



Photo from John Bixby
Fillmore County Bank, built in 1966.

building is constructed of white brick bordered with black trim with a vault of red Colorado flagstone, all situated on Main St. in the county seat town of Geneva, Nebraska. With six employees and four officers, this bank is enjoying a healthy increase as Geneva's newest bank.

BUSINESSES

A. Koehler Company

The A. Koehler Company was started by **Anthony Koehler** in 1885. The first office was on the north side of G St., about the present site of the small roofing house. When the C. & N.W. Railroad was laid through Geneva in 1887, Anthony Koehler moved his yard to the south side of G St. This office stood where the hatchery building is now located. Mr. Koehler also built a small grain elevator on the C. & N.W. right of way.



Photo from Ben Koehler
Office of A. Koehler Co. (1915). Left to right: Barthold (Bat) Koehler, Charles Summers, Edith Summers Brown.

In 1894, Barthold Koehler became associated with his brother Anthony in the business. Anthony's health failed while he was still a young man, and he died in February, 1900, at the age of 40 years. After his death Barthold and a brother, Christian, of Hastings, Nebraska, bought the business from Mrs. Anthony Koehler. These two brothers owned the business, with Barthold as active manager, until the death of Christian Koehler in 1921. During those years Barthold (Bat) Koehler was ably assisted by C. E. (Charley) Summers, who was an esteemed and faithful employee for many years. Barthold's health began to fail in 1924, and his son, John, returned home from Chicago to assist in the business. Both Bat Koehler and Charley Summers died in 1926, thus ending a long and close association.

After the passing of Mr. Koehler, his wife, Clara H. Koehler, was made president of the company, which position she held until a few years before her death on December 6, 1956. Ben Koehler, a son, returned to Geneva and became associated with the business in 1927, and in 1945, still another son, George Koehler, joined the organization.

In 83 years of continuous operation, the A. Koehler Co. has expanded considerably from its rather small beginning. Many older citizens will remember the brick yard south of town, just south of the crossing of the C. & N.W. and the C.B. & Q. railroads, which the company built in 1904. At one time this was an important source of building material, and an important industry in the town. About 25 men were employed from early spring until late fall. With the development of clay building tile this ceased to be an asset of importance, and in 1927 it was dismantled, as were scores of brick yards over the state.



Courtesy Nebraska Signal
Hauling wheat to elevator (about 1915).

The brick office, which is still in use, was built in 1911. A feed department was added to the business in 1932, along with a complete grinding and mixing service. In 1937, the company embarked on a new project, the hatchery business, with Charles Picard in charge. The first turkeys were hatched in 1938, and around 1,000 were raised. In 1940, the turkey operations were enlarged, but an Armistice Day blizzard harvested most of that year's turkeys. The State Health Department advised that the frozen turkeys were definitely edible, and a number of Geneva families had Thanksgiving dinners many times that year. Mr. Picard resigned in 1941, and S. J. Weis, who had been employed by the organization since 1928, took charge, and has continued to managed the hatchery. Mr. Weis is the oldest employee in terms of years of service given the A. Koehler Company. Through his capable and efficient management, this department has made much progress. It now (1959) employs 8 men. A large layer house has been added which houses 4,500 laying hens for breeder stock and instead of 1,000 turkeys (1938), 12,500 turkeys are raised each year.

The elevator business was increased through the purchase of elevators from the Sheridan Grain Co. and the McNeal Elevator Co. during the years 1933 to 1940. From 1950 to 1954 eight steel tanks were added, and the north elevator was completely remodeled. Two steel quonsets were built in 1955 to facilitate the storage of grain. In 1954, a fertilizer department was added.

Chester Dudley, who joined the organization in 1944, brought with him a genial and friendly personality and has been a great asset to the company.

There have also been changes in the building-material department, which is the oldest part of the business. In the early years lumber, sash, windows and doors, were the chief items carried. During the thirties the paint and builders' hardware were added. The Bolton Lumber Co. was purchased in 1943. The growing business found itself short of space in the south office, and in 1947 a modern new office for the lumber department was built on the old Bolton location.

The A. Koehler Co. is in its 83rd year of operation in the Geneva community. The company attributes its success to its many loyal friends and customers, who have given the company the opportunity to serve them through the years. The company feels particularly grateful and indebted to the many faithful employees who have remained with them for so many years, and who have contributed largely in making the A. Koehler Company successful in serving the community.

—Data from A. Koehler Company

Bell Brothers Circus

The Ewalt Amusement Co. was originated by **Tom Ewalt** in the summer of 1934. He built two small drive-it-yourself cars which were taken to near-by picnics and celebrations and used as kiddie rides.

The next winter a kiddie ferris wheel, kiddie merry-go-round, and a large merry-go-round were added, along with extra trucks. In the years that followed more and larger rides were added, and in 1938 a new and larger winter quarters building was erected, replacing the old one just north of the post office. In 1940, a portable stage was added to the equipment, showing liberty ponies, dogs, trick ponies, and monkeys. The company played fairs and celebrations in Nebraska and Iowa.

In the spring of 1944, the show was named Bell Bros. Circus. By now it had large tents, menageries, caged animals, llamas, a string of liberty horses, and Ena the elephant. The circus was transported in 14 trucks and traveled from Texas to the Canadian border, taking in the central states.

Ena was housed in the new winter quarters buildings along with the other animals, being cared for there by a caretaker, Camel Dutch.

In 1946, the Bell Bros. Circus was sold and Mr. Ewalt bought the Sunbeam Theater in Geneva, changing its name to Rialto.



Photo from Tom Ewalt

Bell Brothers Circus (about 1945) — Tom Ewalt with Ena, the elephant.

Mortuaries

The following is an account of the undertaking business in Geneva from about 1900 to the present time.

G. W. Hrubesky (from Schuyler, Nebraska) bought out the furniture and undertaking business of Tom Francis on January 1, 1898. The store (at Gamble Store present location) was an old wooden building—furniture on the first floor (24' x 60') and on the second floor was the old opera house (48' x 60'). This opera house never operated in our day and we used it for furniture later. Back of the store was the office and work-room and behind that the casket room with 7 or 8 caskets which folded back into the wall on hinged panels. Caskets (except children's which were white) were covered in black. The inside of the casket was untrimmed and we bought "pillow sets" which included all the trimmings and we put on all handles.

In that day the embalming was done right in the homes. We worked in one room while the family chatted in another and often overheard things we shouldn't have. Whenever we were called in town we walked and carried a folding slab table, that was darned heavy, in one hand and our case with instruments and embalming fluid in the other. On out-of-town calls we drove a team and hauled our equipment.

In the early days it was the old black-plumed horse hearse, of course. The livery stable kept a regular hearse team to pull it. In the summer the horses wore long black fly nets. In snow, rain, or whatever, the hearse driver and undertaker (not "mortician" in that day) rode on a high seat with no cover except a robe, and he darned near froze or floated away at times.

In 1905, G. W. Hrubesky and Frank White, who operated a butcher shop the next door east (now Gamble's furniture), bought this plot of ground. Hrubesky built a new wooden building which is the present building the Gamble store occupies.

In 1915, I received my embalmer's diploma.

In June, 1916, we got our first auto-hearse. It was the first in quite a wide territory but we kept the horse-hearse for four or five years for emergency until folks could get their Model T's.

I took over the undertaking business from my father in February of 1920. It was hard converting people to the idea of a mortuary but in 1920 we moved our casket supply and equipment north of what is now the Safeway and opened a very crude mortuary. In 1913, I moved to the first door south of the hotel (now Garrett plumbing), adding a few improvements.

In 1939 I purchased the old Bolton residence, now the Farmer-Kritner Funeral Home, from Judge Langren. Since Mr. Bolton was in the lumber business for many years in Geneva, only the finest knot-free lumber and material was put into this structure, making it very desirable for a mortuary. Our first funeral at the present location was on August 2, 1939.

In July, 1948, I sold the mortuary and business to Paul H. Farmer. Between 1898 and 1948 we took care of 2,067 people.

—Frank Hrubesky



Photo from Nebraska Signal
Kitner-Farmer Funeral Home.

Arthur M. and Robert L. Kritner opened the Kritner Funeral Home in Geneva in May, 1936, in the building north of the *Signal* office at 135 No. 9th St., where the business was conducted for ten years.

In August, 1937, the Kritner Funeral Home was opened in Fairmont, in the Hall building, first door north of the Cubbison block, where the Fairmont business has now been established for 31 years. In 1944, the Kritner Funeral Home bought the Wolford Mortuary in Fairmont and in 1946 bought the Wennersten Mortuary in Shickley. Also in 1946, the Kritner Funeral Home bought the Dempster residence at 1035 H St. in Geneva and remodeled it into a modern funeral home.

In July, 1952, Arthur M. Kritner sold his interest to Sherman F. Ashby. For the next five years the mortuaries at Geneva and Fairmont were known as the Kritner-Ashby Funeral Homes. In February, 1957, Robert L. Kritner bought the Sherman F. Ashby interest and became sole owner.

Later in the same month, Robert L. Kritner and Paul H. Farmer consolidated the Hrubesky-Farmer Funeral Homes in both those towns.

The present building at 242 No. 10th St., Geneva, was enlarged and completely remodeled in 1957 to accommodate the newly organized firm of Kritner-Farmer Funeral Home.

—Paul Farmer and Robert Kritner

Book Shop

The Kerl Book Shop, owned and operated by **Mrs. Lewis H. Kerl**, opened in Geneva in November, 1949. Two years later it was listed as a member of the American Booksellers' Association and as the largest bookstore of its kind in the United States operating successfully in a town of less than 5,000 population. In spite of early predictions that such a store could not survive in so small a community, the Kerl Book Store was able to report an increase of business each year. The largest single source of income is the mail-order department.

In 1951, the shop became the official bookstore for the Nebraska Congregational Conference, contracting to supply books at all state



Photo from Mrs. Lewis Kerl
Mrs. Kerl in the book shop (1957).

meetings of the conference in Nebraska. This averaged about 10 meetings each year in all parts of the state, from Omaha to Scottsbluff. In addition, "book nights" were often scheduled in churches of western Nebraska (until 1965), sponsored by various church groups to acquaint members with better books for the home or the church.

Starting with only religious books, and a few story books for children, the shop now carries, in addition to a large stock of Bibles, all sorts of gift, technical, and reference books. The Harper line of Blue Ribbon Books (called "better books for both children and adults") is available at all times, as are the exclusive Gibson books for weddings, guests, and anniversaries. No "comic books" are sold, but there is a line of coloring, play, and "make-'n'-do" books for children of all ages.

The motto of the shop, "If it is in print, we will get it for you," assures customers of quick, sure, and efficient service on any and all titles.

—Data supplied by Mrs. Lewis H. Kerl

Furrier

Geneva's custom furrier, **Gale Walton**, came of pioneer stock. His parents on both sides were born in sod houses and lived the usual life of the early settlers. His mother was the first white girl born in Glengary precinct. Her father, Aaron McPherson, was a contractor who built many of the early houses in Geneva, a number of which are still in use and readily distinguishable by their L-shapes and steep roofs of that period. His father owned a confectionery in Geneva for a number of years and later owned the Walton Barber Shop, which is still operated by another son, Gerald Walton.

In 1929, Gale Walton, three months wed, decided to buy his bride a muskrat coat. He made the trip from Geneva, where he lived, to Lincoln and shopped for the garment. Before he knew it, he was catapulted into the fur industry, and he's still at it—quite successful as a custom furrier.

As Mr. Walton tells it: "I used to trap muskrats as a hobby. So I knew the price of muskrat skins. When I heard the price of the muskrat coat at the Lincoln furrier's, I felt it was too high. So I decided to make a muskrat coat myself."

Mr. Walton explains that he was the youngest of three sons, and had been raised practically as the "daughter" of the home. "My mother taught me how to cook and sew, and I could out-perform many of the young ladies in Geneva. So I put my talent to work and sewed the muskrat coat by hand."

First, though, he acquired a formula for tanning muskrats and dressed the skins himself. The resulting muskrat coat was good enough to bring a request from a friend of Mrs. Walton's for one just like it. And Mr. Walton, one of the original "do-it-yourself" boys, produced another garment.

Later he bought a ready-to-wear muskrat coat, opened it up, and studied the professional techniques of cutting, stitching, etc., and then applied these techniques in his own garments. For, by this time, Mr. Walton was in the fur business. He had partitioned off a section of the living room in his home as an office and showroom. Later he set up a factory in the basement.

His home in Geneva is still his base of operations 39 years later. Relying on nothing but word-of-mouth advertising up until a few years ago, Mr. Walton has built up a trade throughout the state of Nebraska, and has customers as far west as Hollywood and Seattle, and east to New York and Florida.



Photo from Gale Walton

Gale Walton (on right) buying persians in the New York Fur Market.

His first venture into advertising came several years ago when he sponsored a TV program for 13 weeks, featuring as the star his 17-year-old daughter, Gayle, an accomplished Hammond organist.

Today, Mr. Walton employs a number of skilled workers in his organization and personally travels an average of 1,000 miles a week, paying calls on customers in many parts of the country. Since 1937, he has attended fur skin auctions in St. Louis and Seattle regularly, and auctions in New York since 1949.

Mr. Walton is probably the most enthusiastic proponent of color in furs in the Midwest. For some 20 years, he has worked closely with the Superior Fur Dyeing Corp. of New York City in developing clear colors on a variety of furs. He originated the idea of dyeing sheared muskrat in many colors over 20 years ago, and still sells the item. Dyed beaver has been his number one dyed fur for several years.

A descendant of George Walton, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, Mr. Walton recalls with obvious relish his early years in the fur business. He exhibits many of his ancestor's traits, particularly independence of thought and the courage to be different.

"When I began my business, I had no idea of where or how to get supplies to manufacture furs. I managed to get hold of a trade magazine, and there I spotted the name of Samuel Bauer & Sons, the New York supply house. Bauer furnished me with supplies. In 1930, I bought a second-hand sewing machine from Bonis Bros."

Curiously enough, Mr. Walton never set foot in the New York fur market until 1949. Consequently, for many years the Bauer firm labored under the illusion that Gale Walton was a woman.

"They used to send me beautiful gifts for Christmas," Mr. Walton recalls. "I'd get vanity cases, lipstick, cosmetics. Finally, I sent them a picture of myself."

In the beginning, Mr. Walton taught himself the techniques of production of a great variety of furs. His procedure was simply to purchase a garment, take it apart, examine the cutting and sewing techniques, create a pattern, and go into manufacture.

"Some years ago," he reminisces, "I got my first order for a mink coat. Now, I knew that a mink coat had to be let out, but I didn't know the first thing about it. So I went to a friend of mine—a doctor in Lincoln. His wife had a mink coat. I opened it up, looked it over, and went about making my first mink garment."

At any rate, Mr. Walton's do-it-yourself technique has paid off. Mr. Walton is convinced that the future of the fur trade is bound up with color—particularly if processors can continue to develop clear and color-fast tones.

In the Geneva plant every modern process and machine has been added as fast as it has been developed in the fur industry. They have large scientifically cooled and dehumidified storage vaults and the best in cleaning equipment. Skins (furs) were Man's first clothing. Gale Walton aims to keep furs useful and glamorous for today's standards of dress for men and women.

—Based on a "Nebraska Signal" article

Pharmacy

Fred P. Picard sold his drugstore at Juniata, Nebraska, and in 1905 established a drug business at the present location in Geneva. He purchased the building from Nathan & Solomon who were operating a mercantile business there. Because of poor health, Fred took a leave of absence from the drug business and homesteaded in Oklahoma. With his health improved, he returned to the business in Geneva about one year later.

On February 11, 1910, a fire broke out in the basement of the barber shop located at what is the west side door of the present store. While the store was burning, Fred walked down the street and purchased the Lou Fiegenbaum drugstore, operating where Heisey's news stand is now located. He continued to operate this store at that location until the present building was completed. Upon completion of this new building he moved the stock of drugs into the new location, where the business is still operating (1959).

Charles L. Picard, who was in the plumbing business in Indiana, moved to Geneva in 1911 because of his wife's health. He went into business with his brother Fred as a clerk and continued until his death in 1935.

Ralph Reemts started working for the firm in 1925 as a clerk. In 1927, after passing the State Board, he became a registered pharmacist for them.

In 1928, a subsidiary of Picard Pharmacy was formed, known as the Venus Oil Co., to buy motor oils in tank-car lots to be sold directly to the consumer. Until 1935 the warehouse was operated from the back of the Brayton building, now occupied by McPeck Produce (820 G St.).

In 1935, the two warehouses in the 900 block were built and the merchandise moved to the new location. At this date Allan Kline took charge of the warehouses and began his work with the Picard Pharmacy, where he still holds the position of warehouse foreman.

During the summer of 1936, Lawrence Doud worked for Picard's as a clerk and after passing the State Board of Pharmacy in 1937 rejoined the firm as a registered pharmacist.

In 1937, Wilbur Pearson joined the firm as a clerk and in 1938 so did Creston Swails.

On November 1, 1941, Fred Picard sold the "Picard Pharmacy" business to its present employees—Ralph Reemts, Lawrence Doud, Allan Kline, Wilbur Pearson, and Creston Swails. He retained a small interest in the corporation. At his death in 1950 he left his shares of stock to his grandsons, James McCarthy, Jr., and Fred Picard 3rd. In 1942, Creston Swails sold his shares to the other stockholders.

In 1943 the firm purchased the building to the east adjoining the drugstore, formerly occupied by Monroe Heisey, and opened an appliance business which they named the "Modern Appliance Co."

Allan Softley was employed by the firm in 1944 as bookkeeper and continued to serve the corporation faithfully until his death on December 25, 1955.

After receiving a discharge from World War II in 1946, James McCarthy joined the staff of Picard Pharmacy, Inc.

Wilbur Pearson sold back to the firm his shares of stock in 1953 and in 1954 Fred P. Picard 3rd sold his shares, leaving Lawrence Doud, Ralph Reemts, Allan Kline, and James McCarthy the owners in 1959.

Since 1905, there have been five other drugstores opened and closed out at various times.

In addition to drugs and sundries, the Picard Pharmacy, Inc., handles a complete line of school supplies, wall paper, glass, paints, motor oils and greases, poultry minerals, and appliances.

Geneva Milling Company

In June of 1887, the Geneva Roller Milling Co. was formed with A. O. Taylor, president; J. Jensen, treasurer; and F. H. Briggs, secretary. The ground was purchased from Austin Knowler, who had bought it from the railroad on June 1, 1872. This is one of the first industries in Geneva that is still in operation at the present time. It was operated under the above ownership until 1895, when H. L. Smith obtained it by mortgage. The Guthrie Brothers from Superior then operated the Geneva Mill under lease for several years and in 1903 purchased it and made extensive enlargements.

With the roller system, the grain was ground between two steel rolls and bolted or sifted out over reels with silk cloths. Later the long system roller mills came into use. More rolls were used and the grain was processed by gradual reduction and was bolted or sifted out over swing sifters or purifiers. This was the system that was put into use at the Geneva Milling Co. in 1917 when John A. Johnson, Mrs. Percy Bedford, and Henry R. Cellars purchased and remodeled the mill. It was remodeled somewhat again in 1929 when John J. and W. H. Grothe bought it, and again in 1939. John J. Grothe and his son, Charles Grothe, had purchased the mill in 1932.

In the beginning the Geneva Milling Company was mostly a flour and meal mill. In the early days a good deal of the milling was toll milling or exchange milling. The farmer would bring in his grain and the miller retained a certain percentage of it as a "milling charge." The farmer then took the balance back home in the form of flour and meal. Often the farmer would make such long drives—50 or 60 miles—to the mill to exchange wheat for flour that he would need to stay over night and return home the following day. He would lay in a supply of 20 or 30 50-lb. sacks of flour at a time. As late as the 1930's, the largest part of the Geneva Milling Co. business was of this type.

Most of the production of the mill was flour and cereals until about 1935, when large amounts of "prepared" poultry and animal feed were milled.

In 1945, Charles Grothe became sole owner. During this year the mill was destroyed by fire and was replaced with a modern feed mill. Now most of the flour milled is for bakery use. All types of feeds are milled, including pelleted and granulated feeds. Today much of the feed is sold and delivered in bulk to the farms.



Photo from Charles Grothe
Geneva Milling Company (before the 1945 fire).



Courtesy Nebraska Signal

Monroe Heisey being honored by Geneva Chamber of Commerce upon his 50th anniversary as a Geneva business man (1958). *Standing, left to right:* John E. Curtiss, Monroe Heisey, Harvey Garrett, Kenneth Heisey. *Seated:* Mrs. Monroe Heisey, Viola Bender Garrett, Mrs. Kenneth Heisey.

News Dealer

On Saturday, November 8, 1958, **Monroe Heisey**, the local news dealer, rounded out 50 years of business in Geneva. The event got wide news coverage and was celebrated with an open house at the store, where 709 friends signed the guest book. Portions of the *Nebraska Signal's* account (Nov. 13) of this event follow:

"The Geneva Chamber of Commerce recently honored Mr. and Mrs. Monroe Heisey, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Heisey, and Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Garrett at a banquet, where the guest speaker was John E. Curtiss of Lincoln, a patron of the Heisey store when he grew up in Geneva.

"Mr. Heisey has been busy the past week recalling early history of his business and the community for reporters and friends calling at the store, so he hauled out some of his mementoes of the past and put them on display. Included was a good crystal set and a single-tube radio set, his collection of old pictures of the community, a fine collection of old coins, and a scrapbook containing a lot of history of the community and its people.

"Mr. Heisey recalled Tuesday that he would never have been in business in Geneva except for the accident he had while climbing a transmission pole near Lincoln. He broke both legs in a fall and after he had partially recovered he knew he was through climbing poles. It was then that his father-in-law, the late J. C. Bender of Geneva, sent word to him that the Tal Sheldon news stand, across the street from the *Signal* office, could be purchased. Monroe came to Geneva and made arrangements to buy the business. He later moved the business to the main street.

"During much of this period his father-in-law operated a shoe-repair shop in the rear of the store. Mr. Heisey later moved to his present location. During 49 years of this time, his sister-in-law, Mrs. Harvey Garrett (Viola Bender), has been employed in the store, and a son, Kenneth Heisey, has been associated with his father since he was a small boy. A daughter, Leta (Mrs. Everett Ritchey), also has assisted in the business, as did Mrs. Monroe Heisey before retiring a few years ago."

(Monroe Heisey passed away on June 2, 1963.)



Photo from Guy Brown, Jr.

Geneva Nursery.

Geneva Nursery

Pete Youngers and A. J. Brown met in 1871 while planting trees on the north side of the Burlington tracks from Lincoln on west. At that time Youngers lived in Liberty township and Brown in Madison. In 1889, they became partners in the nursery business. Bill Harris had charge of the office and Stella Deland was secretary.

The nursery, which was a wholesale operation, covered between 600 and 700 acres. During the spring and rush seasons, they hired 85 men, with 5 in the office. They shipped to all states except the extreme South; but they budded almond trees for the Southern states. In 1900, they built the warehouse west of the Burlington tracks in Geneva, known now as the Legion Club.

In the spring of 1906, they had 750,000 cherry, 200,000 plum, 400,000 peach, and 3,500,000 apple trees. They also grew a great number of forest trees. In 1916, the Youngers & Brown partnership was dissolved and both men retired.

Geneva then had no nursery for several years, until 1921, when Guy A. Brown, son of A. J. Brown, started a nursery 1½ miles E of Geneva. In 1933, Mr. Brown bought a half-block of ground on the west side of U. S. 81 and built the present nursery building. The operation of this nursery reached its peak in 1941, when 18 men were employed. When World War II caused a shortage of labor the operation was cut down considerably.

In 1936, Floyd Schroeder began working at the nursery and worked there continuously thereafter except for the time he spent in the Coast Guard. He purchased the business in 1962 and has operated it since then as owner.

Roster of Geneva Business Firms, 1959

Clockwise from south side of Block 7:

Clinkenbeard's Blacksmith Shop
Geneva Transfer—Moving, Transfer & Tires
Apley Farm Equipment Co.—Ford Tractors & Farm Equipment
Joe Bixby Real Estate & Ins.—Office
Lichti Repair—Complete Auto Repair
Ray Burton Radio & TV Service
Cartwright Radio & TV—Electric Appliance & Service
Hop Inn—Cafe
Garrett's Plumbing—Installation, Sales, & Service
Geneva Hotel, Les Poole, Prop.
Dr. Lewis H. Kerl—Dental Office
The Kerl Book Shop
Geneva City Library

Clockwise from SE corner of Block 6:

Eich Buick Co.—Complete Auto Repair, Sales & Service
Dr. J. Q. Adams—Dental Office
Jayne Rooming House—Hannah Gilmore, Prop.
V.F.W. Hall
Geneva Sheet Metal Works—Furnace Work, Roofing & Guttering
Geneva Dairy—Dairy Supplies, Fountain Service, & Teen-age Center
Myrle's—Cafe
Smith's Public Market—Groceries & Meats
Fries Package Store—Liquors
Chick's Repair Shop—Auto Repair
Schelkopf Engineering Service—Plumbing, Heating, and Electrical Service
Bud's Shoe Repair
Floyd's Body Shop—Auto Body Repair



Main Street looking west (1967).

Clockwise from east side of Block 5:

Geneva Locker
Safeway Store—Groceries & Meats
Waltemade Cleaners—Dry Cleaning, Men's & Boys' Clothing
Holroyd's Bakery
Monroe Heisey's News Stand—Magazines, Newspapers, Notions, Cards & Gifts
Geneva Photo Co.
Hested's Stores Co.—Variety Store
Heath's Quality Market—Groceries & Meats

Jacox Jewelry & Vogue Clothing Store—Men's Clothing & Jewelry
Rialto Theatre—Movies
Fulton's Furniture Store—Furniture
Fulton's Appliance Store
Gamble's Store—Hardware
Elder Co.—Jewelry, Gifts & Watch Repair
Modern Appliance Co.—Electric Appliances
Picard Pharmacy—Drugs, Paints, & Wallpaper
Masonic Temple—third floor
McKimmey's Barber Shop—basement
Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation—Vaults & Storage
Soil Conservation Service—Office
Side Entrance to Picard Pharmacy
Nebraska Signal Office—Weekly Newspaper Publishers
Dr. D. A. Portwood—Dental Office
LaSalle Beauty Shop
Bernie's Pool Hall
Bixby Insurance Agency—Office, Loans & Insurance
M. A. Nichols, Contractor—Office
Consumers Public Power—Office & Appliances
Lincoln Telephone & Telegraph Office—Telephone Exchange & Telegraph Service
Enid's Gift Shop
Kritner-Farmer Funeral Home—Mortuary & Ambulance Service—NE corner of Block 2
Dr. V. S. Lynn—Physician & Surgeon—SE corner of Outlot 22
United States Post Office—SE corner of Block 3
Venus Wholesale—oil & grease—Alley of Block 5

Clockwise from NE corner of Block 4:

City Auditorium
City Light & Water Office
Geneva Fire Department—City Council Room and Fire Hall on second floor
Drs. A. A. Ashby & C. F. Ashby—Physicians & Surgeons
Shuster Radio & Electric Repair
Eric Waltemade's—Cafe
Gerald Walton's Barber Shop
Geneva Insurance Co. Office—Hugh Wilkins, agent
Geneva State Bank
Fillmore County Abstract Association—Office on second floor
Dr. H. A. Rosenau—Physician & Osteopath—office on second floor
Keenan & Corbitt—Attorneys (second floor)
Waring & Gewacke—Attorneys (second floor)
Dr. George Carlson—Dental Office (second floor)
Eller Co.—Dry Goods & Ready-to-wear
Schneider's IGA Store—Groceries & Meats
Dearking Radio & TV—Sales & Service
Merle Archer Barber Shop
Marguerite's Shop—Ladies & Children's Ready-to-wear
J. C. Penney Co.—Dry Goods & Ready-to-wear
Central Electric & Gas Co.—Office
Dondlinger & Miller Agency—Insurance
Coast-to-Coast Stores—Hardware
Cumberland Style & Beauty Shop—Women's & Children's Ready-to-wear & Beauty Shop
Green Turtle Pool Hall
London, Inc.—Vacant
IOOF Hall—(second floor)
Farm Bureau Office—(basement)
Swanson & Carlson Insurance & Real Estate—Office
Geneva Produce Co.
Blanke's Tavern
Kinder's Accounting & Insurance—Office
Nichols Construction Co.—Office & Shop



Main Street looking east (1967).

Clockwise from east side of Outlot 26 to south side of Block 5, James Bigelow 1st Addition

Yates Welding Shop—Repair Shop
Dr. L. C. Shaw—Veterinary Hospital & Office
Les McPeck's Produce—Cream, Eggs, & Poultry
C. & N. W. Depot
Koehler Lumber Co.—Lumber & Hardware

Clockwise from NW corner of Block 2, James Bigelow 1st Addition:
 American Legion Hall
 Koehler's Elevator
 C. B. & Q. Depot
 Geneva Grain Co.—Office & Storage

Clockwise from NW corner of Block 1 of Bigelow's 1st Addition and Outlot 27:
 Koehler Grain Co.—Office & Elevator
 T & S Service Station—Gas, Oil, & Service
 Boo Implement Co.—International Harvester Equipment
 West Side Grocery & Cafe
 Fillmore County Implement & Irrigation Co.—John Deere, New Idea Implements, Well Digging & Irrigation Equipment
 Cellar Feed & Farm Supply—Feed, Seed Corn, Custom Grinding & Mixing
 McDonald Service Station—Gas, Oil, & Service
 Koehler Hatchery

South Side of street, going east along Highway 41 from corner of 6th and F:
 Fillmore County Shop
 Geneva Sale Barn
 Nelson Oil Co.—Phillips "66" Products, Tank Wagon Service
 South Side Mobil Service—Gas, Oil & Service
 Kamler Implement Co.—Allis-Chalmers Parts & Service, Pontiac Dealer & Irrigation Supplies
 South Side Tavern
 Chaney Implement Co.—Minneapolis-Moline & Massey-Harris-Ferguson Farm Implements, Tire Service & Well Drilling
 OK Rubber Welders—Tires & Repair
 Dr. Edith Ridpath, Chiropractor—SW corner of Outlot 16
 Ridpath Shoe Repair—East of Dr. Ridpath Office
 M. Ridpath—Accounting—SW corner of Outlot 16



Aerial view of Kaneb Pipeline Co., Hill Oil Co., and Cafe.

The following business places are located along *Highway 81*:
 Hill Oil Co.—Service Station & Cafe—1 mile north of city limits
 Kaneb Pipe Line Co.—1 mile north of city limits
 Hy Way Lanes—Bowling Alley
 John W. Wilkins—Builder & Contractor—Office, Shop
 Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation—Office
 Rocol's Hy-Way Service—Phillips "66" Station, Gas, Oil & Service
 Geneva Drive-in—Package Liquor Store
 Fillmore County Hospital
 Millie's Cafe & Grocery
 Ellison Oil Co.—Gas, Oil & Service; also Tank Wagon Service
 Skelly Service Station—Gas, Oil, & Service
 Cafe
 Shaner & Sons—Chevrolet & Oldsmobile cars, Service & Auctioneers
 Swails Standard Service—Gas, Oil & Service
 "81" Tourist Cabins & Mobil Service Station
 Sweden Cream—Drive-in Ice Cream Parlor
 Melton-Issler Motors—Ford Cars, Service
 Goldenrod Motel—Tourist Rooms
 Goldenrod Grill
 Geneva Nurseries
 State of Nebraska Department of Roads

Other locations:

Walton Furrier—Custom-made Fur Coats—237 No. 12th
 Newman's Upholstery Service—542 G St.
 Vern's Auto Repair—1420 G St.
 Ye Ole Corral—Roller Skating Rink—16th and G Sts.
 Peake Transport—15th and F
 Harry Bordner—Iron Dealer
 Hayden Oil Co.—Tank Wagon Service—310 F St.
 Geneva Milling Co.—Grain, Feed—709 D St.

Geneva PV-82—Fertilizer Plant—315 S. 7th
 W. A. Biba Engineering Co.—Office & Shop—636 H St.
 Harold McCashland—Garbage Collector—1518 H St.
 J. B. Barbur Floral Co.—Florist—130 No. 5th
 Rodger D. Franck—Appliance Service—616 So. 10th
 Geneva Electric Service, Wiring & Repair Work—340 No. 15th
 Johnnie Miller—Hybrid Seeds—North 12th
 Frank Kohler—Hybrid Seeds
 Wm. Soukup Repair—1021 E St.
 Kiester-Walker Construction Co.—NE corner of NE ¼ of 2-6-3
 Lauber Seed Co.—Office on farm in Geneva Township
 Pete Kelch—Blacksmith—F St.
 Bankers Life Ins. Co.—Agent, Larry Wattles—1142 C St.
 Fred Schaldecker Electric—339 No. 8th

MANUFACTURING

Since the earliest days there have been numerous attempts to found various industries in Geneva. Some have been successful, others operated only a short time. A few of these projects, taken at random from newspaper files, are listed here.

1878: Merrill Bros. have the molding of a kiln of 100,000 brick nearly completed and will soon be ready to "fire." The kiln is nearly 3 miles N of town and the clay is pronounced by experts as a superior quality and a perfect brick will be produced.

1885: A three-story building east of the square on lots just south of W. H. Jameson's residence is a project of near future. The lower stories will be used for a carriage factory and the third as a lodge room for secret societies.

Charley Heath, the harness maker, informs us that he has never seen the time when there was such a call for fly nets and that it is all but impossible to keep a supply on hand, while the trade journals report that the demand this season is unprecedented and wholesale dealers are at their wits' end to fill the orders.

1887: Fire broke out in the fence factory and machine shop of W. L. Mowry at Geneva. Through the united effort of citizens the fire was put out with a loss of only \$300.

A new brick yard was opened on the DeWolf farm north of Geneva. A grist mill was being erected in Geneva. O. P. Lacey was the contractor.

Will Zirhut sold his interest in the Geneva pop factory to Fred Franck. Mr. Zirhut went to Milligan to take charge of a bank in the new town.

1890: Uglov Bros. are rushing their brick yard to the limit of its capacity and will have a kiln ready for firing by next Saturday.

The Geneva Roller Milling Co. is grinding a carload of meal for the Dakota sufferers, the corn for which is being furnished by farmers in this vicinity. The corn, grinding, and transportation is all donated free of any cost. (This is the present Geneva Milling Co.)

Nick Longly was building a wagon shop in Geneva. (Located on the north side of G St. between 10th and 11th Sts.)

A general remodeling of the Geneva Foundry Co. (Geneva Iron and Windmill factory) has taken place and a new life and capital infused into it. We have a plant equal to any in this part of the state and there is no reason why it should not become the leading industry of the city and county.

(The re-establishment of the foundry took place when several Geneva men formed a corporation named "The Geneva Iron and Windmill Co." The directors elected were: John A. Dempster, A. O. Taylor, W. H. Cooksey, W. V. Fifield, and E. J. Stone. The directors elected John A. Dempster as president, and W. H. Cooksey as secretary-treasurer of the corporation. The company manufactured windmills, tanks, and iron pumps, and did a general foundry business. The company boasted: "It is no air-castle affair which will burst at the first breath of air which strikes it, for it has 20,000 good hard dollars behind it and at its head, men who are well known for their conservative and yet vigorous business principles, and we expect to see the company occupying handsome buildings and employing 100 men inside of three years.")

The foundry was located across the street north of the present Geneva Milling Co.

1896: The Geneva broom factory, owned by J. D. Syas, was broken into and four dozen brooms were stolen.

1898: T. T. Jewell returned to Geneva from Missouri and opened a broom factory west of the square.

1903: The P. K. Gregg cigar factory, established a few months ago, may be developed so that it can give employment to a number of workmen.

A. Koehler Co. put into operation a new steam brick-making plant. The investment was between \$12,000 and \$15,000. From 18 to 20 men were employed at a minimum wage of \$1.50 per day.

1905: M. Bolton and R. T. Dowis have arranged to go into the business of manufacturing artificial stone for building and other purposes and they have ordered the necessary machinery. With the machinery that has been ordered, Messrs. Bolton and Dowis will be able to make blocks of stone of any dimension to suit the purchaser from 3" to 6' long, from 1" thick to 15" thick, and from 4" wide to 24" wide. This will give a wide range in variety of



Old Foundry, 1888-1889—J. P. Williams in buggy. Note wagonload of windmill slats.

Photo from Nebraska Signal



Koehler brick plant about 1905.

Photo from John Bixby

size. The stone will also be put up in ornamental designs for trimming buildings and all sorts of decorative purposes.

The cement blocks are also very extensively used for sidewalks, watering troughs, and in numberless other kinds of construction. The new artificial stone factory will be operated in the Sam Lightbody Building on the west side of the square.

1907 W. M. and W. H. Hindman of Shenandoah, Iowa, opened a cigar factory in Geneva. Their quarters were on the second floor of the Odd Fellows building.

1910 The Geneva Bottling Works was started by Gus Gasper some time prior to 1910. The original location was a frame building on the lot where the Uhlig Cafe now (1959) stands.

In 1910, Tim and William Hourigan purchased the business from Mr. Gasper. They remained in this location for nearly one year and then moved to the building occupied now by the Geneva Cold Storage at 124 North 10th. In 1912 or 1913, they erected a brick structure across the street where the Schelkopf Appliance Store is now located—129 North 10th. At the same time, William Dinneen, who operated the Geneva Ice Cream Manufacturing Co. joined the firm and they named their enterprise the Geneva Manufacturing and Supply Co. To their pop business they added the manufacture of ice cream. This business continued until it was sold to Ed J. Pierce of Holdrege in 1915. The Hourigan brothers moved to Fairmont and opened a bottling plant there.

MARKETING

Mr. Pierce moved to Geneva and immediately began to reorganize and enlarge the business, putting out his products under the name "Takmor," a suggestion followed by the public. The manufacture of butter as an adjunct to the ice-cream business followed.

In March, 1917, Mr. Pierce bought the offices and storehouse of the Geneva Nursery Co., just west of the Burlington tracks (now the American Legion building at 615 G St.). At this time he disposed of his ice-cream business and thereafter confined his manufacturing exclusively to soft drinks, greatly enlarging this feature of the business. The additional space provided by his new quarters in the big nursery building made it possible for him to add a new line of business, that of a wholesale distributor of fruits and vegetables. During the year 1918, Mr. Pierce handled 15 cars of salt on government contract. He also handled 4 cars of apples, 9 cars of peaches, 7 cars of cabbage, and 6 cars of potatoes. All of the fruits and vegetables were distributed to local dealers within a radius of 100 miles of Geneva. He was unable to supply the demand for soft drinks because of the shortage of sugar and syrups. Mr. Pierce continued in the business until 1920, when Frank Battle and John Spohn purchased the business, employing Henry Domeier as delivery man. William Aldrup bought the pop factory in 1922 and moved it to a building east of the Courthouse Square (a brick building just north of the alley and south of the Lauderama. This building was later occupied by the Krawolski Motorcycle Shop.) Mr. Aldrup ran the business until 1932, with Bert Parris as the pop bottler, when his son Carl took over the firm. This business was dissolved about 1934.

1911: Oliver C. Bedford asked the city to furnish water for his ice plant.

1917: Frank Ashton sought permission to install a street light before his marble works. (Frank Ashton bought the monument works from J. A. Smith in 1917 and named it Ashton Monument & Vault Works. He cut stones and manufactured cement vaults at his place in Geneva. Carl Sole and Ed Smith were employed as stone cutters. The monument works was sold to W. S. Desch & Sons of York in 1945, and the materials and equipment were moved to York. This establishment was located on the NW corner of 8th and G Sts. where the veterinary office is located).

1920: The Economy Paint Mills was a new business just opening. (Fred Picard and Dr. H. L. Smith went into partnership to supply paints and oils to this territory. Knud Knudsen was employed to manufacture paint for the firm. When Dr. Smith passed away, he left his interest in the business to Clarence Wilson. When Knud Knudsen withdrew from the firm to go into business for himself, Ray McCaulley bought shares in the firm and became paint foreman. In 1928, Clarence Wilson bought Fred Picard's interest in this business and continued to operate the paint mills until the 1930's.)

1947: The Sothan Body Manufacturing plant was moved from its headquarters at the Fillmore County fairgrounds to Plattsmouth.

Geneva Auto-Gro

One of Geneva's newest businesses is the Geneva Auto-Gro plant, set up for the year-round hydroponic growing of tomatoes. (Hydroponics is the science of growing plants without the use of soil and freed from weather conditions, by controlled and automated supplies of water and soluble plant foods.) The Geneva plant was started in 1966 by Kenneth and Donald Strothkamp in a steel and fiberglass greenhouse at 16th and F Sts. The company operates, in a sense, under the wing of, but not controlled by, Pan American Hydroponics, Inc., a nation-wide organization in this new and expanding field.



Photo from Don Strothkamp
Geneva Auto-Gro (1966).

From earliest times, up into our own pioneer days and until fairly recent decades, in rural areas, trading was the method of purchasing the household necessities. Farmers traded their butter, eggs, and cream for domestic needs. The general store, with its pot-bellied heating stoves, dry goods, barrels of crackers, salt, and sugar, and open bins of cookies and dried fruits, has been replaced by streamlined supermarkets, electrically controlled cases for frozen foods, garden-fresh vegetables and fruit, dairy products, and meats. Attractive cans, packages, and containers are used for foods of all kinds today. The late thirties and early forties saw the trading method replaced by cash purchasing.

The following grocery and market prices show the advances through the years:

Quotations from Chicago (Fillmore County Bulletin, December, 1872)

Beeves, choice	\$5.90-\$6.25
good	\$5.50-\$5.75
fair	\$5.00-\$5.25
medium	\$3.50-\$5.00
Hogs, live	\$4.20-\$4.45
Sheep, good to choice	\$7.25-\$8.25
Butter, choice	27¢-30¢
Eggs, fresh	12¢-13¢
Flour, white	
winter extra	\$9.50-\$11.00
spring extra	\$6.50-\$7.75
Grain:	
Wheat,	
spring No. 1	\$1.42-\$1.44
spring No. 2	\$1.32½-\$1.33½
Corn, No. 2	42¢-43¢
Oats	34¢-35¢
Rye, No. 2	74¢-75¢
Barley, No. 2	56½¢-57½¢
Lard	85¢-8¾¢
Wool, tub washed	68¢-85¢
fleece washed	58¢-68¢
fleece unwashed	34¢-50¢
Provisions:	
Flour	\$2.50-\$3.00
Corn meal	\$1.25-\$1.40
Wheat (spring)	65¢-75¢
Corn	20¢-25¢
Barley	20¢-25¢
Oats	20¢-25¢
Potatoes	40¢-50¢
Bacon	12½¢-14¢
Ham (sugar cured)	16¢-18¢
Lard	12¢-15¢
Tallow	8¢-10¢
Butter	20¢-25¢
Cheese	20¢-25¢
Eggs	20¢-25¢
Fuel:	
Wood per cord	\$4.00-\$5.00
Coal per ton	10.00

Groceries:	
Apples (winter)	\$1.25
Sugar, per lb.	12½¢-15¢
Tea, per lb.	\$1.00-\$1.75
Coffee, per lb.	25¢-30¢
Rice, per lb.	12½¢
Hominy	6¢
White beans	6¢-7¢
Raisins lb.	25¢-30¢
White fish in kit	\$1.50-\$1.75
Mackerel in kit	\$2.00
Dried apples	14¢
Dried peaches (Salt Lake)	20¢
Salt, per barrel	\$4.50
Syrups	70¢-\$1.40
Kerosene	40¢-45¢
Vinegar	40¢

Local Markets—1896 (January 10, 1896)

Corn	16¢
Wheat	40¢-45¢
Oats	15¢
Potatoes	35¢-40¢
Butter	10¢-12½¢
Eggs	12½¢
Hogs	\$3.00

Cattle	\$2.00
Chickens	4¢
Turkeys	5¢
Geese	5¢
Ducks	6¢
Veal	2½¢-3¢
Hens	4¢
Flour, best grade, per sack	75¢-\$1.00

Local Markets—1932

Wheat	35¢
Corn	19¢
Hens	10¢
Eggs	10¢ doz.

Local Markets—1933

Top hogs	\$3.10
Wheat	33¢
Corn	14¢
Oats	8¢

Local Markets—1939 (January)

Corn	23¢
Wheat	60¢
Eggs	13¢
Butter	29¢

Local Markets—1942

Wheat	\$1.11
Corn	63¢
Oats	40¢
Butter	38¢
Eggs	27¢
Hogs	\$9.95-\$10.25

Local Markets—1945 (September)

Yellow corn	\$1.01
Wheat	\$1.50
Eggs	30¢
Hogs	\$11.46-\$14.10

Local Markets—1955 (March 30, 1955)

Wheat, new	\$2.20
Corn, new yellow	\$1.37
Milo, per cwt.	\$1.95
Oats	70¢
No. 1 cream	57¢
Creamery butter	75¢
Eggs	26¢

Poultry	
Heavy hens	13¢
Light hens	11¢
Old roosters	6¢
Hogs, Omaha top,	\$18.50
Top cattle sold at \$30.00 per cwt. at Omaha yesterday.	

Local Markets—1967 (March 29, 1967)

Wheat	\$1.59
Corn	\$1.20
Oats	70¢
Milo	\$1.84
No. 1 cream	59¢
Creamery butter	89¢
Heavy hens	5¢
Roosters	4¢
Eggs, current receipts, delivered	21¢
Top steers sold at \$24.25 per cwt.	
Hogs, Omaha top, Tuesday, at \$18.25 per cwt.	