at the geographical center of school Sec. 36, town 7, range 3

west. Its location is a pleasant one, on the level upland prairie. The town was laid out on an open prairie, but now a fine growth of forest and shade trees surround it. The population numbers about 400. It is located about 8 miles S of the B. & M. Railroad, and the nearest railroad station is at Fairmont.

### Business Houses and Stocks Carried

Dempster Bros., drugs, general merchandise	\$25,000
Platt & Smith, general merchandise	10,000
F. H. Briggs, groceries	5,000
Mozee & Co.	1,000
A. G. Camp & Son, general	5,000
L. Fiengenbaum, drugs	5,000
H. Conant, notions	3,000
I. E. Mack, confectionery	2,000
B. W. Jones, restaurant	500
Jones & Barry, hardware	4,000
Stone & Pardue, hardware	3,000
Baris & Reed, furniture	3,000
S. H. Yates, flour and feed mill	2,000
M. Conwell, flour and feed mill	1,000
Mrs. Luke, millinery	1,000
Mrs. G. Hedge, millinery	1,500
Mr. Haywood, bakery	
J. Selby, coal	
C. Heath, harness	1,500
W. S. Crawford, harness	1,200
F. Stone, stone chimneys	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$74,700</b>

### Improvements

District schoolhouse	\$ 5,000
Opera house and stores, Jensen & Briggs	4,000
Mozee Bros., store and addition	3,000
Mr. Conant, store and addition	2,000
A. O. Taylor, office	500
S. Camp, store building	500
J. M. Fisher, dwelling	4,000
E. Spear, dwelling	1,500
C. Donisthorpe, dwelling	800
Mrs. Clark, dwelling	700
A. J. Jones, dwelling	800
Mrs. P. D. Sturdevant, dwelling	1,000
Mrs. McKee, dwelling	1,200
F. Heiderstadt, dwelling	1,200
C. H. Bane, dwelling	1,200
Mrs. Moore, dwelling	800
J. Lemon, dwelling	800
O. P. Lacy, dwelling	600
A. J. Beals, dwelling	600
G. Nettleman, dwelling	400
C. L. Spear, livery barn	2,000
Barns and cribs not enumerated will aggregate	5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$37,800</b>

### Professions

The attorneys are: C. H. Bane, J. Jensen, W. H. Cooksey, and J. D. Hamilton.

The doctors are: B. G. and William Mozee; R. T. Dailey and G. R. Hart.

The clergy are: Revs. M. E. Donisthorpe, Willis and Pardee.

### Societies

Geneva Lodge, A. F. & A. M.; a lodge of I. O. of O. F.; a G. A. R. post and the Woman's Christian Temperance Society.

The Geneva cornet band and the juvenile band furnish music for the town.

The real-estate business is represented by Taylor & Day, S. Camp, and B. Shickley.

The insurance agents are as follows: J. C. D. McDonald, A. V. Dworak, and J. Miles.

In the next 22 months, the business interests of the town expanded considerably, as indicated by this Business Directory from the *Fillmore County Republican* of October 28, 1885:

Billings & Donisthorpe—attorneys-at-law (on Center St. near Court)  
Banta, C.—Fillmore Hotel  
Briggs, F. H.—groceries, etc.  
Brunner, Adam—shoemaker (on corner next to Camp's store)  
Brown, Mrs. F. M.—milliner and dressmaker  
Carson, J. D.—attorney-at-law (office with A. O. Taylor)  
Cooksey, W. H.—post office, news depot  
Camp, C. D.—photographer  
Camp, J. H.—liveryman and feed stable  
Clark, George C.—painter (east side of courthouse square)  
Cudworth & Evans—milliners  
Dempster, Hazlett & Green—drugs, jewelry, and books  
Dempster & Stewart—dry goods and tailoring (successors to Dempster Bros., opposite the courthouse)  
Faust, J.—shoe shop  
Fifield, W. A.—attorney-at-law  
Fort, J. H. & Co.—real estate and loan agents  
Fiengenbaum, Lou S.—drugs, wall paper, and books  
Fillebrown, Mrs. Ellen—milliner