

Glengary Township

Glengary Township, in the southeastern quarter of the county, is bounded on the north by Liberty, on the west by Chelsea, and on the south by Franklin townships. Its eastern boundary is the Saline County line. The surface is gently rolling. The south fork of Turkey Creek runs in a northerly direction from Sec. 13 to Sec. 3, where it joins the main stream. A smaller stream, Walnut Creek, runs southward through Secs. 24 to 36. These streams account for the fact that Glengary had, in 1966, only five irrigation wells.

The township is crossed from west to east by Nebraska Highway 41, which follows the first section line below the Liberty boundary for 5 miles, then jogs south a mile to Milligan, then east a mile, and south one more mile along the county line. Nebraska 71 comes in from Liberty and terminates at Highway 41, a mile east of the Chelsea line. The Fairmont-Helvey branch of the Burlington slants from northwest to southeast, across Secs. 3 to 24, passing through Milligan.

In early days, a pioneer post office called Glengary was located in the NE corner of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 22, but this seems to have vanished with the coming of the railroad to Milligan.



Photo from Mrs. Joe Vosoba, Sr.

The Henry J. Podlesak family in 1916. *Left to right:* Robert Henry Podlesak, Olga (Tresselt), George, Harry, Richard, Mrs. Henry Podlesak.

In a letter dated from Oak Park, Illinois, May 3, 1956, a former resident, Henry J. Podlesak, supplied the following recollections of early life in Glengary township.

We arrived in Fillmore County, Nebraska, about 3rd day of January, 1872, at Fairmont, were picked up by a farmer from Glengary township and moved to my uncle's farm, homestead, in Glengary township, into a small dugout shanty which was small, for seven people. Father applied for a "homestead," and dug out a shanty on it, and started farming.

After a few years we had some few acres of wheat, oats, and corn, couple cows, and lots of work. Lots of blizzards, scorching summers, even cloudbursts. Great life, out west. But we, like many others, survived.

One year—about the middle '70's—after having cut the grains, with a Walter A. Wood self-rake and bound it by hand—we were stacking the grain when all of a sudden the sky became darkened by clouds of grasshoppers, heading for our region. On seeing the hoppers father tried to hurry to shanty, particularly the vegetable garden patch, to save it from being eaten up by the hoppers. But we did not make much headway before the hoppers landed; the hoppers got into our faces, clothes, well, everything; the horses would not go

Photo from Mrs. Joe Vosoba, Sr.
Joseph Podlesak (died Dec. 6, 1913)



forward because the hoppers got all over them; the horses had all they could do to keep the hoppers from eating up their eyes. By the time we got to the garden, everything was gone—very little left for us to eat. That was the worst grasshopper plague we ever had. They ate up the growing corn; on our way to the garden we went along a good-sized corn field of our neighbor but before we got to the end of the patch, there was not a leaf nor ear left, only the hard stalks were standing.

We had plenty of cloudbursts, tornadoes, cyclones, and dry years—some life! But in 1888 we had the worst blizzard on record. It came on Jan. 12, a little after 1 P.M., in our region, and lasted for three days and nights, wind blowing hard and temperature way below zero. All the quail and rabbits were frozen to death.

The fore part of January, 1888, was mild—warm, we called it—and all the children big enough to work were working in the fields. It happened to be the "cheecher" of District No. 44 on Jan. 12, 1888, had about 20 pupils attending when the blizzard started to show up, and was on us in a jiffy. Sized up the coal supply, which was very low, very little water. But I could not send the kids home, some of them had 2 miles to walk; so the only thing to do was to apportion them to the nearest farms. Took 10 or 11 to the old Steinacher farm, not far but against that fierce wind—what a task that was! Took seven to old Kotas's farm, two to Anton Kotas's farm, and five to my father's farm. I'll never forget that experience.

SCHOOLS



Photo from Mrs. Josephine (Joe) Vosoba

District No. 39 (about 1900). *Bottom row, from left:* John Fujan; Amanda (Dittmer) Meyer; Clara Langhorst; John Bahe. *Standing:* Miss Emma Podlesak, teacher; Mary Strause; Mary Stejskal; Martha Hopkins; Henry Fricke; John Claussen (murdered in the penitentiary—he was a guard there); Agnes Stejskal (murdered by her husband); Henry Dittmer; Henry Hopkins; Chris Hopkins; Lena Bahe; Mamie Gerard; Fred Frickie; Emelia Leff; Lizzie Hopkins; Edward Dittmer; Fred Dittmer; Dora Lankhorst; Frank Gerard; John Hopkins; Fred Langhorst; Bill Strauss. In 1964, there were 14 of these deceased, maybe more.

Frances Stejskal (Mrs. Joe Korbelik) missed school the day picture was taken. Identified by Mrs. R. Meyer (mother of Mrs. Ed Chudly).

District No. 39 was organized on March 12, 1872. It comprised Secs. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33. The first meeting was held at the home of Duncan McLeod on March 19, 1872. Early school board members were Henry Claussen, 1874-79; Anton Nun, 1880-81; J. Gobel 1883-85; and Frank Sieber, 1887-89. The earliest teachers were:

Year	Teacher	Salary	Term
1872	H. J. Morse	\$25 a month	3 months
1873	E. J. Chester	\$25 a month	3 months
1873	Emma Zerba	\$20 a month	3 months
1874	E. J. Chester	\$25 a month	3 months
1875	E. R. Gould	\$35 a month	4 months
1876	Parthenia Matson	\$35 a month	4 months
1877	Parthenia Matson	\$35 a month	6 months
1878	Parthenia Matson	\$35 a month	4 months
1879	Parthenia Matson	\$35 a month	4 months
1880	J. J. Harris	\$30 a month	4 months
1881	Parthenia Matson	\$22 a month	11 months



Photo from Nebraska Signal

District No. 43 in 1913. *Back row, left to right*, Alice Krupicka, Lena Troubough, Alba Vejraska, Ida Troubough, Mary Matejka, Hazel Troubough, Emmet McDonald, Emil Krupicka, Lela Troubough, John Matejka. *Middle row, left to right*: Nina Neel, Anna Svoboda, Ed Matejka, Agnes Nadherny, James Vejraska, Emma Korbelik, James Nadherny, John Troubough, Joe Vejraska. *Front row, left to right*: Lynn Klatt, Emma Vejraska, Ella Matejka, Mollie Nadherny, Lee Klatt, Earl Hennessey, Joe Nadherny, Hollis Neel, Agnes Matejka. Clement Hennessey, teacher.

District No. 43, comprising Secs. 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 34, 35, and 36, was organized by County Superintendent John A. Dempster on March 14, 1872. On June 25, 1881, on petition of voters in Districts 43 and 73, Superintendent J. B. Lewis detached from District 73 the NW ¼ of Sec. 2, T5N, R1W, and attached it to District 43. Some of the early teachers are listed here:

Year	Teacher	Salary	Term	No. Pupils	Director
1879	Benjamin F. Bothwell	\$25 per mo.	3 mo.	50	D. S. Robinson ¹
	George Alexander	\$25. per mo.	3 mo.		
1880	Anna S. Jackson	\$25 per mo.	3 mo.	82	D. S. Robinson
	George Alexander	\$30 per mo.	4 mo.		
1881	Alice Roberts	\$25 per mo.	3 mo.	19	James F. Lippencott
	India Thomas	\$25 per mo.	3 mo.		
1882	Flora Angstead	\$25 per mo.	4 mo.	23	A. B. Johnson
	George Alexander	\$30 per mo.	3 mo.		
1883	Ella Thomas	\$25 per mo.	4 mo.	23	John Bechtel ¹
	George Alexander	\$33.33 per mo.	3 mo.		
1884	Ella Thomas	\$25 per mo.	4 mo.	40	John Bechtel
	J. O. Harris	\$30 per mo.	3 mo.		
1885	Ella Thomas	\$29 per mo.	7 mo.	40	John Bechtel
	Lizzie Harris	\$30 per mo.	3 mo.		
1886	No record	No record		50	John Bechtel
1887	Mary Barrett	\$30 per mo.	5 mo.	46	John Bechtel
	Hattie Little	\$31 per mo.	7 mo.		
1888	Hattie Little	\$30 per mo.	5 mo.	39	John Bechtel
	John Storie	\$30 per mo.	3 mo.		
1894	No record	No record		64	B. Rogers
1904	No record	No record			D. J. Davis

¹Mr. Robinson lived at Goldrinsey, Saline County; Mr. Bechtel lived at Tobias.

Photo from Mrs. Henry Steinacher

District No. 44 about 1926—Anne Slajbert, teacher. *Left to right*: Marie Sadlo, Rose Sadlo, Donald Laun, Donald Steinacher, Norman Steinacher, Joe Sadlo. *Front row*: Eddie Kottas, Bernard Svec.



District No. 44 was established on March 14, 1872, by G. W. Barrows, deputy for County Superintendent G. W. Gue. It was made up of Secs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 12 of T6, R1W. T. W. Clark was notified of the election of district officers, to be held "at the nearest central place in the said district" on Thursday, March 21, at 1 P.M. In May, 1874, Superintendent Dempster, on petition, removed Secs. 1, 2, 11, and 12 from District 44 and attached them to District 71.

Year	Teacher	Salary	Term	No. Pupils	Director
1879	B. F. Bothwell	\$25 per mo.	3 mo.	30	F. J. Znojensky
1880	B. F. Bothwell	\$25 per mo.	3 mo.	30	F. J. Znojensky
1881	B. F. Bothwell	\$25 per mo.	4 mo.	32	F. J. Znojensky
1882	B. F. Bothwell	\$25 per mo.	4 mo.	32	F. J. Znojensky
1883	B. F. Bothwell	\$25 per mo.	5 mo.	33	F. J. Znojensky
1884	George H. Lee	\$30 per mo.	3 mo.	32	F. J. Znojensky
1885	George H. Lee	\$30 per mo.	4 mo.	30	F. J. Znojensky
	S. D. Purviance	\$31 per mo.	3 mo.		
1886	No record	No record		34	F. J. Znojensky
1887	E. S. Stevens	\$31 per mo.	3 mo.	35	F. J. Znojensky
	B. R. Stevens	\$31 per mo.	3 mo.		
1888	Henry Podlesak	\$30 per mo.	6 mo.	23	F. J. Znojensky
1894	No record	No record			Joseph Podlesak
1904	No record	No record			F. R. Kottas

On June 29, 1953, District 44 was dissolved and attached to District 71.



Photo from Mrs. Josephine (Joe) Vosoba

District No. 67 (May, 1900) In doorway: Anna (Schelbitzki) Rippe; Mary (Kuska) Poch. *Back row, left to right (by door)*: *Chas. Sluka; Just Shelbitzki; Cyril Bernasek; James Bernasek; *Joe Bernasek; *Rose (Vejraska) Sadlo; Emma (Rehor) Rezabek. *Tall ones, left to right from building*: Christina (Bernasek) Krupicka; Valentine Kuska; Agnes (Vejraska) Ach; Henry Schelbitzki; Frank Fujan; Josie (Simic) Kasak; *Josephine (Podlesak) Rehor, teacher. *Bottom row*: *Tony (Schelbitzki) Krisl; Emma (Bernasek) Houser; Josephine (Rehor) Vosoba; *unidentified boy*; Joe B. Kuska; *James F. Kassik; *Frank Bernasek; *Leo Hennessey.

The teacher in this picture died on July 11, 1966, at Torrance, Calif., on her 87th birthday. This picture appeared in the *Nebraska Signal* on Dec. 29, 1966.

*Deceased

District No. 67, on petition of the voters of Districts 2 and 39, was set up by Superintendent Dempster on June 9, 1873, to consist of Secs. 7, 8, 16, 17, and 18, and the N ½ of Secs. 19, 20, and 21 of T6, R1W. S. J. Galimore was notified that the first meeting—for the election of a moderator for three years, a director for two years, and a treasurer for one year—would be held at the nearest central place on Monday, June 16, 1873, at 2 P.M.

Later, the W ½ of SE ¼ of Sec. 6 was transferred from District 2 to District 67; still later, the W ½ of SW ¼, Sec. 7 went to District 65, and the SW ¼ of Sec. 18 to District 32.

Year	Teacher	Salary	Term	No. Pupils	Director
1874-75	Aaron McPherson	\$25 per mo.	3 mo.	17	G. A. Tyson
1875	Aaron McPherson	\$25 per mo.	3 mo.	17	G. A. Tyson
1875-76	Emma Zerba	\$24 per mo.	4 mo.	15	G. A. Tyson
	T. J. Whitzel	\$35 per mo.	3 mo.	15	G. A. Tyson
1876-77	W. H. Northrup	\$28.33	2 mo.	17	G. A. Tyson and
	B. J. Lawrence	\$35 per mo.	4 mo.	17	A. McPherson
1877-78	R. L. Donovan	\$25 per mo.	4 mo.	24	Jacoway
1878-79	George A. Folden	\$20 per mo.	2 mo.	24	Jacoway
	Adelli Lewis	\$33.33	3 mo.	24	Jacoway
1879-80	Emma Zerba	\$25 per mo.	3 mo.	43	Jacoway
	Lina Cross	\$30 per mo.	3 mo.	43	Jacoway
1880-81	J. P. Lawrence	\$31.50	6 mo.	50	Jacoway
1881-82	L. C. Kerr	\$27 per mo.	3 mo.	50	Jacoway
	C. M. Johnson	\$33.33	3 mo.	50	Jacoway
1882-83	O. T. Gore	\$36 mo.	3½ mo.	53	Jacoway
	Mrs. J. T. A. Hill	\$36 per mo.	2 mo.	53	Jacoway
	A. C. Tucker	\$30 per mo.	1 mo.	53	Jacoway
1883-84	Thede Kelly	\$30 per mo.	3 mo.	47	G. A. Tyson
	T. J. Whitzel	\$40 per mo.	4 mo.	47	G. A. Tyson
1884-85	Celia B. Grier	\$30 per mo.	3 mo.	43	Jacoway
	H. P. Wilson	\$37.50	6 mo.	43	Jacoway
1885-86	No record	No record		57	No record
1886-87	J. G. Timberlake	\$40 mo.	3¼ mo.	58	W. C. Wollam
	H. P. Wilson	\$40 per mo.	4 mo.	58	W. C. Wollam
1887-88	Flora Carney	\$35 per mo.	12 mo.	48	W. C. Wollam
1888-89	Flora Carney	No record			No record
1889-90	Flora Carney	No record			No record
1890-91	Nettie Holmes	No record			No record
1891-92	Charles Madison	No record			No record
1892-93	Elva Witter	No record			No record
1893-94	Lillie Sharp	No record			No record
1894-95	Milt Ames	No record			No record
1895-96	J. W. Forbes	No record			No record
1896-97	Jennie Husmann	No record			No record
1897-98	Sid Purviance	No record			No record
1898-99	Josephine Podlesak			6 mo. 27	No record
1899-1900	Josephine Podlesak			8 mo. NR ¹	No record
1900-01	Ethel Montgomery			8 mo. NR	Frank Kassik
1901-02	Ethel Montgomery			8 mo. NR	Andrew Lynn
1902-03	Gertrude Worley			8 mo. NR	Josef Kuska
1903-04	Marye Knopp			8 mo. NR	Josef Kuska
1904-05	Marye Knopp			8 mo. NR	Josef Kuska
1905-06	Frank Adams			8 mo. NR	Anton Kuska
1906-07	Lydia Linnert			8 mo. NR	Anton Kuska
1907-08	Marie Luksik			8 mo. NR	Emil A. Kuska
1908-09	Bertha Massoth			7 mo. NR	Emil A. Kuska
1909-10	Effie Danielson			8 mo. NR	No record
1910-11	Effie Danielson			8 mo. NR	No record
1911-12	Esther McDonald			8 mo. NR	No record
1912-13	Wm. F. Schneider	\$50 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1913-14	Wm. F. Schneider	\$55 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1914-15	Anna H. Pivniski	\$55 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1915-16	Anna H. Pivniski	\$55 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1916-17	Rose Matejka			8 mo. NR	No record
1917-18	Mrs. D. E. Franck	\$55 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1918-19	Nellie Songster	\$70 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1919-20	Mollie Sieckmann	\$70 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1920-21	Agnes Dinneen	\$95 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1921-22	Agnes Dinneen	\$95 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1922-23	Mamie Steinacher			8 mo. NR	No record
1923-24	Mamie Steinacher	\$80 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1924-25	Mamie Krupicka	\$80 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1925-26	Rose M. Soukup	\$70 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1926-27	Rose M. Soukup	\$80 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1927-28	Rose M. Soukup	\$80 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1928-29	Anna E. (Novak) Jansky	\$80 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1929-30	Julia A. Hines	\$70 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	Joe F. Sluka
1930-31	Julia A. (Hines) Kuska	\$75 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	Joe F. Sluka
1931-32	Anna A. Herynk	\$60 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	Joe F. Sluka
1932-33	Anna A. Herynk	\$60 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	Joe F. Sluka
1933-34	Alice L. Sluka	\$40 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	Joe F. Sluka
1934-35	Erma L. Schultz	\$40 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	Joe F. Sluka
1935-36	Erma L. Schultz	\$40 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	Joe F. Sluka

Year	Teacher	Salary	Term	No. Pupils	Director
1936-37	Irma E. Soukup	\$40 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1937-38	Mildred Stejskal	\$40 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1938-39	Marie L. Sadlo	\$40 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1939-40	Marian Kassik	\$40 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1940-41	Helene Hendrych	\$40 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1941-42	Irene Bures	\$40 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1942-43	Irene Bures	\$60 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1943-44	Irene Bures	\$90 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1944-45	Evelyn Hromadka	\$95 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1945-46	Louise Bernasek	\$90 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1946-47	Louise Bernasek	\$100 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1947-48	Louise Bernasek	\$140 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1948-49	Marilyn Cecrle	\$175 per mo.	8 mo.	NR	No record
1949-50	No record				No record

¹No Record

With only two pupils remaining, the district was closed. In September, 1950, one 8th-grade pupil was sent to Milligan (District 71). In December, 1952, Richard Poch and family moved into the district; their two children were sent to District 65, at tuition charge of \$275. From September, 1953, to May, 1954, the Poch children were sent to District 65, with District 67 paying the tuition of \$550. In September, 1951, \$270 was paid to District 71 as Henry Allen Kassik entered the first grade. Henry and his little brother Ralph went to District 71 in 1952 and 1953 at a cost of \$500 per pupil. In 1954, the next younger brother joined the Kassik boys (in kindergarten), and three pupils were being sent to District 71 at a tuition cost of \$500 each.

District No. 71 was set up by Superintendent Dempster on May 18, 1874, to comprise Secs. 1, 2, 11, and 12 of T6, R1W. John McManas was notified of the first meeting, to be held at a central place on Saturday, May 30, 1874, at 2 P.M., to elect the usual officers. This district later absorbed District 80. (More details on this district, which became the Milligan school, are given in the history of Milligan.)

District No. 80 was set up on a petition of the voters of District 43 by Superintendent J. B. Lewis on May 18, 1880. It was made up of Secs. 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, and 24, detached for the purpose from District 43. However, on the combined petitions of voters in District 71 and District 80, these sections—comprising the whole of District 80—were re-attached to District 71. With this action, taken by Superintendent P. H. Hines on July 22, 1899, District 80 ceased to exist.

FAMILIES

Claus Henry Claussen (better known as Henry) was born October 29, 1845, in Suderheistadt Dietmarschen, Holstein, Germany. At the age of 22, in 1867, two years after the Civil War, he immigrated to America. He stopped first at Clinton, Iowa, where he remained three years. In May, 1870, he walked from Clinton to Fillmore County. He was a wagon maker by trade. He homesteaded on the NW ¼ of Sec. 32 in what is now Glengary township. He gave a plot of ground in the northeast corner of his homestead for a cemetery and a school, known as Claussen Cemetery and School District



Photo from Mrs. Rudolph Meyer
Mr. and Mrs. Claus Henry Claussen in 1906

39. Three brothers followed him to Nebraska: Franz Christen (known as Christ), Hans, and John. Christ, who remained a bachelor, homesteaded on the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 4, in Franklin, 2 miles NE of Ohiova. Their parents, Claus Rode Claussen and his wife, Anna Rohevvedder Claussen, and three daughters — Catherine (never married), Matilda (Mrs. Wenzel Landkammer), and Anna (Mrs. J. Gobel)—came to America and lived with Christ Claussen.

Henry Claussen met Maria Wieden by a lone cottonwood tree at the north edge of his homestead while she was walking to visit a neighbor. A romance started, and they were married on February 28, 1875, in the one-room schoolhouse on his land. They obtained their marriage license at Fairmont (Geneva and Ohiova did not yet exist). They started housekeeping in a dugout. Maria often told how she would find bull snakes coiled by her milk crock in the dugout. For many years the dugout house and barn could be found in the pasture. After some time in the dugout, they built a very small house and a barn in a grove on the east edge of their land. Henry walked many a time to Beatrice, and later to Alexandria, to get and carry home a sack of flour. To their union were born 10 children, four of whom died in infancy. Henry and Maria Claussen, his parents, his two brothers, and five children are all buried in the Claussen Cemetery.

On January 1, 1880, Henry and Christ helped organize St. John's Lutheran Church and were charter members. Before organization, services were held in farm homes and in the District 40 school. Henry opened his home for services. He was a prosperous farmer, giving land to each of his children, and did many good deeds for his fellow men and his church. His generosity helped many a family when in need.

In 1908, he retired from farming and became a resident of Ohiova, with his six living children, Rudolph, John, Henry, Mary (Mrs. Fred Karre), Minnie (Mrs. Bruno Goerz), and Martha Mrs. Jess Beckwith). Rudolph and Minnie died during the 1918 influenza epidemic. John, who became a guard at the State Penitentiary in Lincoln, was murdered by an inmate on Good Friday, April 16, 1954. In 1919, a new bungalow and other dwellings were built on the west edge of the homestead, close to the highway. The place is now owned by Mrs. Joe Kaderabek of Milligan and farmed by her son.

Henry and Maria celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on February 28, 1925. Maria passed away on November 26, 1927, and Henry on December 16, 1936.

Maria Wieden Claussen was born January 1, 1857, in Hermsdorf, in the German part of Bohemia, and came with her mother, brother, and sisters to the United States in 1871. They were met at Fairmont (then the terminus of the railroad) by her father, who had been in America and in Fillmore County for two years. Her parents were Joseph Wieden and Franzijka Muller Wieden. They homesteaded on land adjoining Henry Claussen, on the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 4, Franklin, east of Ohiova. Her one brother, William Wenzel Wieden, a baker by trade, specialized in pastry and cake trimming. He enjoyed relating pioneer history. While living in Beatrice, he furnished bread for the Sioux Indians when the government moved them through town in 1873. On August 1, 1877, William and his wife started a bakery in a small frame store building in Sutton. He lived and hunted buffalo there. On August 1, 1924, in the evening, he became ill and closed his shop. Two weeks later, on August 14, he passed away. His business had continued more years without change of management than any other in Sutton.



Photo from Mrs. Henry Steinacher
Mr. and Mrs. Joe Janousek,
homesteaders in Glengary town-
ship.

Josef Kassik, Sr., and Veronika Franek Kassik were married in 1859 in Czechoslovakia. They settled in Glengary township in 1870, on the W $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 10, with two boys, James and Joe. Their third boy, Frank, was born here on January 21, 1871, and passed away on



Photo from Lou Kassik
Mr. and Mrs. Josef Kassik, Sr., in 1859.

September 17, 1954, at the age of 83 years, 7 months, and 26 days. He was the oldest resident born in and living in Glengary township all his life. A sister, Anna (Mrs. Charles Keberle), also had a long life in the area; she died on March 8, 1958. Of the Kassiks' five boys and two girls, the last two living in Fillmore County were Emil Kassik Sr., aged 91, and Albert Kassik, Sr., 88. Both have now passed on. Albert, with his three sons, owned and ran the alfalfa mill and pellet factory in Milligan.

Josef Kassik, Sr., used to work at Nebraska City and walk there and back, often carrying home a 50-lb. sack of flour. Once he brought a grindstone on his back. When he came to a stream, he spotted a young fawn. He laid down the grindstone and chased and caught the fawn. But he had nothing to tie it with, so he took off his suspenders and tied it up. By that time he had lost track of his grindstone. When he finally found it and got back to where he had left the fawn, the animal was gone, also the suspenders. He went on homeward, on this third day of his journey. When night came, he thought that he must be close to home. But in the dark, tired and hungry, he lay down to sleep, with the grindstone beside him on a straw pile. When he awoke in the morning, he found that the straw stack was his own.

Mrs. Veronika Kassik had an experience with Indians one day. She was at home alone, just starting a fire in their dugout, when an Indian woman came in and, seeing the matches, wanted them. Mrs. Kassik was scared, so she gave her the whole box of matches, and then for a long time had to use flint stones to start the fire. Kindlings at that time were weeds tied in small bundles.

Mr. and Mrs. Kassik managed to give each of their five boys a 160-acre farm with a three-room house, a barn, and a granary. The boys all had to work while very young. They were often tied to the seat of a machine so they would not fall off while the machine was in motion.

—Agnis Ach



Photo from Melvin O. Kuska
The Anton Kuska family about 1890. Left to right: Anton Kuska, E. A. Kuska, Val Kuska, in front of Joe Kuska (nephew), Mrs. Anton Kuska, Joseph B. Kuska, Mary (now Mrs. Poch), Joe Rehor.

Anton Kuska was born in Malkov u Lrar, Kraj Pisek, Czechoslovakia, on December 14, 1852. His parents were Thomas and Marie Vavra Kuska. He grew up in Czechoslovakia, where he learned the shoe trade from his maternal Uncle John. Upon reaching the age of compulsory military service, he entered the artillery corps of the army of Emperor Franz Josef I, King of Bohemia. Later he served in the medical corps. On completing his army service, he was released from further military obligation and decided to emigrate to the United States. Arriving in New York City in May, 1881, at the age of 28, he came on to Chicago, where he remained a few weeks with an uncle before coming to Nebraska. He then came to Exeter, where he worked as a shoemaker for a short time. Later, he found work on a farm near Milligan.

My mother, Elzbeta Kolar, and my wife's mother, Mary Bures, came to America from Czechoslovakia on the same steam freighter. My mother could get on this ship but my father had to wait a week for another ship. After they were on the ocean the weather turned stormy and dark. The water was rough and they drifted off their course. They feared they would never reach land. During the storm, the ship constantly blew its whistle to give warning to other ships to avoid collision. Food supplies ran low and so did fuel. Much sickness and many deaths occurred on this voyage. However, they reached Baltimore and proceeded to Fillmore County. Mother came to Karel Kolar's home on the creek north of Milligan. Even though mother experienced a longer ocean trip, she arrived in Fillmore County before my father.

On September 17, 1881, Anton was united in marriage to Elzbeta Kolar. To this union eight children, seven sons and one daughter, were born. The living children are Emil Anton of Fairmont, Mrs. Mary Poch of Milligan, Valentine of Lincoln, Joseph B. of Lomita, California, Henry of Berwyn, Illinois, and Clement of Oak Park, Illinois.

Dad and mother began married life on a farm 4 miles NW of Milligan in Liberty township. Oxen were used to do the farming on this land, which was owned by Anton Kotas. Later they purchased 80 acres (S 1/2 SW 1/4 17-6-1 Glangary township) of B. & M. R.R. land on contract and received a deed to this land on March 27, 1885. They lived on this land the rest of their lives.

My parents often talked about the many hardships of pioneer days. The grasshopper plague and drouth of 1894 were severe blows. Crops in previous years were fairly good; larger acreages were planted, and grew well in the early part of the season. On July 26, 1894, the hot winds came and dried the corn, causing the crop to be lost in one day. Later in the same month the grasshoppers came. They came so thick that they obscured the light of the sun like a dark cloud so that within a short time the crops that survived the hot winds were destroyed. It was said that the Indians toasted the grasshoppers and ground them into a meal for food. In 1895, there were some crops. A big corn crop was raised and the price was 8 to 10 cents a bushel. That year's crop caused many cribs to be built in town, as the farmers were hauling ear corn there to sell. However, there were several farmers who would rather burn corn than buy coal because the latter was too expensive. We had a cow for our milk supply and when it died we didn't have the money to purchase another.

I can remember the big snowdrifts of the famous Blizzard of '88 (Jan. 12). The drifts were hard and I could walk over them. The day started very nice but by noon large snowflakes began falling and in the afternoon a strong wind began blowing and soon it was a severe whirling windstorm. Visibility was zero. Some mothers lost their lives by trying to get to schools to save their children. There is no doubt that the suffering and loss in the blizzard were greater because of the suddenness with which the storm struck and the inadequate weather forecasting and communications which caught people and livestock without warning. The storm moved from Montana to Southeast Nebraska (a distance of 780 miles) in 17 hours, or an average speed of 45 miles per hour. Temperatures at North Platte dropped 32° in 13 hours and at Crete 18° in 3 minutes. This storm, in contrast to the 1949 blizzard, was much worse. The 1949 blizzard traveled at only a 3 to 4 mile gait, and better facilities of forecasting and warning and thicker settlement reduced danger to a minimum.

Another interesting fact of these progressive pioneers was their foresight in bringing alfalfa seed from their native homeland which they planted in this country. This alfalfa seed (Turkey Stand) has been kept in the family all through the years.

I, Emil Anton Kuska, am the oldest child of Anton and Elzbeta Kolar and have been a resident of Fillmore County since my birth on August 6, 1882. On February 14, 1912, Katherine Becwar, daughter of Anton and Elizabeth Becwar, and I were married. Our first home was on a farm near Milligan. We bought the SW 1/4 of Sec. 18, Liberty township, in 1913 and have lived there ever since.

I attended University of Nebraska short courses in Agriculture and have been in agriculture continuously. In 1936, I was recognized by the Pasture-Forage-Livestock Conference at Omaha as the pioneer in bringing brome grass as a permanent and temporary pasture into

south-central Nebraska in 1900. Also, I have kept sowing the alfalfa seed that my father brought to this country.

My wife and I had three sons. Donald graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1938 and is corporate director of quality control for the Oliver Corporation, South Bend, Indiana. William passed away during his sophomore year at the University of Nebraska in 1938. Melvin, after graduating from the University of Nebraska, spent five years in the U. S. Army Air Force in World War II as a captain, and returned to Fillmore County to take over the farming operations.

—Emil A. Kuska

John Placek was born in 1837 in Rakolusky, Kralovice County, Czechoslovakia, and in 1863 married Catherine Kotas, born in Kozojedy, Czechoslovakia. In September, 1868, they came to Chicago, then to St. Louis. The following year they came up the river (a seven-day trip) to Nebraska City, where they found Vac. Petracek, who conducted a boarding house at the time. Petracek informed Placek of a countryman named Koleno, from Brezi, Bohemia. Koleno advised him to wait until the Czech settlers from the Big Blue country came down, when they would take him back with them. Shortly thereafter, Matej and Frank Kovarik, John Brabec, and George Krajnik came down to get a seeder they had ordered. Placek bought a wagon and other necessities and set out with them. They stayed at Krajnik's for three days, sleeping in their wagon, because Krajnik's sod house was filled to overflowing.

Vincent Aksamit had a homestead in that neighborhood and on it a little shed, and so they moved in and lived there one winter. Placek had to go to Nebraska City, 75 miles, for furniture. In the spring he took a claim, broke 30 acres, and lived in an open camp. Later he built a dugout, where their son was born. When the child was three days old, the mother came to the field with it and helped Placek plant potatoes, the other children staying at home alone. A cloudburst occurred; the mother and child sought shelter under the wagon, and Placek hurried home. He found the dugout filled with water, the frightened children in bed. When he came, he had brought with him a nephew, who found work with a settler, but sickened and came to Placek's to die. Their home measured only 4' x 6'; they had to place the corpse outside and cover it until the funeral.

The next year Placek planted 70 acres. Many settlers poured in. The year following that, he bought railroad land in Fillmore County, selling it two years later (an 80 for \$800) and buying a quarter-section for \$700. Then he bought another 80 for \$400 and, still later, school land for \$1,000, all in Fillmore County. As his boys grew to manhood, he kept on selling improved land and buying unimproved, to give them farms—all earned by hard work of himself and his family. It was a good example of the way many others did and in time were rewarded.

Settlers kept coming, railroads were built, towns were established, and Placek was able to retire with his wife to Milligan, in his old age, to enjoy a well-earned rest, and, as he said, to await the time when they were to abide in that last and smallest "sod house" of all, which measures but 2' x 6' but in which its occupants find eternal peace.



Photo from Mrs. Henry Steinacher

The John Placek family. 1. Fred E. Placek, 2. Louis Placek, 3. Albert Placek, 4. E. E. Placek, 5. Frank Placek, 6. Anna Rohla (Placek), 7. Christine Kubicek (Placek), 8. Mrs. John Placek, 9. Mr. John Placek, 10. Mary Boxa (Placek).



Photo from Mary E. Krisl
Emil Placek

Emil Edwin Placek, son of Jan and Katerina Placek, was born in a sod house in Fillmore County on December 14, 1877. Emil worked on the home farm and attended public school at Milligan. In the fall of 1894, he entered Western Normal College at Lincoln; the next year he transferred to the University of Nebraska, taking a law degree in June, 1897, followed by graduate work in law. He was appointed recorder in the office of the Fillmore County clerk on January 1, 1898, but soon resigned to enlist in Company G, 1st Nebraska Regiment, U. S. Volunteers. He served in the Philippines campaign and was present at the taking of Manila, August 14, 1898; he then served through the Philippine insurrection from February 4 to July 1, 1899, and was honorably discharged on August 23, 1899, at San Francisco. Upon his return, he again became recorder in the clerk's office. On January 1, 1900, he was appointed clerk of the county court, but on June 1, 1900, he resigned to take a post in the Census Department at Washington.

On March 1, 1901, Emil Placek took up residence at Wahoo and engaged in the general practice of law. He served as county judge of Saunders County for two terms (1906-1911). In the meantime, in 1907, he was one of the organizers of the Bank of Prague, Nebraska, of which he has been president since its inception. In March, 1909, he purchased a controlling interest in the Nebraska Culvert & Manufacturing Co. of Wahoo, of which he has since been president and general manager. All of his employees in this firm—which makes road machinery and corrugated culverts, and does general sheet-metal work—work on a profit-sharing basis. Besides his various business and civic interests, he served two terms (sessions of 1911 and 1913) in the Nebraska State Senate. He also served two terms as mayor of Wahoo.

In 1904, he was united in marriage with Elizabeth Lindercamp, a daughter of John and Agnes (Lent) Lindercamp, the former of whom had served in the German army during the Franco-Prussian War. To this union were born three children: Corene S., born at Wahoo, May 21, 1905; Enid Elizabeth, born at Wahoo, September 10, 1910; and Wayne Edwin, born at Pasadena, California, March 11, 1921.



Photo from Gust Schelbitzki

The Wenzel Schelbitzki family about 1913. Back row, left to right: Henry, Frank, Anton, Mary, Antonie, Anna. Front row: Gust, Wenzel Schelbitzki, Mrs. Schelbitzki, Sarah.

At the age of 27, in 1870, **Wenzel Schelbitzki** came to America from Austria-Hungary. It took three weeks to cross the ocean. He worked in Nebraska City for one year and then came to Fillmore County, where he homesteaded 80 acres on Sec. 20, Glengary township, 11 miles SE of Geneva. He lived in a dugout and during the first year walked many a mile to Beatrice for groceries, carrying a sack of flour on his back and groceries in a bucket. Sometimes a snake would make its way into the dugout. Once, while working in his potato patch, he was bitten by a rattlesnake. To draw out the poison, he buried his arm in the mud of the creek, thus averting poisoning. He built chairs, tables, and beds the family used for years. Stones for the foundation and lumber for the frame house he built were brought by wagon and oxen from Alexandria.

In 1875, he married Mary Kruta, who had come from Czechoslovakia. He bought 80 acres adjoining the homestead and moved the frame house there. Here he reared his family of four sons—Anton, Frank, Henry, and Gust—and four daughters—Sarah, Mary, Antonia, and Anna. He lived there continuously until his passing at the age of 85 years. His wife preceded him in death. These hardy pioneers are buried in Glengary Cemetery.

A large granite rock which was partially embedded in the ground was taken from the homestead pasture and placed in the Geneva park as a memorial.

As of this year (1966), the survivors of the Wenzel Schelbitzki family are: Henry and Gust Schelbitzki of Ohio, Mary (Mrs. John Sieber), of Ohio, and Anna (Mrs. George Rippe), of Sidney, Nebraska.

Among our local pioneers, the family of **Frank J. Sieber** of Ohio is a four-generation family: the great-grandfather, the grandfather, the father, and the son all had the same names, and lived all their lives in Fillmore County.

In 1870, four men from Hermsdorf, Bohemia, decided to come to America. Each had a profession but thought that opportunities were few, and so they sailed for America hoping to find a better situation. These men were Frank J. Sieber, Joseph Stoy, Joe Staritz, and Carl Wieden. Their families were left in Bohemia to come later if the men found America to be a desirable place to live and bring up their families.

From New York they came to Beatrice, to contact a land agency. They were first shown land in western Nebraska but decided to come back farther east, as they were impressed with the level prairie land. The Homestead Act of 1862 provided that anyone who was an American citizen, or who declared his intention to become one, could claim 160 acres of government land. They decided to homestead on Sec. 28 in Glengary township. In the center of the section they dug a well so that the four families could all share it. Dugouts were made, and these served the four men as their living quarters. For miles and miles around there was nothing but prairies and sky. The dugouts were dark caves, but when they came outside and saw the level prairie and beautiful blue sky, hardships were forgotten.

In the fall they sent someone to Bohemia to bring over their families. This did not work out too well, because the person they sent squandered the money he had been given for the families' passports. He also told the families that America had nothing to offer them but Indians, snakes, and wild animals. It was then that the aged grandfather told the families that he would go to America and write them back the truth. During this time, the men who were already here started to build sod houses to be ready for the families when they arrived. The great-grandfather finally arrived, found things favorable, and wrote the families to come.

In the fall of 1871, they sailed for America. There were the aged grandmother Sieber, Helena, the wife of their son Frank (already here), and their children, Frank, Mary, Caroline, and Tracy. Other children born in America were John and Anna. The family of **Joseph Stoy** (already here) coming with them were Mrs. Joseph Stoy, three sons—Julius, Joseph, and Anton—and a daughter, Mary. They were on the ocean 20 days and had many exciting experiences. Finally they arrived in Fillmore County and were united with their husbands. The husbands had the sod houses completed, and the families began a new kind of life on the prairies of Nebraska.

The winter of 1871 was severe and they encountered many hardships. The nearest post office and grocery store were at Beatrice, and the men walked together 50 miles once a week to get supplies. One time they were caught in a severe blizzard and had to seek shelter in a haystack for several days.

When spring arrived, they turned over more prairie with oxen and a wooden plow. They also planted many trees. Although not much grain was raised the first year, a little meant a great deal to them. They had many hardships in these years, but somehow they survived them.

After a few years, neighbors arrived, and later more immigrants came. A schoolhouse was built not far from the homesteads, first called the Sieber district, then the Claussen district, and finally District 39. The children of these families went to school there. There was not much equipment, but as time went on more was added. The



Photo from Mrs. Earl Franck

Graves of Frank and Theresa Sieber in Glengary cemetery—Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sieber II standing by graves.



Photo from Mrs. Earl Franck

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sieber II.



Photo from Mrs. Rose Lynn

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sieber III on their 56th wedding anniversary.



Photo from Mrs. Rose Lynn

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Stoy and their daughter Mary Stoy (Sieber).

friendliness of these pioneers was marvelous. Each family helped one another in sickness, in sorrow, and in need. The schoolhouse was also used at times by Catholics and Lutherans as a meeting place.

A school program or church affair always drew a packed house; people would come for miles in lumber wagons drawn by ox teams. As time went on, trees had grown fast and were ready to be cut for material for log cabins. Later, frame houses were built. The Stoy family built a frame house on Sec. 20 and the Sieber family built on Sec. 28. More and more prairie was turned over and crops were good for a few years; then came a grasshopper year, and they destroyed all crops and even chewed harnesses and wagon tongues.

In 1886, tragedy struck the Stoy family. Their three sons, Joseph, Julius, and Anton, contracted typhoid fever and all died within three months. Their ages were 25, 23, and 21 years. Doctors stayed there day and night but were helpless. The only surviving child was the daughter, Mary.

Mary Stoy later married Frank J. Sieber III. Mr. Sieber often remarked that he could boast of having brought his wife to this country and having taken care of her on the boat. He was nine years old then, and she was two. The parents were allowed to bring along a cradle on the ship; this antique is still a treasured Sieber possession.

Later, people from Ohio and Iowa began to arrive and take up homesteads. About this time a town was to be incorporated, and someone suggested that for a name they might combine the letters in *Iowa* and *Ohio*; and that is the way the village of *Ohio* got its name.

The third generation of Siebers, Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Sieber, moved to town in 1891. Mr. Sieber was cashier in the Bank of *Ohio* until 1907, when he incorporated his own bank, known as the Home Bank. Mr. and Mrs. Sieber were blessed with four children: three sons—Frank Jr., Joseph, and one who died at birth—and a daughter *Rose*. The sons later became partners in their father's bank. Edward J. Lynn served as cashier.

Mr. and Mrs. Sieber lived to celebrate their 57th wedding anniversary. Their sons preceded them in death, as did their son-in-law, Edward J. Lynn, husband of *Rose* Sieber.

The grandparents of *Rose* Sieber Lynn made three trips to their native land, Bohemia. They always enjoyed these trips, but America was home to them and they were always glad to get back.

One by one the pioneers were laid to rest in the little cemetery by the District 39 schoolhouse. On their tombstones can be read the names of many brave pioneers who helped make Fillmore County history.

As of 1967, the survivors of the Frank J. Sieber family were: *Rose* Sieber Lynn and her two sons, Vincent and Leland; Mrs. *Sophia* Sieber (wife of Frank J. Sieber, Jr.); Mrs. *Grace* Sieber (wife of Joseph Sieber) and her daughter, Mrs. *Betty Joe* Zengerle of *Anville*, Pennsylvania. Vincent S. Lynn, M.D., and his wife *Helen* live in *Geneva*; they have two daughters, *Mary Carmen*, of *Chicago*, and Mrs. *Ray* Decker, of *Lincoln*. Leland M. Lynn, D.D.S., teaches dentistry at the University of Nebraska in *Lincoln*. He and his wife, *Laura Mae*, have one daughter, *Laura Lea*.



Photo from J. J. Klima
Charles Smrha.

Charles Smrha was born in Styria, Austria, on September 14, 1876. In 1884, he came, with his parents, brothers, and sisters, to Exeter, from where they eventually moved to Milligan in 1893. He graduated from the Exeter High School in 1896. On August 30, 1904, he was united in marriage to *Agnes Barta* of *Wilber*.

Mr. Smrha started his adult life as a country school-teacher, but this activity was interrupted by his service in the Spanish-American War (1898-99). On his return from service he became Fillmore County's superintendent of schools. In 1903, he became cashier of the Farmers & Merchants Bank of Milligan, of which he later became president, and served in the latter capacity until 1933. During this period he served two terms as a state Senator, representing the 17th District (Fillmore, Jefferson, and Thayer counties). Throughout his lifetime, he was actively affiliated with and devoted to the ideals and principles of the Democratic party.

In 1933, he became the Nebraska state manager of the

Glengary Township Homestead Map

Aaron N. Wilkinson	Nichols Wilkinson	Charles H. Bassett			Thomas W. Clark	Jeremiah Foley	Frank Znojensky			Karl Massek	Frederick Walmosy				
					Philip Porcell					Frank Andill					
John Wilkinson	Joseph Ondrak	Franz Kohler			Joseph Podlesak	Dnac Podlesak	John Steina-cher			Thomas Gilroy	William W. Hanson				
					John Kennedy					Frank Suda					
		Peter Donnelly	Geo. A. Tyson	David Griffiths				John Kotas	John Hodek	Joseph Svec		Warner Folden	Peter Bartu		
								Frank Kotas					Frank Bartu		
		Michael Kirwin						John Barnachik	Josef Kasik	Vaclav Svec		Charles W. Folden	John Anapach		
			Albert M. Tyson					James Barnachik				James Wallace			
Chas. H. Bean	John Lawrence	Harrison P. McClaflin										Isaac L. Scott	Robert Cloyd		
Aaron McPherson	Robert R. Folden					School Land						Jefferson Randall	Albumen L. Starr		
Giles R. Folden															
		Geo. M. Rutherford						Benjamin F. Bothwell	David S. Robinson				John R. Heston	Moses C. Fitzer	
		Mary E. Steele	Wenzel Schelbitake												
			Joseph Stoy					Garrett V. Hancock	James A. Bothwell	Sarah Bothwell	William T. Thomas		Sarah Ann Starr	Adam Amn	Richard J. Tyacke
		Harvey B. Macklin													
Silas B. Camp	William Purdy											John F. Lippencott	Cyrus Bechtel		
Gerhard Hopken	John W. Gassell											Alonso B. Johnson	John Bechtel		
		Claus Claussen	Franciska Wieden					Willard P. Brooks	Henry Eberstein						
		Gerd Henry Hopken	Anton Nun					Horatio N. Brooks	John Eberstein, Jr.						School Land

Home Owners Loan Corporation, and in 1936 he was appointed state Director of Insurance by Governor Roy L. Cochran. During World War II, he served as district director of the Office of Price Administration at North Platte from 1943 to 1945.

He was a 50-year member of Stotsenberg Lodge of the Knights of Pythias, and with this organization was past grand chancellor of the Grand Lodge of the State of Nebraska; a 50-year member of the Masonic order, Geneva Lodge No. 79; a charter member of Z. C. B. J. (Western Bohemian Fraternal Association); a member of Harris Fraley Post No. 131 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars; past commander of the Nebraska Department of United Spanish War Veterans; and a member of the Knife and Fork Club.

His ability as an orator gained him wide recognition. He was called upon to deliver addresses on many occasions, and he delivered the funeral addresses at almost every funeral in the Milligan community for nearly 50 years, from 1910 until

1958, when failing health made it impossible for him to continue.

Mr. Smrha died at the Veterans Hospital in Lincoln on April 19, 1961.

James (Vaclav) Svec and Marie Suda were early pioneers in Fillmore County. They lived all their married life on the farm on which Vaclav filed his homestead entry on April 17, 1871, filed his proof at the Beatrice land office in January, 1877. The farm, still in the family, is in Sec. 10, Glengary, one mile W of Milligan.

Vaclav Svec was born in Zichovice, Okris Stasecky, Czechoslovakia, on October 16, 1841. When he was only 12, he lost his mother, and so had to make his way in the world while still a young boy. He took up the trade of a cabinet maker. When he came to America in 1869, he followed this trade for a time in Iowa. He came to Nebraska two years later, settling in the neighborhood of the present town of Milligan. He pursued his trade here also, being called upon from



Photo from Mrs. Pauline Votipka

The James (Vaclav) Svec family (date not known). *Back row, left to right:* Mollie (Hamouz), Mary (Soukup), Frank, Joe, Anna (Soukup), Christine (Fujan). *Front row:* Agnes (Tesar), Emil, James Svec, Pauline (Votipka), Mrs. James Svec, James.

time to time to make caskets for his neighbors, as the need arose.

Marie Suda was born in Bezdekova, Czechoslovakia, and came to this country with her parents in 1868, when, following the Civil War, there was a great influx of European immigrants. Her first home in America was in Chicago, where the family remained until 1871. Leaving Chicago after the great fire, the family then came to live in the vicinity of Milligan.

Vaclav Svec married Marie Suda on January 17, 1873. Their marriage was blessed with 11 children, one of whom died in infancy. One son, James lost his life in action in France, in the Argonne Forest, during World War I. To make a living for his family, Vaclav made journeys to work in Lincoln, Beatrice, and Nebraska City, walking there and back, and carrying on his return trips the necessities of life. He and his wife endured, and survived, all the usual hardships of the pioneer days. In his later years, when the family relieved him of the heavy work, he spent his leisure time walking to the creek to fish and to enjoy the shade of the trees. He loved to listen to the songs of the birds.

—Pauline Votipka



Photo from Mrs. Frank Hamouz
Mr. and Mrs. Josef Verjraska
about 1910.

Josef Vejraska was born in 1850 and his wife, Marie Kucera, was born in 1856, both in Czechoslovakia. They were married on May 1, 1877. They had six children; the first child, a son, died of diphtheria when he was only one year old. The other children were daughters: Anna, Agnes, Mary, Rose, and Frances. Josef's father, Jan Vejraska, came to Fillmore County in 1880. Josef and his family followed in the summer of 1884 and bought 80 acres of school land on which they settled.



Photo from Donald Larson

William and Joe Svec standing in front of their home near Milligan. The house is built of bricks made from clay on the Svec farm.

They built a sod house, and after a few years, when snakes and other pests were dangerous to the children, they decided to look for clay for making bricks, as Joseph Vejraska and his father were both masons and brick makers in their fatherland where they made bricks commercially. They found the clay, so they decided to make their own bricks and build a brick house.

First they took off the top dirt and dug out enough to make a sample for bricks. They found out that this worked, so they dug out the clay, broke the clods, poured water over it, a batch at a time, worked it into a smooth dough by hand with tools and walked in it with bare feet—and all that was hard work for both hands and feet. They pulled the water from the well with a long bucket by hand. When the clay dough was smooth it was worked by hand into a breadlike loaf on a long plank table and then thrown into a wooden form with force so it would fill the corners in the form. The form was made for two bricks at a time. Then the top was cut off by a wire saw, handmade from a fresh bough of a tree skinned and soaked in water, then bent, and wire was fastened to both ends. As it was drying, the wire would stretch so tight that it cut the brick straight. These bricks were $10\frac{1}{2}'' \times 5\frac{1}{2}'' \times 2\frac{1}{2}''$. The bricks were then dumped on a straight smooth field, brushed with fine powder-like sand, with a "know-how" so the bricks would not be lopsided. When the field was full it was a beautiful picture. The bricks lay nicely in straight rows, just an edge of form space in between. When they dried off enough to be picked, the bricks were put into a shed to finish drying, piled so that air could go through.

The shed was made of brick pillars and wooden sides. The pillars held the wooden sides which were removed when the weather permitted so the bricks could dry thoroughly.

The kiln for baking the bricks was dug out in a hill made like two rooms. One opening was made at the bottom of a hill for coal and a fireplace. The other one was large and deep, about 40' square and 40' deep. It had two burners made of heavy iron to hold the large load of bricks. When enough bricks were made and dried they



Photo from Mrs. Frank Hamouz

Pictured in front of their house of hand-made bricks are four of the daughters of Josef and Marie Vajreska. *Left to right:* Anna (Mrs. Vac Capek), Agnes (Mrs. Vac Ach), Mary (Mrs. John Brecha), and Rose (Mrs. Josef Sadlo). Not included is Frances (Mrs. Joseph Kunce). The dog was "Dingo."

were then hauled into the kiln via wheelbarrows, and placed zig-zag so the air, heat, and smoke could go through. Then the fire was started and slowly pushed to the back end. A hoelike poker was used to push the fire far in and get the ashes out underneath the grates. It took 4 days and 3 nights to bake the bricks with slow steady heat. Intense heat would have deformed the bricks.

When the bricks were red hot and little flames started shooting up through the bricks, the fireplace was closed and the top was covered with dirt thick enough to keep the heat in for slow cooling. If rainy weather set in the top was covered with a tin roof over the dirt.

The house built of these bricks on the Vejraska 80-acre farm in Sec. 16, Glengary township, was 22' x 24' inside. The walls were 18" thick. The dry raw bricks were used for the inside of the wall to take up any moisture and keep the house dry. In those days lime, sand, and hair was used for plaster—cement was not available. The interior of the house was whitewashed in the spring.

As the family grew, a homemade brick addition was added on to the house which was 22' x 46'. More bricks were also made for the barn built in the hill and with a wooden roof. That replaced a low barn that was in a dugout and had a grass roof which was made of small bundles of long swamp grass and fastened on heavy laths with a smooth thick twine put over just like shingles and it never leaked and was very warm. Horses were precious in those days and the Vejraskas believed in good housing for them.

A chicken house was dug out in the hill and the lower part was made of sod and square nests were dug right in the side of the dirt walls and the roof was of grass.

This 80-acre farm with the brick house and barn has been continuously in the Vejraska family. The grandson, Joseph Sadlo, Jr., and his father Joseph Sadlo, Sr., farm it at the present time.

—Mrs. Frank Hamouz



Photo from Mrs. Frank Hamouz

Barn built in 1902 from bricks manufactured on the Vejraska farm.

[The section on Milligan owes a great deal to Robert I. Kutak's *The Story of a Bohemian-American Village* (1933). This was a study of the relationship between inherited and traditional customs and their transplantation to a new land, especially in a community heavily influenced by one national group of immigrants. This study, undertaken between 1928 and 1933, with the aid and co-operation of many of the people of Milligan, was the Columbia University Ph.D. thesis of Dr. Kutak, who later became professor of sociology at the University of Louisville.]

Frank Znojensky, a native of Bohemia, was granted his homestead claim on the "E 1/2 of the NE fractional quarter of Sec. 4 in Township 6N of Range 1W . . . containing 80 acres and 69/100 of an acre" on June 15, 1875, by a patent signed by President U. S. Grant. He was naturalized as a United States citizen on September 26, 1906.

Mr. Znojensky lived on his homestead from 1875 until his passing away on August 2, 1915. It took from that time until 1929 to locate his heirs overseas. At that time, the farmstead was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Joe Steinacher, who lived there until 1965, when they in turn sold it to Edward Uldrich, who is the present owner.

Milligan

In a town named Milligan, located in Glengary township, one might expect to find an Irish population, but the town is inhabited largely by the descendants of Czechoslovakian settlers.

Milligan was established as a village in the fall of 1887. In the same year, the Kansas City & Omaha R.R. began to build a branch from Fairbury to McCool Junction.



Standard Atlas of Fillmore County (1905)
Map of Milligan in 1905.

The first inhabitant of Milligan was a blacksmith, Charles Polansky, and the first business here was the hardware firm of Kotas & Bulin. By the end of 1887, the following businesses had been established: *Hardware*: Kotas & Bulin, and Placek & Wozab; *General Merchandise*: D. S. Robinson, and Frank Chase; *Elevators*: Taylor & Burke, with C. O. Morgan and A. A. Hamouz, assistants, and Davis & Co., with Frank Stech as assistant; the Milligan Exchange Bank, with W. J. Zirhut as cashier; *Lumber Yard*: Bagley & Parkhurst; *Drugstore*: Williams & Co.; *Furniture*: Anton Vodicka; *Livery*: E. J. Hanabery; *Blacksmith*: Charles Polansky; *Carpenters*: John Havel, John Luksik, and Anton Vodicka.

The town was duly organized and incorporated February 15, 1888, with the following trustees: D. S. Robinson, chairman, and W. J. Bulin, E. S. Bagley, Frank Chase, and Anton Vodicka. J. E. Starr was elected justice of the peace, and Charles Polansky was appointed marshal. The first postmaster was Anton Vodicka, who was appointed January 19, 1888, and served until April 15, 1890. During the year 1888, additional places of business were opened: *General Merchandise*: N. M. Zmudsky; *Hardware*: F. A. Placek; *Implement*: Kotas & Bulin; *Saloon*: Kotas & Kotas; *Millinery*: Mrs. A. Vacek; *Meat Market*: Joseph Kotas; *Doctors*: Amy & Amy; *Livestock*: W. J. Kotas. This year remains memorable all over the West for one of the most violent blizzards that the oldest settlers can remember.



Photo from Mrs. Emil A. Havel

John Havel was an early-day carpenter in Milligan who helped build many of the business buildings. This picture was taken in 1895. front row, left to right: Jim, Joe, Bill, Emil, John. Center row: Frank, Mrs. Havel, Mr. Havel, Emma. Top row: Anna and Mary.

On June 15, 1872, President U. S. Grant issued a patent to the Burlington & Missouri River R.R. of Nebraska covering Sec. 11 in T6N, R1W of the 6th Principal Meridian, the section on which Milligan is now located. The first depot agent in Milligan was Charles Walker.

Transportation

E. J. Hanaberry had the first livery stable in 1888, with two teams of horses and one buggy. When William Dinneen bought out the business in 1896, a special wagon was built to pick up children each morning to bring them to school. A team and buggy rented for 50¢ and up to \$1 to \$1.25, depending on the distance. The first auto in town was owned by Frank Soukup in 1901. About 1915, automobiles became the rage and slowly took over. In 1928, Milligan also had a taxi, No. 956, run by James Kassik, who drove his patrons wherever they wanted to go around the country.

Fire Department

Milligan's Volunteer Fire Department was organized May 12, 1933, with 16 members. The charter members were Henry Rischling,



Photo from Mrs. Emil A. Havel

Milligan Fire Department in 1933. Back row, left to right: Lew Hamouz, Frank Laun, Ralph Kable, Clarence Zelenka, James Stastny, Leo Rischling, Robert Kunc, Bob Buzek. Front row: Clarence Kotas, Fred Skocpol, Eldon Havel, Bud Rischling, Ed Hamouz, Emil Havel, Len Vasina, Unknown, Jim Pavelka.

Emil A. Havel, Fred Kassik, Ernest Kotas, Bohumil Buzek, Lew Hamouz, John Bulin, John Pavelka, Albert Kassik, Joe Jicha, Jr., James Jarolimek, Joe Prokop, Milton Stastny, Fred Skocpol, Slav Petracek, and Ben Jeseck. Emil Havel and Ernest Kotas are the only charter members with a continuous membership who are still active today.

The first fire-fighting equipment was a two-wheeled hose-reel cart which had to be pulled by hand. In 1950, a fire truck was purchased for \$10,000.

Telephones

The Bell Telephone Co. installed Milligan's first telephone in 1897 in A. V. Kouba's bank, located in the present Kotas building. Soon thereafter the bank was moved to its present location. The telephone, however, remained in the store building, and constituted the entire service for several years. Then the Fillmore County Telephone Co., with Attorney John Barsby as manager, took over this telephone, and others were installed both in town and in the rural areas. This necessitated the switchboard which was set up in the Milligan Times office. The switchboard was operated during the day by J. V. Kotas and E. J. Kotas, and at night by Pat Hanaberry and Frank Holpuch. About this time Ike Steele of Ohio started the Farmers Cooperative Telephone System, which also served this community. Later, the switchboard was moved to the home of J. V. Kotas. Dial telephones were installed in March, 1941, and Direct Distance Dialing reached Milligan in April, 1963.

Newspaper

The first newspaper published in Milligan was the Milligan Review, founded in 1892 by Fred Gilmore. In 1897, it was sold to J. A. Harris, who edited and published the Milligan Journal, which continued until 1900, when it became the Times. In 1933, Merle Furse started a new Milligan Review, but sold it in 1936 to Robert Dvorak. At present the Milligan news is published in the Nebraska Signal.

A clipping from the Milligan Review dated April 16, 1952, reads: The present day Milligan Review editor was handed a copy of the April 18, 1913, issue of the Milligan Times recently by Frank J. Schultz. Exactly 39 years ago the newspaper serving Milligan was a six-column "handset" with two pages home-print and six pages ready-print. The editor was Frank Rischling, who at present resides at Lawrence, Nebraska, and still visits the home town occasionally. With the closing of the Milligan Times several years later, the community was without a newspaper until Merle Furse started the Milligan Review in 1933. The present owners bought out from him in 1936.

Among the advertisers of that day according to the Times were Petracek & Co., clothing and millinery; Frank J. Korbelik, meat market; F. A. Placek, hardware; A. A. Hamouz, dry goods and groceries; Rut & Jezek, meat market; W. D. Russell, cafe proprietor; Frank Hrdy, groceries and dry goods; Frank Rozanek, furniture; Joseph Jicha, Central Hall saloon; S. H. Michener, manager lumber yard; Joseph Kotas, produce business; E. E. Cooksey was Burlington agent; Frank Laun did shoe repairing; Dr. F. A. Motis, dentist, came from Tobias on Monday to his office over Central Hall; Dr. V. V. Smrha was resident physician and surgeon; E. J. Kotas was village clerk; Charles Smrha was cashier of Farmers and Merchants Bank.

Some of the printing was in Czech language. All news items are of interest at the present time because they are history. The Milligan market of almost 40 years ago told the following story: Wheat, No. 2, 73¢; Corn No. 3, 45¢; Oats, 25¢; Eggs, 14¢; Butterfat, No. 1, 28¢; Butter, 20¢ and 25¢; and so on.

A grand wrestling match was advertised for Saturday, April 19, at 3 P.M. at Stastny & Kotas Hall between Joseph P. Bartu of Milligan and Emil Martin of South Omaha. Admission was 25¢.

The issue is yellow with age and has been patched in several places with scotch tape. These old histories of a town and its people become valuable with age and in reading the daily happenings of a past generation, one is taken back to "the good old days" for a picture of things and people as they were at that time.



Photo from Mrs. Louis Svec

Main Street, Milligan, in 1900. Notice the two windmills.

Water System

In 1888, the first water system of Milligan consisted of two windmills, each over a deep well. Most families had their own wells, but those who did not, and who lived close to the town windmills, went there to get their water. Later a town well was drilled where the power house stands and that well served the community until 1938, when the present water system and tower were installed. The new well north of town has a very good supply of water.

Post Office

A post office was established at Milligan on January 19, 1888. Anton Vodicka was the first postmaster. The records show that during 1888, \$290.07 worth of stamps and stamped paper were sold. On September 15, 1904, Rural Free Delivery service was established in Milligan, with Henry Spirk as rural carrier at a salary of \$720 per year, including horse hire.

For many years the post office was located in Block 9, Lot 12, in the bank building west of the banking rooms. In 1923, the post office moved into the new Krisl Building, on Block 9, Lots 10 and 11. On January 28, 1961, the post office was moved to the Hrды Building, Block 9, Lot 3.

Local Politics

Nearly all of the members of the town board had to be drafted into its service. The office carries with it a great deal of responsibility, provides no financial return, takes much time, and results in but little prestige.

At one time interest in local politics was very keen; two tickets were in the field and bitter contests occurred. Charges and counter-charges flew back and forth, and every method was employed by each faction to win the elections. Sometimes the law stepped in to set limits beyond which candidates might not go in their efforts to win votes.

"The local political campaign just opening will probably be the driest one that ever struck this vicinity, or, in fact, the county. Candidates are not allowed to set-em-up to the foaming *pivo* [beer], cigars, or other refreshments that will require the expenditure of money; and so ice-water, cornfield handshakes, and a whole lot of talk will have to be used instead on susceptible voters. For the candidate who is possessed of a social nature and liberal disposition, this will be a hardship, but for the fellow who wants your vote but hates like thunder to chip in even for a livery rig to come to town and ask for it, it will be a godsend."—*Nebraska Signal*, October 13, 1899, quoted in *Milligan Journal*.

Interest in state and national politics is still keen in Milligan, but the waters of local politics have not been troubled in many years. Such apparent indifference has caused comment from other communities in the county, but the local attitude is ably defended in the following article:

"The *Signal* last week commented on the fact that the Milligan ballot for the village election and the school board election contained the names of no candidates and left the voters free to go to the polls and write in the name of anyone whom they pleased for the places to be filled. If the *Signal* were as close an observer of Milligan events as it should be, it would have seen in this no unusual occurrence It has probably been 15 or 20 years since a caucus has been held here to nominate candidates for village officers. And the interesting feature of it is that nothing has been lost thereby

"A village fight or a school fight may break the monotony of an otherwise quiet life, but it does much more than that. It breaks up a spirit of co-operation without which no community can prosper or progress. It doesn't take very much to start a village fight And when the fight is over, like engaging in a law suit, both sides to the controversy are the losers."—From the Milligan correspondent of the *Nebraska Signal*, April 13, 1922.

Despite this apparent indifference to local politics, and the fact that no formal caucuses are held before elections, yet the voters are not without some direction when the time comes to elect the village trustees. A few rather able politicians in the town manage to run elections pretty much to suit themselves, and the men whom they prefer sit on the town or school board. One of these men, the village banker, is the political "boss" of the village, and has been elected three times to the state senate on the Democratic ticket. Of him one of the Milligan girls who attended the state university wrote as follows: "We have one eminent man in town, and he was a Nebraska State Senator in 1923 and again in 1927. He always was the outstanding person in Milligan, and people all went to him for advice and help in business and domestic affairs. He is a good speaker, and since gaining recognition he has been called outside the community to deliver graduation and political speeches, Memorial Day and fraternal addresses. Years ago he was a county school superintendent of Fillmore County and also took part in the Spanish-American War as an officer." (From an unpublished manuscript entitled "Community Attitudes: A Study of a Town," University of Nebraska 1927.)

Churches

Milligan has two churches, the **St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church**, and the Methodist Episcopal Church. The first Catholic church, now located in the north cemetery, was built in 1876; on Sundays the people of the entire settlement gathered there for worship. Father Joseph Bartik was the first resident priest after the church was built



Photo from Guy Brown, Jr.
First Catholic Church of Milligan, now in north cemetery.

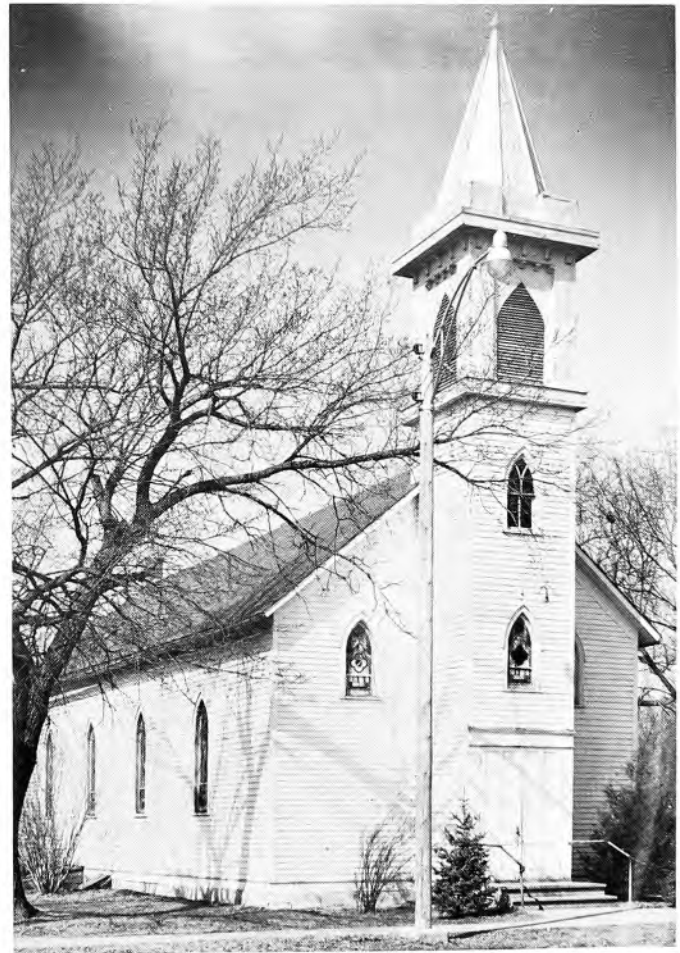


Photo from Mrs. Emil A. Havel
St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church.

in town. In pioneer days the priest traveled from one mission to another to take care of the spiritual welfare of the faithful. In 1890, the St. Wenceslaus Church was built in Milligan; Father Bouska contributed not only his time but also his money. The first couple to be married in this church by Father Bouska were Frank Tenopir and Matilda Slepicka (January 6, 1891). The first baptism in this church was held for Fannie Hodek Haberman, daughter of Frank and Anna Hodek. Milligan has two ladies who joined the Sisterhood: Sister M. Geraldine, daughter of the late W. J. and Rose (Hamouz) Bulin, and Sister M. Francis Ann, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Emil A. Havel.



Photo from Mrs. Rudy Spousta
Milligan Methodist Church (July, 1967).

The foundation for the **Methodist Episcopal Church** of Milligan was laid in 1904, when a group of women organized a Ladies' Aid Society and raised money to buy a church lot. After that year, a Sunday School was held in various buildings until the year 1924, when a permanent church organization was formed in the ZCJB Hall under the direction of District Superintendent Rev. R. Gettys of Beatrice and Rev. Henry Ibsen, who at that time was in charge of the church at DeWitt. The next pastor was Rev. Watters.

In 1931, the Rev. E. L. Cochran was instrumental in obtaining a church building from Friend, Nebraska. This was moved to Milligan on January 7, 1931, and dedicated on February 8.

Cemeteries

Milligan, like any other town, soon found that it would be necessary to set out a plot for a cemetery. On October 22, 1881, a society was formed, and 3.15 acres one mile S of Milligan were purchased from Abumen and Sarah Starr for \$10. The cemetery was named Glengary Cemetery Society. In 1897, a group from the Bohemian Gymnastic Society and ZCJB Lodge Rabi took over the cemetery and the name was then changed to Ceska Narodni Hrbivot (Bohemian National Cemetery). In 1947, the association re-organized and new by-laws were agreed upon. The cemetery is now owned by the public, each lot owner being considered a member of the organization.

The Ceski Bratri Cemetery, one mile N and one mile W of Milligan, was established in 1876. A great many pioneers are buried there. The first burial was a Mrs. Josefa Shenkirka, who died in 1876. This plot is also known as the Pioneer Cemetery.

Schools

The 1854 act authorizing a territorial government for Nebraska provided for free public schools, and reserved Sec. 36 in addition to Sec. 16 for the maintenance of schools. Since District 71, as first organized, was composed of Secs. 1, 2, 11, and 12, it can be assumed that the first schoolhouse of the district was that on what is now the Millard Korbilek farm. John Dempster was county superintendent at the time. J. B. Lewis, a later superintendent, reported about 1882:

"I take pleasure in being able to report fair prosperity. Teachers employed are generally 'Efficient.' Epidemic sickness has been the greatest drawback. The number of children of school age has increased 26 per cent. Eight good schoolhouses have been built. The people show a disposition to meet their indebtedness."

In the years 1879-1888, the following persons taught in Milligan, with an average stay of three months: B. F. Bothwell, Minnie Butler, E. R. Gould, S. D. Purviance, S. S. Blauvelt, Mary Page, May Stewart, Eva Purviance, V. B. Crane, C. C. Spangler, and C. A. Buss.

A new building was erected in 1889, for \$1,500, on land that was part of the town site originally purchased from the C. B. & Q. R.R., and which is now the Funfrall Park. The frame building had four large rooms. The 130 pupils were in the care of two teachers; a third teacher was added in 1893. The curriculum was extended to include the ninth grade in 1895; the tenth grade was added the next year. By 1915, all twelve grades were being taught. The first commencement exercises were held in 1897 for six graduates: Nellie Hanaberry, Emil J. Kotas, Frank A. Motis, William Podlesak, Anna Smrha, and Frank A. Stech.

Transportation facilities for children living at a distance have changed with the times. The Kingsville system put into operation in 1899 was new in this part of the country. Under this system, the school district hired a driver who furnished his own wagon and horses

to transport the pupils. The wagon, or hack, was a vehicle with benches along the sides; for children whose parents had probably walked long distances to school, such an arrangement was, no doubt, considered luxurious. Among the drivers of the horse-drawn hacks were John O. Kotas, Albert Boxa, and many others.

With the coming of motorized transportation, the drivers acquired buses that resembled delivery trucks. In 1953 the school district bought its first regular bus, a Ford, and hired James Hromadka as driver. A second bus, a Chevrolet, was purchased in 1956 when a second route became necessary. The new bus was driven by Herman Michl.

Within the past 15 years, shelving has been installed in the assembly room to provide for a growing library, and for current publications. The books are catalogued in the Dewey System. Facilities for music teaching have been improved by providing a music room in the new addition. The Band Mothers have worked diligently in support of music projects. The school has always had a program for physical fitness. At one time Sokol activities were a part of this program, but more recently, inter-scholastic sports contests have received emphasis.

The gymnasium is the main feature of an \$85,000 addition approved in 1956. Its laminated wood beams, oak bleachers, and maple floor help to make it one of the most beautiful and functional gymnasiums in this area.



Photo from Mrs. Rudy Spousta
Milligan Public School in 1900.



Photo from Mrs. Emil Havel
High School Orchestra. Left to right: Trombone, James Luzum; trumpet, Henry Steinacher; clarinet, Joe Stech; violin, Professor Lawrence; piano, Ada Klima; base drum, Ed Kottas; snare drum, Fred Havel.



Photo from Mrs. Frank Hamouz
Milligan Public School and new gym (in December, 1956).

The school now operates as a Class II minor-accredited school. Requirements for graduation are 40 hours each of English and social studies, 30 hours each of mathematics and science, 20 hours of practical arts, and 10 hours each of music and physical education.

The walk from the street to the front door crosses over a culvert with cement balustrades at either end. During dry periods the culvert has provided imaginative young minds with many delightful games, and in winter the culvert has been plugged and the basin filled with water for skating. No doubt there are many fond memories of playtime down by the "bridge."

High School Alumni Association

Since many of the graduates of the Milligan High School often said they wished that Milligan would have an Alumni Association like those all the surrounding high schools had organized many years ago, Miss Agnes M. Capek, now Mrs. Frank V. Hamouz, called a meeting of a number of interested graduates for the purpose of organizing, on Thursday, April 29, 1948, at the National Farm Loan office at Milligan. Those attending this meeting were:

Agnes M. Capek, Mary E. Krisl, Mrs. Louis (Vlasta Kuncce) Svec, Arlene Laun, Irma Beth Kotas, Mrs. Joe M. (Libbie Petracek) Oliva, Irene Capek, Eleanor Kassik, Mrs. Frank W. (Emma Suda) Kassik, Frank Havel, Sr., Jim F. Kotas, Robert Chudly; A. R. Jensen, Superintendent of the Milligan Public Schools, and Mrs. Henry Kassik, president of the Milligan Woman's Club. The Milligan Woman's Club consented to serve the dinner and were pleased to be asked to donate the plates to the honored class of 1948.



Mrs. Frank Hamouz (graduated 1930), first president of Milligan High School Alumni Association.



Mary E. Krisl (graduated 1902), first secretary of Milligan High School Alumni Association.

Agnes M. Capek was elected president and Mary E. Krisl secretary to serve till the time of the first banquet and meeting, scheduled to be held on Thursday evening, June 3, 1948, at the Milligan Auditorium. The following committees had been appointed:

Invitation Committee

Irene Capek
Eleanor Kassik
Mrs. Frank W. Kassik
Irma Beth Kotas

Program Committee

Robert Chudly
Jim F. Kotas
Mrs. Joe M. Oliva
Arlene Laun

Committee to set-up By-laws

Mrs. Otto Kotas	Louis Hamouz	Stanley Chudly
Otto Kotas	Mrs. Joseph G. Capek	Richard Buzek
Eleanor Simacek	Edward Kottas	Melvin Vavra

Later some changes were made and additional committees were appointed.

With the assistance of Mrs. Charles J. Kotas, who kept an outstanding scrapbook, Mrs. Anna McClure, principal of the Milligan Public Schools, and Supt. A. R. Jensen, a list of graduates from 1897 to 1948 was made, totaling 589. The Invitation and Registration Committee worked very hard to get all the addresses.

Program—First Banquet—June 3, 1948

On the evening of June 3, 1948, it was found that 324 graduates and guests assembled in the basement of the Milligan Auditorium for the first gathering of its kind in more than 30 years. It was interesting to learn that 308 graduates had paid their dues, thus becoming members of the Milligan High School Alumni Association. 90 of these were unable to be present at this first banquet, but hoped to make it some other time. Forty-five classes were represented. The officers were pleased with this response.

The entire banquet was planned around the motto, "The Pioneers' Trails Paved the Road to Our Present." The decorations

were carried out in the school colors, purple and white. The motto, in purple letters on white crepe paper, was hung along the north wall, back of the speaker's table. At one end of the motto, placed on the piano, was a vase in the shape of a covered wagon filled with mock-orange blossoms and roses. On the other end of the motto was hung a poster bearing the picture of a covered wagon and the mottoes of the first two graduating classes: 1897—"We Have Laid the Foundation," and 1898—"Know Thyself." Along one of the beams at the west and facing east, was the motto of the class of 1948—"When We Build, We Build Forever."

The nut cups were wagon wheels in purple with white hubs. Very effectively marking the places for the classes at the tables were stands of purple with the figures in white. The badges were squares of purple construction paper, with the names and years of graduation, or guests, neatly printed thereon in white ink.

The program, menu, committees, and graduates of each of the honored classes were bound in a booklet, the cover of which had a covered wagon and a bow of purple floss.

Grateful for the use of the Klima loud-speaking system, Miss Anna Smrha of Lincoln, as mistress of ceremonies, announced the program. The group singing was led by Mrs. Milo Kotas, a guest, accompanied by Mrs. Herman Michl at the piano. Miss Agnes M. Capek gave the welcome and introduced the graduates representing the honored classes that evening—that is, the first class of 1897 and those ending in "8." The 1948 graduates were Rosalie Beranek, Marilyn Ceclre, Virgie Lee Havel, James Jaros, James R. Kassik, Mildred M. Matejka, Norma Jean Most, Bernard J. Pavelka, Darlene M. Podlesak, Henry J. Rohla, Lorene Tesar, Lorene Buzek, and Arlene Weaver. The response was given by Mrs. Fred Kovanda.

At a short business meeting, the following officers were elected for the next year: Norman Steinacher, president; Miss Arlene Laun, vice-president; Mrs. Frank W. Kassik, secretary; and James F. Kassik, treasurer. The president read letters from distant graduates unable to be present.

All were disappointed to hear that Mrs. Nellie Hanaberry Roth of Bayard, one of the speakers, was unable to be present. Mrs. Roth's presence was closely felt through her fine written message covering her topic, "Pioneer Days in Schools," which was well read by Miss Anna Smrha. In her message, Mrs. Roth extended greetings from Bayard, the "Buckle of the Beet Belt," and went on to say, "Yes, we were the 'big six' (the Class of 1897), who put dear old Milligan and our Alma Mater on the map. We did not 'Roll Out the Barrel,' but we started the ball a-rolling; we pioneered, we paved the way for all the streamlining that came later." In the following paragraph, Mrs. Roth gave a vivid picture of the graduating class in 1897:

"Going down memory's lane, turning back the pages, I see our class taking their places on the stage in the old Jicha Hall. What a thrill! What a picture for sore eyes—there we were, the Gay Nineties in all their splendor! We had everything but the bicycle built for two. Emil (Kotas), brave in his snug-fitting suit and celluloid collar; Frank Stech, practically shapeless in a suit that allowed for expansion; Frank Motis like a scared bunny, hair parted the wrong way, wearing the then popular wing collar, also celluloid; next, William Podlesak—bashful William, standing very stiff, apparently afraid to sneeze lest zip would go the seams. William and Frank (Motis), swell fellows, but God called them before their work on earth was done. Now, last, but not least, Anna Smrha (Mrs. John Krisl) and the gal called 'Nello,' two roses among the thorns! Are you listening? Attention everybody, and hang on to your hats! We were there and over. Decked out in exactly what is now known as the 'new look' and today I am getting that 'old look' trying to find the 'new look' because I do not want to be the last by whom the new is tried; so there you have that thrill-packed picture as it was on the night of nights so long ago."

Emil J. Kotas of the Class of 1897 was called upon to say a few words. James R. Kassik talked on "Modern Days in School." His talk was followed by a history of the Milligan High School given by Mrs. Frank W. Kassik. Leonard Becwar pleasantly entertained the group with several selections on the accordion.

Norman Steinacher introduced the last two speakers, namely: Ernest Kotas, who spoke on "Tricks and Pranks," and Frank Hromadka, whose topic was "Athletics and Activities." The last number on the program was hearing from some of the graduates.

The graduates of the class of 1898 were Nora Dunn, Anna R. Hamouz, Lizzie A. Toomey, August B. Hromadka, Frank Kucera, and Emil Loukota. All are deceased except Nora Dunn.

The second banquet, on June 2, 1949, turned out to be another successful event with 300 alumni and guests present. Again 45 classes were represented.

Emil Korbek of Nelson, a graduate of the 1920 class, acted as toastmaster. The group singing was led by Mrs. Henry Steinacher, accompanied by Miss Virgie Havel at the piano. Norman Steinacher gave the welcome and introduced the graduates representing the honored classes (those ending in "9"). The response was given by Agnes M. Capek.

At a short business meeting, the following officers were elected to serve the following year: Mrs. Henry Steinacher, president; Miss Marilyn Ceclre, vice-president; Mrs. Herman Michl, secretary; and Milton Stastny, treasurer. The toastmaster read several letters from graduates unable to be present.

Miss Agnes M. Capek, president of the Milligan Woman's Club, presented the corsage from the club to Mrs. Emma Havel Kolar, who had graduated 50 years before, in 1899. Mrs. Kolar gave a short talk contrasting the commencement exercises of the two periods 50 years apart. They had 20 numbers on the program consisting of orations, essays, music, and songs. Their motto was "Think for Thyself." There were three members in this class—Mrs. Emma Havel Kolar, Mrs. Emma Mengler Dye, and Mrs. Lillian Motis Vrazil, deceased. A moment of silence was held for the departed members.

Miss Faye Kotas gave a vocal solo, "Without a Song," accompanied at the piano by Miss Virgie Havel. A song, "Fair Evening" was sung by the sextette (Miss Faye Kotas, Mrs. Alvin Kohler, Mrs. Joseph G. Capek, Mrs. Ed Kronhoffman, Jack Dunker, and Melvin Vavra). Virgie Havel played the accompaniment. Attorney Joseph Ach talked on "Not the End, But the Beginning," motto of the Class of 1919.

The next number consisted of talks by some of the graduates. As a last number, the group sang "Fare Thee Well Until We Meet Again." After that all went to the Auditorium to dance to the music of the Harmony Knights Orchestra.

This year the Association issued a directory of all of its graduates. This directory (which was for sale) listed the names of all deceased graduates with date of graduation and date of death, all graduates by classes, and also all graduates in alphabetical order with their present addresses. It was a 33-page booklet, attractively bound with a white-trimmed-with-purple cover, the Milligan High colors. Miss Mary E. Krisl was chairman of the Directory Committee.

The 1949 graduates were LeRoy Becwar, Lorene Bedlan, Bernice Koca, Faye Ann Kotas, Delmar Kuska, James Luzum, Jr., Blanche Michl, Elaine June Simacek, William Slezak, Norma Spicka, and Elaine Suda.

The third Banquet was held on Thursday, June 1, 1950, with 237 alumni and guests present. The banquet was planned around the motto of the Class of 1950, "With the Ropes of the Past, We Will Ring the Bells of the Future." Mrs. Elizabeth Shirey Donisthorpe of Wiggins, Colorado, graduate of 50 years before (Class of 1900), sent a beautiful bouquet of yellow daisies, carnations, and snapdragons.

Val Kuska of Omaha, a graduate of the 1904 class, served as the genial toastmaster and enlivened the program with his humor and clever introductions of speakers and entertainers. The group singing was led by James R. Kassik, accompanied by Virgie Havel at the piano. Mrs. Henry Steinacher gave the welcome and Mrs. Helen Wilbur gave the response. Supt. A. R. Jensen presented the Class of 1950: JoAnn Beranek, Donald Kotas, Norman Kresak, Marilyn Kucera, Patricia Steinacher, Jean Vavra, Ronald Uldrich, and John Zak.

John Stastny capably addressed the audience, stressing that your learning belongs to you, and that we must have confidence in our government as they will find the way. He concluded the talk with these words, "With the ropes of the past, we will ring the Liberty Bell of the future."

Mrs. Carrie Krisl, graduate of the Class of 1910 (first 11-grade class), spoke a few words about her commencement exercise, marked by long orations and musical numbers. Their motto was "Nothing is Impossible to Industry." Jo Ann Beranek and Jean Vavra sang "In the Garden of Tomorrow." Jean Vavra, JoAnn Beranek, and Donald Kotas sang a medley.

Recognition was given to four families, having all their members graduates of the Milligan High School—the Henry Steinacher family, the Millard Podlesak family, the Frank Hrdy family, and the Edward F. Laun family. Mrs. Mary Stastny and her six children, all graduates and all present, were also honored.

The Milligan Woman's Club again served the meal. The following officers were elected: Richard Buzek, president; Robert Chudly, vice-president; Mrs. Lillian Frycek, secretary; and Glenn Kovanda, treasurer.

The fourth banquet was held Thursday evening, June 7, 1951, with 187 alumni and guests present. Forty-three classes were represented. James Tesar, graduate of the Class of 1919, acted as toastmaster and announced the program. Mrs. Henry Steinacher led the group in singing the doxology. Richard Buzek gave the welcome and introduced the graduates representing the honored classes. The response was given by Shirley Synovec, president of the Class of 1951. Frank Havel, Sr., a graduate of the Class of 1901, spoke a few words about his commencement. There were eight in his class—Celia Emma Hamouz (Mrs. John F. Kucera, deceased), Josie T. Bors (Mrs. Charles Slepicka, deceased), Marie M. Kopp (Mrs. Herman Stastny), Frank Havel, Estella A. Motis (Mrs. Frank J. Ruzicka), Joseph F. Lauvetz (deceased), Thomas F. Hannaberry, and Mamie A. Hrdy (Mrs. J. D. Kopp). The 1901 exercises had long orations written by the graduates and musical numbers. His oration was on "Our Government." Their motto was "We Have Reached the Hills, the Mountains Are in View." Mrs. Ruzicka sent greetings and quoted from her oration, "My America."

Supt. A. R. Jensen presented the 10 members of the Class of 1951, namely: Glen Koca, Dean Placek, Robert Oliva, Arlene Rischling, Shirley Synovec, Leo Oliva, Lumir Jansky, Donald Urban, Leslie Svec, and Daniel Zak.

Glen Koca played a trumpet solo. William H. Kotas gave the address. LeRoy Becwar entertained with his magic tricks.

The following officers were elected: Leonard Becwar, president; Mrs. Bernard Zeleny, vice-president; Mrs. Frank W. Kassik, secretary; and Irene Capek, treasurer.

The American Legion Auxiliary served the dinner.

The fifth annual banquet was held on Thursday, June 5, 1952, with 178 alumni and guests present. There were 43 classes represented.

Mrs. W. A. Biba (Anna Laun) of Geneva, graduate of the 1906 class, was the toastmistress. The program began with the singing of the doxology. After the meal, group singing, led by LeRoy Becwar, took place. Virgie Havel accompanied on the piano. Songs popular in the years 1902, 1922, 1932, and 1942 were sung. The senior class of 1952 sang "Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania."

President Leonard Becwar gave the welcome and introduced the graduates representing the honored classes that evening. The response was given by Ronald Svec.

The Association presented a boutonniere to the speaker, Len Davis, and to the toastmistress, Mrs. W. A. Biba, and to Miss Mary E. Krisl, a graduate of 50 years ago. Miss Krisl was the only one present of the seven members of the Golden Anniversary Class of 1902. Four of the members, Charles Kubicek, Leon Schnase, Fred R. Stech and James Jansky, are deceased. Mr. and Mrs. (Barbara Cecrle) Fred Kottas of Lewiston, Montana, were unable to be present, but sent greetings. Miss Krisl gave a short talk. Their motto was "By Our Efforts We Hope to Rise."



Photo from Mrs. J. Vosoba

Steam-powered sawmill on the Frank Hromadka farm. Much of the lumber that went into the building of Milligan came from this mill. In the foreground, left to right: — Russell; Joseph Ladman, Sr.; Rudolph Sadlo, Sr.; Rudolph Capek, Sr.; Frank Hromadka, Sr.; unidentified man; Charles Buresh; Rose Votipka; Grandma Hromadka; Grandpa Hromadka. At the saw: William Podlesak. On the engine: Rudolph Buzek. With the mule team: Louis Buzek.

Mrs. Milton Stastny gave the tribute to the deceased alumni.

Glen Koca played a trumpet solo, "That Old Gang of Mine." Len Davis of the Class of 1906 gave the address using the 1906 motto, "By Our Efforts We Hope to Rise." The boys of the senior class of 1952 sang "Bells of St. Mary's," "That's Where My Money Goes," and "Bill Biba's Goat."

Supt. A. R. Jensen presented the 14 members of the Class of 1952, namely: Dorothea Johnson, Betty Ann Krupicka, Louis Oliva, Betty Ann Slezak, Robert Zeleny, Jerome Jensen, Betty Hendrych, Melvin Busch, Lucille Most, Jeanette Luzum, Verlyn Koca, Ronald Svec, Deloris Laun, and Edward Betka.

The Milligan Woman's Club served the dinner.

The following officers were elected: Rudolph O. Spousta, president; John H. Kotas, vice-president; Mrs. Edward Oliva, secretary; and Mrs. Donald Havel, treasurer.

The sixth annual banquet was held Thursday, June 4, 1953, with 203 alumni and guests present and 41 classes represented. Jeanette Luzum led the group in singing the doxology. The meal was served by the Milligan Pythian Sisters.

After the meal, President R. O. Spousta gave the welcome. The response was given by Marian Jansky, president of the Class of 1953. Adolph Rozanek was the toastmaster. Edward H. Stech of the Class of 1913 gave a talk on "Memories of 1913." Their motto was "We Must Labor to Receive." Their class was the last to graduate from the old school building. They were the first class to present a play, and to start a basketball team and a debating team. Six of the seven members were present—James F. Kassik, John H. Kotas, Joseph J. Klima, Edward H. Stech, Clara Krupicka Zumpfe, and Millie Pulec Jarolimek. Agnes Matejevsky Rogers sent greetings.

Gilbert Gray and James Betka played a saxophone duet, "Where is Your Heart," accompanied at the piano by Johnny Kucera. Mrs. Carleton Flynn's address was to be on the class motto of 1903, "The Crown of Life is Hats." As she expained that hats display character, she modeled hats of different eras.

The members of the class of 1903 were Alba A. Krisl, Emma T. Kouba (Mrs. Fred Sharp), Emma V. Bors (Mrs. Edward Uldrich, deceased), Mary G. Bors (Mrs. Phillip Walla, deceased), Charles H. Leisher, Anna E. Svec (Mrs. Key), Robert K. Laun, deceased; and Marie A. Kouba, deceased. Charles H. Leisher of Cheyenne, Wyoming, was at Milligan, but was not at the banquet as he was ill. Mrs. Anna Svec Key of Burbank, California, sent greetings.

Supt. A. R. Jensen presented the Class of 1953, namely: James Betka, Roma Buzek, William Hamouz, Marian Jansky, Grace Krupicka, Richard Rischling, Robert Slezak, Rose Marie Valda, Shirley Vavra, and Joe Vnoucek.

The following officers were elected: Leonard Kassik, president; Anton Capek, vice-president; Mrs. Milo Hromadka, secretary; and Mrs. Kenneth Walker, treasurer.

The seventh annual banquet was held on Friday, May 28, 1954, with 191 alumni and guests present. Val Kuska, a 50-year graduate, was the toastmaster. President Leonard Kassik gave the welcome and Norma Jean Koca, president of the 1954 class, gave the response. The invocation was given by Rev. S. J. Siegienski. R. S. Deems of Omaha, principal in Milligan in 1904, was asked to say a few words.

The Class of 1954 provided the entertainment for the evening. Gilbert Gray played a number on the saxophone, Frank Kassik played two numbers on the accordion, and the class sang "Heart of My Heart."

The members of the Class of 1904 were Anna M. Holpuch (Mrs. Charles Michl, deceased), James Wadman (deceased), Valentine Kuska, Gizela L. Lauvetz (Mrs. Anton Gutchovsky), James D. Kopp (deceased), Frank L. Hrdy, Emma Luksik (Mrs. James Pracheil), Albert C. Jelinek, Peter Kasak, and Lillian E. Kotas (Mrs. Albert Frycek). Their motto was "Launched but Not Anchored."

The Association presented a corsage to Mrs. Lillian Kotas Frycek and to Val Kuska and Albert Jelinek boutonnières as they were the three members present from the 1904 class.

Members of the 1954 class were Ruby L. Svec, Gilbert E. Gray, LaVern F. Novak, Norman L. Slezak, Marvin R. Slepicka, Frank W. Kassik, Louise Klima, Louis Dale Svec, Rose Lee Uldrich, Willa Jean Kotas, John J. Kucera, Arnold Filipi, and Norma Jean Koca.

The alumni voted in favor of holding annual banquets. The new officers were: Richard Maresh, president; Arnold Nadherny, vice-president; Betty Slezak, secretary; and Betty Krupicka, treasurer.

The meal was served by the Women's Society of Christian Service at Milligan.

The eighth annual banquet was held on Friday, May 27, 1955, with 190 present. Rev. L. E. Seavers of Exeter gave the invocation. The toastmaster and speaker was Attorney Joe T. Vosoba. President Richard Maresh gave the welcome. The response was given by Gene Placek, president of the Class of 1955.

The members of the Class of 1905 were John F. Kotas, Stanley Kotas (deceased), and John Luksik (deceased). Their motto was "Step by Step."

The musical entertainment included an accordion duet by Edwin Gray and Jerry Hendrych, Jr., and two vocal duets by Elma and Erma Rischling.

Supt. A. R. Jensen presented the Class of 1955, namely: Henry A. Bulin, Richard I. Jensen, Kenneth E. Kresak, Richard D. Krupicka, Gene E. Placek, Elma J. Rischling, and Erma J. Rischling.

The following officers were elected: president, Tom Oliva; vice-president, Mrs. Merle Buzek; secretary, Mrs. Donald Sluka; and treasurer, Mrs. Leo Soukup. The Milligan Woman's Club served the meal.

The ninth annual banquet was held on Sunday, June 3, 1956, with 209 present. Forty-three classes were represented. Ed Svajgr was the toastmaster. Rev. S. J. Siegienski gave the invocation. President Tom Oliva gave the welcome and Richard Oliva, president of the class of 1956, gave the response.

Supt. A. R. Jensen presented the Class of 1956, namely: Elaine Betka, Kalyxta Kassik, Rogene Kresak, Teresa Stech, Dwain Kubicek, Richard Oliva, and Norman Uldrich.

Entertainment for the evening was a song by the 1956 graduates and several accordion selections by LeRoy Becwar. Group singing was led by Mrs. Frank Schultz.

The members of the Class of 1906 were Joseph Kuska, Anna Laun (Mrs. William Biba), Stanley Chudly, Marie Luksik (Mrs. James Gay), James Bors (deceased), Paul Leisher, Len Davis, and Charles Motis. Their motto was "Climb Though the Rocks be Rugged."

The following officers were elected: president, William H. Kotas; vice-president, Edward Smith; secretary, Mrs. Richard Brunkow; and treasurer, Mrs. John Kuska. The dinner was served by the American Legion Auxiliary of Milligan.

The tenth annual banquet was held on Sunday, June 2, 1957, in the Milligan Auditorium with 207 graduates and guests present. Forty-four classes were represented. LeRoy Becwar was the toastmaster. President William Kotas gave the welcome and Roger Prybil, president of the Class of 1957, gave the response.

Supt. A. R. Jensen presented the Class of 1957, namely: James Bulin, Raymond Bulin, Delbert Duba, Elvin Filipi, Edwin Gray, Patricia Hamouz, Jerry Hendrych, Joseph Koca, Henry Kral, Doris Kresak, Larry Michl, Roger Odvody, Delores Oliva, Roger Prybil, Shirley Slezak, William Tesar, Bonnie Turek, Donna Uldrich, June Uldrich, and LaVern Vejraska.

The Class of 1897 was honored as the 60-year graduating class. Nellie C. Hanaberry (Mrs. O. W. Roth), the only one able to attend, was presented with a carnation corsage. Mrs. Roth gave an interesting talk. She said:

"We didn't have class rings, we didn't have what this generation has, but we had the will to do, determined to face the unknown and unknowable future in the knowledge that no one ever crossed the ocean without first leaving the shore.

"Sixty years is a long time to be wandering around in this vale of tears. Two of our number have gone to their reward, the remaining four waiting their call. Yes, time adds to our years, but graciously brings beautiful memories to temper the stings.

"Life is both pleasure and pain. We must absorb the shock and keep on rolling. Look forward, never backward. If we have spent our time in the right way, our dreams are still pleasant, our regrets are few and all is well as we go down the western slope.

"So the only way to play the game of life is to take our tarts when they are passing tarts and don't wait to see what they are going to pass next. That is life."



Photo from Mrs. Frank Hamouz
First graduating class. Class 1897. Top row, left to right: Emil J. Kotas, A. Motis, William H. Podlesak, Frank A. Stech. Front row: Nellie C. Hannaberry, Anna A. Smrha.

Members of the Class of 1907 (the 50-year class) were Agnes Krisl (Mrs. Charles J. Kotas) and Albert Smrha, deceased. Their motto was "Excelsior."

The evening's entertainment consisted of a trumpet trio, "Bugler's Holiday," by Henry Kral, Larry Michl, and Ray Bulin; a piano solo, "Claire de Lune," by June Uldrich; a vocal solo, "Summertime," by Jerry Hendrych; and two songs, "Tip Toe Through the Tulips" and "In a Dutch Garden" by the Class of 1957.

Tribute to the deceased alumni was given by Mrs. Milton Stastny.

The following officers were elected: president, Merle Buzek; vice-president, Frank W. Kassik, Jr.; secretary, Teresa Stech; and treasurer, Mrs. Jim Kotas.

The eleventh annual banquet was held on Sunday, June 1, 1958, at the Milligan Auditorium with 218 graduates and guests present. There were 45 classes represented.

Miss Katherine Kuska was the toastmistress. President Merle Buzek gave the welcome. The response was given by Dwayne Luzum, president of the the Class of 1958.

Supt. A. R. Jensen presented the class of 1958, who were: Mary Ann Kotas, Arline Kottas, Dwayne Luzum, Roger Rut, Rose Mae Steinacher, Stuart Vavra, and David Zenisek.

The evening's entertainment consisted of a song by the Class of 1958, a trombone solo by Arline Kottas, a vocal solo by Mary Ann Kotas, and an accordion solo by Rose Mae Steinacher. Interesting talks were given by Joseph Ach and Harry Kottas. Group singing was led by Mary Ann Kotas. The tribute to the deceased alumni was given by Irene Kotas.

The honored classes were presented. Nora Dunn is the only living member of the Class of 1898. The members of the Class of 1908 were Anna Bulin (Mrs. Fred Kovanda), Mayme Davis (Mrs. Joe Miles), Rudy Havelka (deceased), Frank Holpuch, Mary Holpuch (Mrs. Frank Hrdy), Anna Jicha (Mrs. Harry Gregory), Mamie Jicha (Mrs. Joe Varejka), Adolph Kotas (deceased), Rudolph Krisl, Emil L. Soukup, and Joe Svec. Their motto was "A Place in the Ranks Awaits Us." Mrs. Fred Kovanda was presented a corsage, being the only one present.

Officers elected for the following year were: president, Ernest Kotas; vice-president, Ellsworth Maresh; secretary, Arlene Weaver; and treasurer, Mrs. James Luzum. The meal was served by the Catholic ladies.

These reunions became such popular traditions that they have been continued; and we may hope that, not only for their sentimental but for their historical value, they may be continued on and on into the future.

Chamber of Commerce

A Chamber of Commerce, organized in Milligan, April 23, 1924, has long been active in promoting local business and other activities. Within a few months it had demonstrated its value to the satisfaction of the local reporter:

"Since the organization of the Chamber of Commerce, a number of projects beneficial to the community have been launched and enough of them carried to a successful conclusion to demonstrate the value of such an organization.

"Here are some of the things that have been accomplished during the short time that organization has been in existence. Under its auspices, the Czechoslovak band was secured to come here and give a concert. People from a distance of 50 miles and more came here to hear them and complimented the spirit of the town in having secured this truly wonderful organization. The purebred sire train committee was induced to come here for the purpose of looking us over and left with the conviction that folks here do things on a big scale and broadcast the story that there was more interest manifest in the enterprise here than at any other point where they visited. The purebred sire train is coming, too, there is no doubt about that.

"Took initial steps to put the old school ground in condition to be used as a tourist park. When the federal road is opened east of Wilber, there will be need of such a park here, and ours will be ready by that time. Called attention of the town board to the necessity of replacing some broken fire hydrants. New ones are already in place. Arranged for a meeting with the town board for the purpose of discussing the proposition of graveling the streets. There

Photo from J. J. Klima

Seated, first row, left to right: K. N. Barnard, Joseph R. Vnoucek, Leonard Kassik, James J. Halama, Norman W. Steinacher, Milton Stastny, Fred Hosposky, William G. Krupicka, John Halama, Jim F. Kotas.

Seated, second row, left to right: Frank Havel, Sr., Betty Jean Spousta, Vlasta M. Svec, Alice Jansky Michl, Ethel Steinacher, Velma Halama, Mary Kottas, Agnes Sramek Ladman, Rose Kotas, Stella Hospodsky, Camille Oliva, Charles J. Kotas, Darrell Portenier, Albert Kassik, Jr., Ray Rempe, Hynek Jaros, Rudy O. Spousta.

Standing, third row from bottom, left to right: James Hromadka, Donald Kotas, Bert J. Lynn, Milo Kottas, Charles Valda, Jr., Emil A. Havel, John A. Hromadka, Harry J. Kubicek, Tom J. Oliva, Albert Michl, Johnnie Gene Halama, Robert Chudly, Adolph J. Kotas, Leslie L. Svec, Melvin R. Suda, Bernard R. Svec, Edward J. Bulin, Ernest F. Kotas, J. J. Klima, J. V. Charvat.

Standing, top row, left to right: Frank W. Kassik, Jr., Roger Odvody, Richard W. Brunkow, Arnold Soukup, William H. Kotas, Robert Rischling.



Photo from J. J. Klima

Lodge Rabi No. 135—Czechoslovakian Benefit Lodge; later became Lodge Rabi No. 27 of the Western Bohemian Fraternal Association. This group went by lumber wagon to Geneva to participate in the dedication of the Fillmore County Court House.

Standing, left to right: Joseph Sramek, Matias Votipka, John Havel, Amon Kolar, Anton Kucera, Vaclav Simacek, Vaclav Brt, Frank Mengler, Karel Kolar, John V. Luksik, Vaclav Chlup, W. J. Zirhut (Milligan's first banker), Joseph Kolar, Vaclav Rebicek.

Seated, left to right: Frank J. Kucera, Joseph Hulka, V. Svoboda, Frank V. Kucera, Pavel Anton, A. V. Kouba, (Milligan's second banker), Charles Smrha, Sr., F. M. Ziska, Vaclav Vodicka, Gotlieb Girmus, Victor Prokop, Matias Kubicek.



Photo from Mrs. Henry Steinacher

Milligan Chapter of Jednota Ceskych Dam. (Unity of Czech Ladies) — about 1895. (None of these ladies have been identified.)



is money on hand which is to be used for the purpose of repairing the streets and alleys and without doubt it will be possible to agree with the board on some program whereby this money can be used to the best advantage.

"Monday night six laborers came to town looking for places to work in the harvest fields. The committee on community co-operation called up all the farm lines to notify the farmers that this help was available, and those in need of harvest hands came and got their men. Projects are now in process of crystallization which will mean much to the town and community as a whole. There is no use talking—there is no limit to which a community may build and grow if it just has the proper spirit and willingness to co-operate for the promotion of the good of the whole."

—*Nebraska Signal*, July 3, 1924

A later news story reflected the same kind of enthusiasm:

"Word has been received here from the Omaha Chamber of Commerce that a train load of 100 businessmen from Omaha will visit Milligan on a 'good will trip' Thursday, May 22, from 5:40 to 6:05. One of Omaha's best bands will accompany the party, and they are bringing with them two cars of souvenirs for distribution.

"The Milligan Chamber of Commerce will make arrangements to greet the visitors and will make an effort to impress upon them the fact that Milligan is a lively burg which measures up to Omaha standards in everything but size and what it lacks in size it makes up in quality.

"This will be the first visit Milligan has enjoyed of this nature. This is due largely to the fact that we are off the usual beaten paths of commerce and travel, but when once we've been located most of our visitors seem to have no trouble in remembering that we're here."

—*Nebraska Signal*, May 8, 1930

National Farm Loan Association

The Milligan NFLA was organized on February 20, 1920, when 16 farmers signed its Articles of Association and applied for Land Bank loans. Frank Elznic, the first president, with James Nohava, Joseph Sadlo, Joseph Suda, and Albert Kresak formed the first board of directors of the association. C. Smrha was the original secretary-treasurer and served until August, 1933, when J. J. Klima succeeded him. By 1923 the association had only 33 members. Steady growth brought the membership total to 69 at the beginning of 1933, and by the time the needs of the community, principally caused by nation-wide agricultural depression, were cared for, the maximum membership stood around 300. In a 1943 consolidation, the group joined with others originally formed at Crete and Geneva and organized a consolidated association, called the Saline-Fillmore National Farm Loan Association of Milligan. J. J. Klima was the first secretary-treasurer. L. W. Kubert of Crete was the first president of the newly formed association, followed by Mike Becwar, Jr., who served for many years thereafter.

It is now known as the Federal Land Bank Association. The officers in 1967 were: president, Reinhart Stuhr; vice-president, Elmer Ourecky; board members, Carl Geis, Victor Gierhan, Ray Buzek, and Melvin Thomas.

Businesses

Ben's I.G.A. Store, located on Lot 10, Block 8, is owned and operated by James J. and Velma Halama. They purchased the property in 1962 from HSSK Post No. 240 of the American Legion, which had used the building for its headquarters. The building has housed businesses as varied as a pool hall and a meat market, and was once the office of Dr. George F. Zerzan.

In October, 1931, **Ethel's Beauty Shop** was opened by Ethel Chasdek (Steinacher) in the south room of the Auditorium building. In 1932, the beauty shop was moved into the north rooms of the hotel

building, where it remained for eight years. Between 1940 and 1946 it was located in several different places before being moved to the Steinachers' new home on Highway 41.

Early in 1921, a small group of farmers from the Milligan area organized the **Farmers Co-Operative Company**. They had heard of the benefits derived from Co-operatives, and they organized one in Milligan to market grain. This group of pioneer co-operators, 20 in number, held their first meetings at their farm homes, with each member donating \$5 to cover the cost of travel, mailing of letters, and other expenses. These first meetings were attended by Vaclav Ach, Vaclav Capek, Anton Fujan, Frank Fujan, Frank Jansky, Fred Kottas, Jr., Joseph Kottas, John Kucera, Sr., Robert Laun, Albert Novak, Albert Placek, Fred Placek, Louis Placek, Emil Slepicka, Bohumil Slajchert, Edward Smith, Frank Smith, James Smith, Joseph Svec, Jr., and Joseph Suda.

On June 9, 1921, the group bought an elevator from the Nebraska-Iowa Grain Co. for \$10,000, and the Farmers Co-Operative Co. took possession on July 1, 1921. This was the south elevator which is still being used today. Frank Krisl, Jr., was hired as the first manager. The 141 charter members invested a total of \$25,200.

On February 7, 1930, two fuel-storage tanks, a truck tank, and other fuel-handling equipment were purchased from Bohumil Buzek. On February 25, Milo Buzek was hired to take charge of the oil department; he was also the first tank-truck salesman.

In the 1930's the company found itself in extremely difficult times. The first blow was dealt by the Depression, followed by several years of drouth. The volume of grain purchased was naturally very low, and farmers could not afford to purchase fuel except for the small amounts that were absolutely necessary. The company kept expenses low, and employees agreed to take a reduction in salary, so the company came through the crisis in relatively good condition.

Recent growth of the company has included building a concrete elevator in 1950, and purchasing an anhydrous ammonia fertilizer bulk plant in 1955. On December 31, 1962, the company had 622 members, assets totaling \$352,802, and fully paid capital stock of \$164,650.

The **Farmers and Merchants Bank** of Milligan stands on the lot where the first bank of Milligan was founded. The State Bank of Milligan lasted only five years, from 1892 to 1897. After its failure, A. V. Kouba organized a new bank in 1897 called the Farmers State Bank of Milligan. In 1900, he converted the institution into a private bank, the Nebraska State Bank of Milligan. In 1903, he sold this bank to the following group: George E. Aldrich, Anton A. Hamouz,



Photo from Mrs. Charles Krejci Family of A. V. Kouba in 1899. Left to right: Emma, Marie, Tillie, A. V. Kouba, Richard, Mrs. A. V. Anna Kouba, Olga, Anna, Velma (in baby carriage); Irvin not in picture.



Photo from Fred Krejci Main Street, Milligan, in 1928 — looking north. Notice old bank building at left.



Photo on left from Milligan 75th Anniversary Booklet Left: Farmers & Merchants Bank, built in 1892



Photo on right from J. J. Klima Farmers & Merchants Bank (new building 1956).

Charles Smrha, Jr., and Frank W. Sloan, and it was renamed Farmers and Merchants Bank. In 1956, J. J. Klima purchased the old building from the bank, and rebuilt it the same year. During the reconstruction, the bank conducted its business from the Mary E. Krisl building; it occupied the new building on November 1, 1956. Mary Smrha, who joined the bank as an employee in 1908, retired in 1963, after serving the bank for 55 years, becoming in that time a director and vice-president.

The bank is now and has been since 1934 a member of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, insuring its deposits for amounts up to \$10,000, for which it pays semi-annual premiums.

The **Halama Blacksmith and Repair Shop** is located on Lot 1, Block 14. John Halama purchased the building in 1958, and started the blacksmith and general repair shop, which is doing business at present. F. S. Soukup and his sons operated a blacksmith and repair shop in the building for several years before selling it to Mr. Halama.

In 1904, the Taylor & Morgan Grain Co. was the first business to be conducted on the lots that the **Kassik Milling Company** stands on today. In 1912, Charles Smrha erected a dairy barn and silos, and operated a dairy business in this location. In 1923 he sold the lots to Albert Kassik, Sr., who built the flour mill in 1923. In the spring of 1924, "A. Kassik & Sons" was born, and started milling flour. In 1928, they started manufacturing feeds. In 1930, they built their first vertical mixer at home, and started using pre-mixes in their feeds. They stopped milling flour in 1938, and devoted all their attention to the feed business, calling their product "Kassik's Formula Feeds."

The Kassiks built the alfalfa mill on the C. B. & Q. right-of-way in 1947, and now ship alfalfa meal and pellets to many points in the eastern and southern United States. In 1950, they built a modern seed plant onto the old flour and feed mill, but never operated it, because a few months later both plants were destroyed by fire. In 1951, a new mill was built, and Kassik's Formula Feeds were once again offered. Since its founding, the mill has been operated by the Kassik family. Albert, Jr., and Leonard Kassik are the present owners and managers.



Photo from Anniversary Booklet
Main Street looking north, June, 1963. Notice new bank building just beyond intersection.

In 1963, the **Kotas Grocery** celebrated its 50th anniversary. Charles Kotas began as a clerk in the A. A. Hamouz General Merchandise Store in 1907 and remained for three years. He then clerked in C. J. Cerveny's general merchandise store. In 1913, Mr. Kotas started his own store. He bought the Frank E. Loukota grocery store in 1932, moving his store to this building, remaining here to the present.

Lot 13 in Block 9, where the **Milligan Lumber Company** now conducts a part of its operations, was first established as a lumber business in 1887, by Bagley & Parkhurst. In 1920, S. H. Michener and associates organized a corporation under the name of the Milligan Lumber Co. Stanley Chudly took over the management after the death of Mr. Michener, and continued until his death in 1958, when his son, Robert Chudly, took over the enterprise.

The **Milligan Transfer** began operation in 1961, when Joseph E. Koca bought the Michl Transfer. Donald J. Kotas bought the business in 1962 from Mr. Koca, retaining the name "Milligan Transfer." The company has been known through the years also as "B. B. Transfer" and "H & M Transfer."

In the fall of 1954, Mrs. Agnes Sramek purchased Lot 18 in Block 15 from Joe Kassik and on this lot Mrs. Sramek has established the **Milligan Variety and Gift Shop**. She has operated the business since 1954.

On April 5, 1947, a new business started on the west side of Milligan's main street in the building on Lot 6 owned by Fred Hospodsky. The name was "**Rudy's Appliance**"; its proprietor was Rudy O. Spousta.

The beginning was a humble one; one work bench with a few pieces of test equipment for the repair of radios and small appliances, and some shelving to hold the repaired items until customers called for them. A few months later some small appliances and a few refrigerators were added to the store's inventory.

There was plenty of repair work, and all went well until September, 1947, when Fred Hospodsky sold the building to Jerry Krupicka, and Rudy had to move out. He set up shop again in the building owned by John Frankforter. Then, on September 26, 1947, an opportunity presented itself, and Rudy purchased the brick building on Lot 6 where he had started business.

In this 25' x 90' building the number of appliances offered began to grow, especially after R.E.A. came to farms around Milligan. Frigidaire's complete line of appliances was added in 1953. Zenith, Philco, and RCA televisions were displayed, sold, and installed.

The **Standard Oil Company** began business in Milligan in 1919, with Pete Suttin as agent. His 500-gallon tank wagon was pulled by four mules. The present bulk station storage tanks were moved here from Tobias, Nebraska, in 1920. Pete worked for Standard Oil until 1933. Jim F. Kotas, who began in 1957, is the present agent. His tank-wagon capacity is now 1,500 gallons, with a corresponding increase in storage tanks—quite a difference from 1919, when the company started in Milligan.

The first building erected on the present site of the **Texaco Service Station** was known as the Society Hall. It was built in 1889 by the Bohemian Slavonian Benevolent Society Rabi 135, organized in 1888. A number of ZCBJ organizations, insurance groups, Sunday Schools, town boards, and societies met in the Hall. The hall was moved to the rear of the lot in 1929, and a new brick building was built to house the Chlup filling station and blacksmith shop. At present the station and repair shop is owned and operated by Albert Michl.

The **Vogltanz Painting & Papering Company** was first established in 1920 when Nick Vogltanz, Sr., and his family moved to Milligan from Omaha. In 1929, Nick, Jr., began to work for his father, and after his father retired in 1945, he continued with the business, and is active today.



Photo from Mrs. Emil A. Havel
Central Hall (now torn down) in 1933. The occasion was the arrival of the first load of beer into Milligan after the end of Prohibition.

ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

American Legion

On February 28, 1920, a group of World War I ex-servicemen met in the Nebraska State Bank Building at Milligan to plan the organization of an American Legion post. Temporary officers were elected and Joseph J. Klima was selected to prepare all papers necessary to secure a charter for a Post in Milligan from the Department of Nebraska American Legion at Lincoln. On March 31, 1920, a charter was granted. The post was named HSSK Post No. 240 in memory of four Milligan boys who had lost their lives in France, using the first letters of their family names: James Houska, Edward Slezak, James Svec, and Frank B. Koca. The bodies of two of them, Edward Slezak and Frank B. Koca, were returned to Milligan for burial. The two others, James Houska and James Svec, were buried in France. The first officers of the newly organized post were Joseph Bors, Commander, and Joseph J. Klima, Adjutant. The other charter members were: H. C. Flint, John F. Kotas, Fred Kolar, Edward Chudly, Adolph Kotas, Fred Havel, Albert Shimic, William B. Bartu, Ed Stetina, Joseph Petracek, Alois Petracek, James F. Kassik, John H. Kotas, and James C. Smith.

The post held its meetings in the lodge room of the Joseph Jicha Central Hall on the first Tuesday of each month. The meeting date was later changed to the last Tuesday of each month, a practice still followed.

Work on the American Legion Park was commenced in the spring of 1927. The park was developed on land donated to the Legion by the Milligan school district as a memorial to the boys who lost their lives in France during World War I and to World War I President Woodrow Wilson. Although the park was developed largely by the Legion members, much help, materials, and money were donated by the community. Formal dedication ceremonies were held on Arbor Day, April 22, 1927. The day started with a parade led by the American Legion Drum and Bugle Corps down the main street of the village, then to the school building to join the delegation there.

and then to the park. Trees were planted in honor of the deceased servicemen, and the address of the day was delivered by C. C. Frazier, Nebraska State Commander. A copper box containing pictures, Legion records, and other data was placed in the base of a monument dedicated the same day.

In 1936, feeling the need for its own clubhouse, the local post commenced plans for such a building. After the usual discussion about a site, two lots were purchased from Joseph Jicha for \$200. On October 19, 1936, a group of Legion boys came with their tractors and scoops to dig the basement. J. J. Jarolimek, a Legion member, was the general contractor and designer of the building, and he donated a great deal of his talent and labor. The actual cash expended for the building was \$2,350. Approximately \$200 of this was used for labor, virtually all of the labor being donated by the women and men of the Legion, and the skilled labor by others in the community. The funds raised for the clubhouse came from the following sources: American Legion members, from the proceeds of their Adjusted Service Certificates, \$565.00; American Legion Auxiliary \$100.00; individuals, \$429.50; Milligan War Relief Society, \$529.81; American Legion general fund, \$25.69; mortgage loan on the property, \$700.00. All the furniture and fixtures were furnished by the Auxiliary. At this time the post had 27 members and the Auxiliary had 36 members.

On May 15, 1937, after much hard work, the post and its auxiliary realized its dreams and dedicated the new clubhouse. Appropriate dedication ceremonies were held. Principal speakers of the day were Verne R. Taylor, Nebraska State Commander; Rev. Father E. C. McFadden; William H. Weis, District Commander; and Robert B. Waring. Music for the parade and dedication ceremonies was furnished by the Milligan High School Band. During the ceremonies a box containing Legion documents, records, and pictures was sealed into the cornerstone of the building by J. J. Jarolimek. In the evening a Clubhouse Dedication Ball was held in the Milligan Auditorium.

During the following years the American Legion Post contributed in every possible way in helping to make the community a better place in which to live. It took as its responsibility leadership in all patriotic projects and assumed the responsibility for conducting services at the cemeteries on Memorial Day, as well as participating in funeral services for its members. When World War II broke out, J. V. Charvat, one of its members, was made chairman of the drive for collecting scrap metals, old rubber tires, and other materials needed for the war effort. At this time the post gave up its giant World War I artillery gun trophy. The trophy was replaced after World War II by another such gun, which now stands in the park.



Photo from Mrs. Norman Steinacher
First American Legion Club house in Milligan.

After World War II the post's activities increased. Its membership grew as veterans returned. With this great increase, both in the post and its auxiliary, a need was felt for a clubhouse in the business part of town. An opportunity came when the Jansky Cafe building became available; this was purchased, remodeled, renovated, and for a time was the hub of all Legion and Auxiliary activities. However, as activities of both organizations continued to expand, both larger and better quarters were needed. After a year of planning, the Mary E. Krisl building was purchased in 1961. The front portion of the building is rented for office space and the rear of the structure was remodeled to make it suitable for the various Legion and Auxiliary activities. The Jansky Cafe building, sold to J. J. Halama, is now Ben's I.G.A. Store.

HSSK Post No. 240 of the American Legion is one of the largest and most active posts in Fillmore County and ranks as one of the top posts in District No. 11 of the State of Nebraska.

The post has sponsored and financed the Legion Concert Band in which all community musicians take part. This project, carried on since 1947, is one in which the organization takes great pride because it gives the youth of the community a chance to develop their musical talents during the summer months.

The Legion has always taken an active part in sponsoring worthy local projects. It was the first organization to arouse interest in a new gymnasium and circulated a petition to bring the question to a vote

of the people of the school district. After the gymnasium was completed, the post sponsored an event from which the proceeds were used to purchase a very fine gym time-clock and a popcorn machine to be used during sports events in the gymnasium.

Annually the post sponsors Girls' and Boys' County Government Day, a project it believes will bring about needed interest in government among the coming leaders of the community.

Another project of our local post of the American Legion was the compilation of a Service Record Book showing the pictures and service records of all boys of the community who served in World Wars I and II. A supplement has been added to include those who served during the Korean conflict.

The goal of HSSK Post No. 240 of the American Legion and its Auxiliary is to live up to its constitution in the future as it has in the past.

American Legion Auxiliary

The eligibility of mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters of veterans who served in the armed forces between April 6, 1917, and November, 1918, brought a large group of ladies together to form an American Legion Auxiliary.

Two years after the post was organized, an auxiliary unit began taking form. In May, 1922, a meeting was called and an application issued for a unit charter. Seventeen ladies were present and they elected Mrs. Adolph Kotas as acting president.

On April 28, 1925, a meeting was held for the purpose of organizing a unit. Acting president of this group was Mrs. Frank P. Mehuron and secretary was Mrs. Joseph Bors.

The organization was formed and a charter was issued in July, 1925. Mrs. Frank P. Mehuron was elected president and Mrs. Joseph Bors was elected secretary. The charter members were:

Mrs. Frank Mehuron	Mrs. Anna Chudly	Mrs. Alma Kolar
Mrs. Edward Laun	Mrs. Alice Hamouz	Mrs. Frank Stych
Mrs. Emma Krupicka	Mrs. Millie Jarolimek	Mrs. James F. Kassik
Miss Rose Slezak	Mrs. Joseph Bors	Mrs. Barbara Krupicka
Mrs. Tom Harpham	Miss Matilda Kotas	Mrs. Ada Klima
Miss Anna Kolar	Miss Mary Smrha	Mrs. Mary Hrdy
Mrs. Anna Kotas	Miss Emilye Koca	Miss Vlasta Kolar
Mrs. Anna Suda		

The April 28 meeting elected a committee of three—Mrs. Harpham, Mrs. Jarolimek, and Miss Clara Kolar—to prepare by-laws. On November 24, 1925, the committee presented the by-laws, which were accepted. (In January, 1936, new by-laws were read and accepted, which were prepared by Mrs. Mary Stastny, Mrs. Clara Ceerle, and Mrs. Mary Hrdy, as the first set were lost.)

On March 30, 1926, it was decided to purchase a wool American flag. The unit appointed Miss Mary Smrha, Mrs. Lillian Frycek, and Miss Clara Kolar to make the Unit Banner.

Auxiliary held their meetings in homes until 1937 when they helped the Legion build the clubhouse on Highway 41 on the south edge of Milligan. Then the Legion in 1954 sold the building to Mr. and Mrs. Dave Sweny and purchased the Jansky building (now the IGA store). In 1961, they purchased the Mary Krisl building, which is now the post's meeting and social activities center.

With the passing years, membership has alternately risen and declined. World War II, with the tremendous number of servicemen involved, made eligible the wives, daughters, sisters, and mothers of those who served between December 7, 1941, and September 2, 1945. A few years later more ladies became eligible—those whose menfolk served during the Korean troubles, between June 25, 1950, and July 27, 1953.

The Auxiliary maintains a roster of Gold Star Mothers and Gold Star Sisters for all three conflicts.



Photo from Mrs. Norman Steinacher
Gold Star Mothers' Tea. Left to right around the tables: Mollie Hamouz, Anna Kotas, Ella Vnoucek, Emma Krupicka, Marie Koca, Emma Koca, Barbara Tesar, Mary Dlouhy. Left to right, in background: Emily Koahler, Arlene Kassik, Anna Maresh, Matilda Bernasek, Mamie Kassik, Jennie Kubisek.



Photo from Mrs. Norman Steinacher

Junior Legion Auxiliary (April, 1959). *Back row, left to right:* Letitia Bunker, Rita Urban, Marjorie Halama, Barbara Hromadka, Sharrel Krupicka, Diane Hromadka, Nancy Kotas, Diane Luzum, Carole Steinacher, Janet Maresh, Diane Pavelka. *Front row, left to right:* Jeanette Capek, Barbara Krupicka, Judy Hromadka, Terry Buzek, Cherri Maresh.

American Legion Junior Auxiliary

The Junior Auxiliary was organized in the fall of 1956 by Lenora Suda, senior Auxiliary member, who also acted as junior counselor for the term of 1956-57, with Ethel Steinacher as assistant. The enrollment started with 16 Juniors.

On September 15, 1956, the first meeting was called to order the following officers were elected: President, Gloria Swartz; vice-president, Diane Hromadka; secretary, Marlene Uldrich; sergeant-at-arms, Diane Luzum; publicity chairman, Nancy Kotas; pianist, Sharrel Krupicka; hospital chairman, Carol Steinacher; chaplain, Judy Kohler.

Chautauqua

Around World War I days, there was a great deal of interest in the Chautauqua in Milligan, but unfortunately the interest was not often apparent in the gate receipts. Nearly every year the people who signed the contract were forced to make up a deficit.

"Monday a number of businessmen signed a contract for a Chautauqua of four days to be put on some time during the month of August.

"Chautauquas have not been exactly what you might call a howling success before—except for the howling of those who have had the deficits to pay for, but that does not necessarily mean that they cannot be made so. They do bring to town a series of programs that is worth taking in."

—*Nebraska Signal*, February 5, 1925

Early in August the Chautauqua came to Milligan and pitched camp on the schoolground south of the schoolhouse. The profits from the Chautauqua were to go toward new playground equipment, but the children had to go without the equipment that year, for the Chautauqua ran true to form and showed a deficit. Finally the sponsors rebelled, and the 1925 Chautauqua was the last one in Milligan.

So ended a heroic attempt to introduce "culture" into the community. Seasonal work and the weather usually combined to cut down the attendance, and the entertainment and the instruction were often not of the best. Many people of the community could not understand the speeches and plays. But, in Milligan as elsewhere, the Chautauqua was really a device to stimulate business as much as to educate and entertain. The Milligan businessmen soon found other and less expensive methods of stimulating business.

Dramatic Societies

Although the dramatic society might not be indispensable to the establishment of a Czech community, yet such a community was not long in existence before at least one such association was formed. Two years after Milligan was founded the newspaper recorded the success of a Czech play. "The Bohemian home talent rendered last Saturday *Trasák a Basa* at the Kotas Opera House in a very creditable manner," said the *Nebraska Signal* (Oct. 24, 1889).

Throughout its earlier history Milligan was treated to liberal doses of Czech drama. In the town's early days, Czech plays were the only ones offered. Back in the 1920's a traveling company of players brought in English-language plays, but the largest crowds were always found at the Czech dramas. As late as the 1920's and 1930's the village had several dramatic societies, one of the most successful consisted almost exclusively of young people who presented Czech plays in a way acceptable to the older people. Their first play was a great success. According to the *Nebraska Signal* for December 5, 1929:

"One of the biggest crowds for a home talent play that Milligan has had for many years turned out Thanksgiving night to witness *Zmatek nad Zmatek*, the play presented by the Ceska Lipa Dramatic Club, recently organized by Father Biskup. This play is a very clever comedy and for a Thanksgiving play when a good laugh is needed to help in the digestion of a Thanksgiving dinner it proved to be a very happy selection, because it kept the crowd in an uproar sufficient to digest several dinners

"Father Biskup selected and coached the play and its presentation showed his mastery of the art. The ticket receipts were better than \$300 and everybody who was there seemed to agree that it was money well earned. It is hoped that Father Biskup will take the time to help put on other plays by this group in the playing season."

This play was such a success that it attracted the attention of neighboring Czech towns. The next month the club journeyed to Bee, Nebraska, where it presented the same production. Dramatic clubs in other towns often came to Milligan to present their plays.



Photo from Mrs. Henry Steinacher

Dramatic Society in 1913. *Left to right:* Edward Kottas, Helen Barnes, Edward Cekal, Mamie Placek, Fred Rozanek, Agnes Placek, John Svec, Ada Stech.

"The dramatic Club of Bruno presented a play at Jicha's Hall Saturday evening which drew a good audience and which was thoroughly enjoyed by all who saw it. The play was an operetta depicting the merry life of the old country mill and depicting also, of course, the pathos which comes with every story where love has a part. . . . The Simen Orchestra from Brainard was also here and furnished music for the dance which followed the play. The visit of the club was thoroughly appreciated by followers of home talent plays, and it is hoped that their visit may be repeated when they have another play prepared."

Nebraska Signal, February 13, 1930

After the play a dance was usually held. The proceeds of the play were generally donated to one of the lodges or to the local unit of the Sokols.

Once or twice a year a company of professional actors came to Milligan and presented Czech dramas. On June 29, 1922, the *Nebraska Signal* said:

"Don't fail to see the Cesko-American Narodni Divadlo [to be] given here on the evening of July 6 and 7 under the management of Joseph R. Krejci of Chicago. Among their plays are *Baby Mine*, *Where the Meadow Lark Sings*, *The Twins*, and *Merry War*. This [will] be an unusual treat for all lovers of this sort of entertainment and all who attend are assured of an evening well spent."

Although the Czech drama was more popular than the English in Milligan, road companies which toured the small towns of Nebraska did not despair of getting an audience. One article announcing the arrival of one of those companies suggested the type of entertainment offered. To quote again from the *Nebraska Signal* (December 9, 1920):

"The Hazel McOwen stock company, which plays the Central Hall and Opera House at Milligan, Nebraska, on the night of December 14, is reputed to be the best organization of its kind on the road today. The company has formed a circle of towns including Wilber, Geneva, Edgar, Clay Center, Sutton, Exeter, and Crete, playing each one on the same night every two weeks. At present there are a couple of nights to fill in, and the company is playing [at] Milligan with the intention of including it in the circle permanently should the patronage warrant.

"The best of reports have been given from Geneva and Wilber, where the company has already played. Their plays are of the finest and produced by an A-1 company of ladies and gentlemen, each one a star in his respective line.

"The play that has been chosen for Milligan is one of the most beautiful bills ever written, entitled *The Girl from Out Yonder*, a comedy-drama in four acts. The highest class of vaudeville is introduced between each act, including the Hazel McOwen quartette of excellent singers which is well worth the price of admission alone, singing in harmony the very latest and best ballads and numbers.

By all means come out and see this excellent company and be assured of seeing a good high-class show played by a real company once every two weeks."

As far as drama was concerned, Milligan people were much more interested in Czech plays than in English productions. The type of drama offered by the Czech societies was generally superior to that offered by the English-speaking companies. The acting, although amateur, was rather good, and the actors had many friends and relatives in the audience. The proceeds were usually donated to some worthy cause. The lines could be followed even by those who did not understand the Czech language very well. The Czech drama, therefore, long remained one of the most important links which the people had with the Old World.

Stage plays in both English and Czech have suffered, since the above account was published in 1933, from the competition of other forms of entertainment. The strong revival, in the last 10 years or so, all over the nation, of interest in stage plays and in local theater groups may offer some hope that this fascinating tradition may not be totally lost but can obtain a new lease on life once more.

Knights of Pythias

Stotsenberg Lodge No. 43, Knights of Pythias, was named for Colonel Stotsenberg of the 1st Nebraska Regiment, who lost his life in the Philippines. The lodge was formally organized on December 31, 1901. The first officers installed were: G. W. Trobough, C. C.; Joseph Kunce, V. C.; Frank Hrdy, P.; V. F. Rohla, M. of W.; F. O. Kucera, K.R.S.; Frank Stech, M. of F.; A. V. Kouba, M. of E.; V. F. Bouse, M. of A.; Martin Leisher, I. G.; and Frank Trvz, O. G. A charter was granted by the Grand Lodge on October 14, 1902. Other charter members were: S. J. Chyma, Thomas Jicha, Rudolph Motis, F. A. Placek, W. B. Saunders, J. A. Trobough, Peter Vojta, and G. F. Zerzan.

"As of today," wrote James Tesar in 1958, "we have four 50-year members: Charles Smrha, Emil Kassik, Sr., Fred Placek, Sr., and W. B. Saunders. The lodge is composed of 90 members, from Geneva, Exeter, Ohio, and Milligan."

The purpose of the organizations is "to appeal to the good of mankind, to lift up the fallen, to minister to the distressed, to heal the broken, to bring friendship to the friendless, and exemplify the practices of brotherly love among mankind."

Pythian Sisters

In 1929, Mary Bors became interested in instituting a Pythian Temple in Milligan. It was discovered that 23 wives, sisters, and daughters of the Brother Knights were eligible for membership. On March 29, 1929, at a meeting in the home of Mary Bors, the following ladies became charter members: Nellie McCartney, Agnes Smrha, Mary Bors, Agnes Ach, Lillian Frycek, Tony Havey, Agnes Steinacher, Alba Rischling, Mildred Buzek, Alice Hamouz, Alba Buzek, Stella Hospodsky, Velma Halama, Anna Bulin, Emma Bouse, Mary Jicha, Libbie Petracek, Helene Petracek, Rose Placek, Gladys Placek, Viola Rischling, Mamie Laun, and Eliza Zeman.

The *Nebraska Signal* for April 4, 1929, reported the formal installation of the Temple:

"Friendship Temple No. 20 was the name and the number chosen by the sisters. Meetings were to be held twice a month. Motion was made to adjourn until 7:30 in the evening. Some time was spent in meeting the visiting sisters and brothers, including 35 from York and seven from Crete and some from Hastings, who had come to assist in the work.

"All sisters, visiting sisters and brothers went to the spacious and open doors of Sister Marie Bors' beautiful home, where the Milligan sisters had prepared a delicious two-course covered dinner. The large dining room was very pretty with the well-filled table ready to give such good service to so many hungry folks; the eats were certainly good and were relished by everyone.

"The meeting was again called to order by the Grand Chief, after which the York Temple took charge of the meeting, conducting it in ritualistic form. Sisters Rose Placek was given the initiatory work, which was well given by the officers and degree staff of the York Temple. A flower march was had and a nice collection was received to start a fund for the sick and the shut-ins. A generous payment of dues was a good start toward a prosperous financial condition of the temple.

"Most Excellent Chief Sister Marie Bors presented Grand Chief Sister Olson and G. M. of R. and C. each with an appropriate framed motto, expressing their true friendship and love. These will be prized by the two sisters. It was indeed a surprise to receive such tokens of appreciation, but we will long cherish the memory of the time spent with these sisters. The meeting was then closed until the next meeting, after which kolace and hot coffee were served. The visitors expressed a wish to come to Milligan again and invited the local members to their temples."

The Brother Knights donated \$50 to the sisters' treasury with which they bought their paraphernalia for meetings. Meetings were held in the Jicha Lodge Room on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. The sisters moved to the Auditorium later but at present are back in the lodge room where they started.

The Temple holds food sales, card parties, birthday donations and penny marches as means of replenishing their treasury. Anniversaries are celebrated with a program, and the sisters also have a program on Mother's Day, with mothers or guests as visitors.

Christmas time is observed with entertainment and exchange of gifts and a luncheon. Each outgoing Past Chief is presented a Past Chief pin. On Memorial Day each deceased Sister's grave is marked with a flag and potted plant. Sick members are remembered with cards and flowers and many outstanding things are done for members and their families.

Milligan Woman's Club

[The following history of this group was "prepared as of March 22, 1957." Although much more has happened since, this history, as far as it goes, indicates a degree of purpose and of dedication of spirit.]

The Milligan Woman's Club was organized in the fall of 1925 with 33 members. The club took the sewing project, "How to Dress Becomingly," offered by the Nebraska Co-operative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics.

The Milligan Woman's Club (then known as the Milligan Community Woman's Club) federated with the Nebraska Federation of Women's Clubs in the fall of 1926. On October 22, 1926, the application for membership to the Nebraska State Federation of Women's Clubs, together with a constitution signed by 19 of the 22 members and their membership dues, were sent to the state corresponding secretary.

The 19 members who signed the constitution were: Mrs. John R. Smith, Mrs. Fred Kottas, Jr., Miss Mary E. Krisl, Mrs. Charles Smrha, Mrs. J. B. Frankforter, Mrs. Fred Kucera, Miss Mary Smrha, Miss Hazel C. Young, Miss Eleanor Kudrna, Miss Nelle Murphy, Mrs. S. H. Michener, Mrs. J. V. Kotas, Mrs. Frank J. Bulin, Mrs. James Bors, Miss Velma Kotas, Miss Alba Buzek, Mrs. Antonie Krisl, Mrs. J. J. Klima, and Mrs. Albert Frycek. The three not present to sign were Mrs. Fred Havel, Mrs. Jesse Kovanda and Mrs. James Simkovsky. Only two of these charter members have belonged to the club continuously. They are Mrs. J. V. Kotas and Miss Mary E. Krisl, both past club presidents. At the present time, Mrs. J. J. Klima and Miss Mary Smrha are members—Mrs. Klima having been a member for 22 years and Miss Smrha 21 years. The following are deceased: Mrs. Charles Smrha (who was also a past president), Mrs. S. H. Michener, Mrs. James Bors, Mrs. Antonie Krisl, and Mrs. Fred Havel. Mrs. John R. Smith was the first president. Past presidents have been:

Mrs. John R. Smith.....1926-1928	Mrs. F. J. Butcher.....1941-1943
Mrs. Charles Smrha.....1928-1930	Miss Agnes M. Capek.....1943-1945
Miss Mary E. Krisl.....1930-1932	Mrs. W. H. Kotas.....1945-1947
Mrs. Edward Chudly.....1932-1934	Mrs. Mike Becwar, Jr.....1947-1949
Mrs. J. V. Kotas.....1934-1936	Mrs. F. V. Hamouz.....1949-1951*
Mrs. R. J. Jansky.....1936-1937	Mrs. Lou Vavra.....1951-1953
Miss Agnes M. Capek.....1937-1939	Mrs. F. J. Butcher.....1953-1954
Mrs. Henry Kassik.....1939-1941	Mrs. Henry Kassik.....1954-1957

* (formerly Miss Agnes M. Capek).

The project for 1926-27 was "Making the Home Attractive," carried out by one group of the club. Another division called itself the Social Study Club. Its object was to "encourage intellectual development, to promote good fellowship, and to work for the good of the community." The club chose the sweet pea for their flower, pea green and pink for their colors, and "Do More and Wish Less" as their motto. They used the word "Community" in the name (Milligan Community Woman's Club) because they wanted the women of the rural area to feel that they were eligible and wanted as members. No one seems to recall just when the word "Community" was dropped from the name.

In 1927, the club, for their first money-making project, sponsored the showing of a moving picture. Also that year they undertook the care of the tourist park. During the summer they planted trees and shrubbery. For a number of years, the club hired a man to keep the grass cut.

The year 1929 marked the beginning of the receptions held for the faculty of the Milligan Public Schools. Now for a number of years the school board of District 71 at Milligan have served as co-hosts with the club to this faculty reception. The invitation is extended to husbands of members, all patrons of District 71, and parents of all pupils enrolled in the school.

A traveling library, started by the club in 1932, was kept up by one of its members, Miss Mary E. Krisl, till January, 1943, at which time the club sponsored the opening of the Milligan Public Library housed in the south front room of the Milligan Auditorium. At present (1957) Mrs. J. B. Frankforter serves as the librarian.

[On June 30, 1962, there were 1,524 books in the library, not including many encyclopedias and other reference books and magazines.]

The school ground beautification project was undertaken in January, 1932. In this the club was assisted by the American Legion, the village board, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the school. Plantings included 119 trees, 40 clumps of shrubbery, and 8 ivy plants. A merry-go-round and slide were purchased.

In 1934, the proceeds of a musical program and basket supper went to purchase stage curtains for the high-school assembly.

The city hall has been renovated a number of times as a civic project. By giving this service, the club did not have to pay rent for meeting there.

In the spring of 1939, the club sponsored the two-tree project. Each member purchased two Chinese elms, which were planted in the

tourist park. These trees were planted so closely together that the club was "kidded" about Milligan's "windbreak," but it was much easier to remove a few trees in 1949 when the park was renovated than it would have been to start planting trees. The club also donated 200 trees to the Nebraska National Forest at Halsey.

In January, 1940, the club held a birthday party celebrating its 14th anniversary and the General Federation's Golden Jubilee. At this meeting the guest speaker was Mrs. Joseph Bixby of Geneva, president of the Fillmore County Federation of Women's Clubs. In 1946, the 20th anniversary was observed. Mrs. Russell Freidell, vice-president of the Nebraska Federation was the guest speaker. The Silver Anniversary of the club's federation was celebrated on October 10, 1951, with Mrs. William H. Hasebrook, president of the Nebraska Federation, as guest speaker.

The club observed its 30th anniversary of federation on October 18, 1956. Mrs. J. E. Yost of Milford, president of the Fourth District, NFWC, was the guest speaker. Especially honored were the two charter members with 30 years of continuous membership, Mrs. J. V. Kotas and Miss Mary E. Krisl.



Photo from Mrs. Frank Hamouz

Milligan Woman's Club 30th Anniversary (1956). Seated, left to right: Mrs. Agnes Hamouz, Mrs. Agnes Kassik, Mrs. Mollie Becwar, Mrs. J. E. Yost, of Milford (guest speaker). Standing, left to right: Mrs. Frances Kotas, Mrs. Ann Vavra, Mrs. Irma Kotas, Mrs. Pearl Butcher, Miss Mary E. Krisl.

In 1935-36 the club sponsored a flower show with 200 entries and a crowd of 500 people. Several other successful flower shows were held.

On November 10, 1938, the club sponsored a public safety program in charge of Mrs. Russell Freidell, state safety chairman, and Captain Weller, attended by a large crowd. The Milligan Auditorium co-operated and didn't charge rental.

The first mother-daughter banquet was held on May 21, 1941. This get-together has continued throughout the years, either as a banquet, a covered-dish supper, or an evening program followed by a social hour. The faculty women and the high-school senior girls are invited as guests.

During World War II, collections of waste fat, scrap paper, and used clothing were promoted. Many contributions to worthy causes, such as Red Cross, War Chest, Cancer Fund, Library, and Infantile Paralysis Fund, were made, partially from funds earned by selling waste fat and scrap paper. The amount received for scrap paper, \$50, was divided evenly between the two local churches.

When the Milligan High School Alumni Association was being organized in 1948, the club was asked to back them and serve the first banquet. Since the association didn't have funds to start with, the club offered to, and did, donate the plates served to the Class of 1948, the first honored class to be initiated into the Alumni Association. Since that time the club has served many of their dinners.

In May, 1949, the club entered the "Build a Better Community" contest sponsored by the General Federation of Women's Clubs and the Kroger Foundation. The project undertaken was the renovation and beautification of the Tourist Park, which had been neglected during the war years. (The working out of this project is described under *Funfrall Park*, hereafter.) The renovated park was dedicated in July, 1949, with a community picnic; each year since that time, an anniversary picnic is held on the last Sunday in July.

This project won the club an Honorable Mention in the "Build a Better Community" contest. The club continues to sponsor the park.

The following year, the contest was "Build Freedom with Youth." The club entered this contest also, and won fifth place in the state of Nebraska. The local high-school and upper-grade students were enlisted for the tasks of raising funds, looking after upkeep, and planning organized park activities.

In cooperation with the Saline and Fillmore County Extension Service and the businessmen of Milligan, the Woman's Club sponsors

the annual Grasslands Day held in Milligan. The first was held in 1949. The club sells the noon plate lunch, thus making money to cover the expenses.

A memorable trip to the Christmas City of Minden was made in December, 1949, serving as their December meeting. Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Warp made the arrangements for this visit and tour, which included the evening meal.

The club allotted \$100 in February, 1949, for the purchase of a radio-phonograph with records to be given to the Milligan Public Schools. In 1955, it contributed \$50 toward the purchase of uniforms for the school band.

By having placed fifth in the merit point plan under Mrs. Hasebrook's first year as state president, the president of the Milligan Club, Mrs. Frank V. Hamouz, received one of the spring hats at the 1951 state convention. At the state convention on April 24, 1952, the Milligan Woman's Club received two certificates of award under the merit point plan. One award honored the club for placing tenth in the state of Nebraska and the other honored them for placing first in Fourth District. The club members worked hard and deserved these awards.

The club sponsored its first grade-school music program at the Milligan High School Assembly in April, 1953, a project which they continue to carry on each year in April. All mothers of grade-school children are invited.

At the request of Mrs. Frank V. Hamouz, then president of Fourth District, NFWC, the club gave the tea at the close of the district convention held in Geneva on October 1 and 2, 1953. Yes, they served "kolace."

In 1954, the club sponsored an international relations program with Dr. G. W. Rosenlof of the University of Nebraska and students from India and the Netherlands as well as a young man from North Ireland on the international exchange program. High-school students and others interested were invited.

A father-son banquet was sponsored by the club in April, 1956. The proceeds went toward the purchase of a time-clock for the new gymnasium.

Some of the other projects carried on regularly are: sending articles to the annual Children's Memorial Hospital benefit bazaar, Christmas gifts for Ingleside patients, participation in the German Youth Association project, Heart Fund drive, and contributions to all worthy drives. The club makes most of the money by serving dinners and banquets.

Books were donated to the Milligan Public Library in memory of the following deceased club members: Mrs. Fred Havel, Mrs. Antonie Krisl, Mrs. James Bors, Mrs. S. H. Michener, Mrs. V. V. Smrha, Mrs. Mike Soukup, Mrs. Hynek Jaros, Mrs. Charles Michl, Mrs. Charles Smrha, and Mrs. Frank Svec. Many other books were donated to the library in memory of friends and relatives of members.

During its 30 years of federation the club has been hostess to five county conventions held at Milligan: (1) The first Fillmore County convention, held in the Milligan High School auditorium in the fall of 1928 with 117 present, and Mrs. J. B. Frankforter as county president, and Mrs. Charles Smrha, local club president. (2) October 6, 1943, at the Milligan Auditorium with Mary E. Krisl as county vice-president and Mrs. J. V. Kotas, local club president. (3) October 14, 1939, Milligan Auditorium with Mrs. Henry Kassik as local club president. (4) October 13, 1945, at the Milligan Auditorium with Miss Agnes M. Capek (now Mrs. Frank V. Hamouz) as local club president. (5) October 1, 1956, at the Milligan Methodist Church with Mrs. Henry Kassik as local club president.

Besides the county offices held by local members as listed above, Mrs. Frank V. Hamouz has held these positions: Fillmore County—treasurer, first vice-president and president; Fourth District, NFWC—secretary, first vice-president, second vice-president, and president, Chairman of Conservation for four years, and Communications Chairman for two years. At the present time she is secretary of the Scholarship Loan and Nurses' Gift Board, NFWC.

The 1956-57 membership of the club was 50. Mrs. A. R. Jensen was the president.

Milligan has a number of other clubs for women. A Ladies' Aid Society composed of women of the Methodist Church meets once monthly to sew and visit and discuss the ways in which the interests of the church may be advanced in Milligan. The Catholic Church has a similar society, called the Altar Society. The main activity of each, however, is the annual bazaar by which each society raises money for its church.

Modern Woodmen

"The Modern Woodmen lodge of Milligan is growing right along in membership and has nearly 100 members now. Lately there have been several members taken in . . . The night these four were initiated it took six men to hold the goat as the boys, one by one, mounted him. Frank Vavra, Joe Rohla, and Rudolph Motis were the honorable committee that had charge of the goat for a week before that night, and they had stuffed him full of oats, oil cake, and Hi-Hi bitters, and when he started around the room he was a holy terror. The boys hung on for their lives. Delaney gave up all hope of ever seeing the livery barn again; Mengler felt that someone else beside him would be selling farm machinery this spring; Hanus thought he had made his last harness, and Rozanek never even hoped to see his farm again. But they were all rescued before being killed and each

one grinned and said he was glad he was alive. It is said Joe Rohla put a cocklebur under the goat's tail just as he started and that the goat held to it tightly all the time he was going round the room, but we do not know whether this is true or not . . ."—*Nebraska Signal*, March 22, 1901; quoted from the *Milligan Times*.

The Sokols

Since its establishment in 1894, the Tel. Jed. Sokol local in Milligan has met with varying degrees of success. In its early years it was a strong organization. At that time there were many new arrivals from Europe who had been members of the Sokol organization which was originally established in Prague, Bohemia, in 1862. It was natural for these new settlers to take an interest in the organization in America. During its early days the Milligan Sokol Organization took part in both the state and national tournaments. This news item illustrates the interest displayed in the national tournaments, usually held in Chicago:

"Ben Smrha arrived home Thursday afternoon from Chicago, where he has been for nearly two months studying and practicing the new system of gymnastics arranged for use in various Tel. Jed. Sokol (Bohemian Turners) lodges over the country. He passed the examination in the highest class and has his diploma."—*Nebraska Signal*, September 1, 1899; quoted from the *Milligan Journal*.

The effect of weather on the Sokol tournaments and other Milligan social affairs is aptly reflected by this passage from an article published in 1930:

"Until very recent times the possibility of meeting expenses at all public gatherings in Milligan was dependent on weather. Muddy roads kept not only the farmers, but also residents of neighboring towns at home. Time and again the village newspaper ascribes the lack of success of social events to the fact that it rained. The 'large crowd' reported was usually present in the editor's imagination. Today one gravel road leads to Milligan, but all of the side roads are still unsurfaced. Expenses are made today regardless of weather, but a large profit can be made only if the sky is clear."

In Milligan the Sokols did not at any time have a hall of their own. They used halls owned by other lodges. During the course of the winter, the Sokol's masquerade ball was one of the major social events. The ball of 1901 was described by the local paper:

"The T. J. Sokol's masquerade ball turned out pretty well regardless of the storm which occurred in the evening. There was a very large crowd present and everyone seemed to have a good time. The masks were numerous and some of the finest ever seen."—*Nebraska Signal*, March 1, 1901; quoted from the *Milligan Journal*.

A 1925 article from the *Nebraska Signal* remarks upon the sporadic interest commanded by the Sokols from 1905 to 1925.

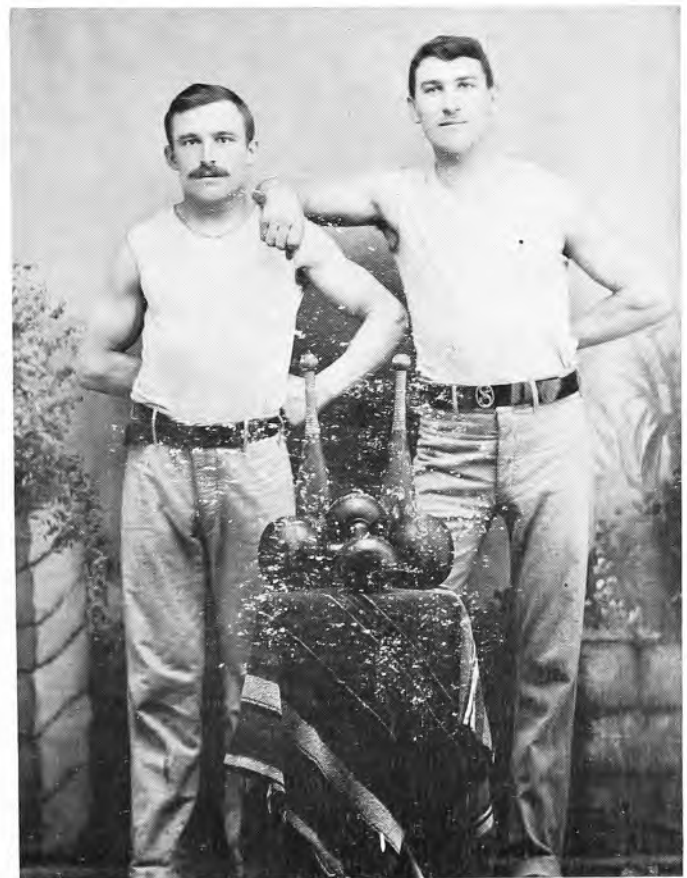


Photo from Mrs. Emil A. Havel
Vnclav Bouse and Frank Laun, members of the Sokols.



Photo from Alba Buzek

"Sbor Sokolek," Ladies' Gymnastic Group, Milligan in 1907.

Top row, left to right: Agnes Herynk (Mrs. Anton Capek), Carrie Placek (Mrs. Frank Krisl), Mary Stejskal (Mrs. Harry Soukup), Anna Brt (Mrs. Joe Hass), Mary Frycek (Mrs. Albert Kassik), Emma Buzek (Mrs. Tlbert Soukup), Vlasta Podleska (Mrs. James Loukota).

2nd row from top, left to right: Agnes Vejraska (Mrs. Vac Ach), Alba Buzek, Mary Hromadka (Mrs. Rudolph Capek), Anna Podlesak (Mrs. Henry Buzek), Lula Cudly, (Mrs. Frank Havel, Sr.), Anna Bulin (Mrs. Fred Kovanda), Rose Vejraska, (Mrs. Josef Sadlo).

3rd row from top, left to right: Agnes Steinacher (Mrs. James Stoffer), Betty Beranek (Mrs. J. J. Novak), Anna Capek (Mrs. Edward Smith), Agnes Sredl (Mrs. James Nohava), Rose Herynk (Mrs. Joe C. Laun), Bessie Selement (Mrs. Henry Wanek).

Bottom row, left to right: Alba Korbelik (Mrs. Henry Rischling), Rose Kassik (Mrs. Frank Stych), Mary Bulin (Mrs. James Bors).

"Twenty years ago and more the Sokols were one of the liveliest organizations here. Classes in physical training met regularly and delegates were sent to all tournaments. Of late years the organization has dwindled down, some of the active ones having gone beyond the river and others having moved away or grown too old for the strenuous exertions to which the Sokol is put. There was also a strong girls' class and while they did not become active at any time in going through the physical exercises, they were active socially and were the sponsors of many pleasant events.

"In the past few years the Sokols have been taking a new lease on life, several organizations having been formed in various parts of the state. Not to be left behind, Milligan formed an organization last Tuesday evening. Frank Chmelik, who came here direct from Czechoslovakia three years ago, spent a week here looking over the ground and holding classes at the school gymnasium. As a result of this a meeting was called for Tuesday evening at the ZCJB hall and an organization was formed. An admission fee of \$5 was agreed upon and a further payment of yearly dues of \$5."—*Nebraska Signal*, November 26, 1925.

Under the leadership of the recently arrived Mr. Chmelik, interest in the organization grew. In May, 1926, it was ready to show the home folks what had been accomplished.

The year 1926 marked one of the high points in the revival of the Sokol organization in Milligan. On a Sunday following an exhibition at Milligan, the state tournament was held in Omaha. Many Milligan people were present. A special train which started at Milligan and picked up a number of delegates along the way was filled with several hundred contestants and spectators when it arrived in Omaha. The *Nebraska Signal* reported:

"The exhibition at the auditorium was a revelation to those who witnessed it. The auditorium hall was full. The exercises came in a methodical and orderly manner and the drills were given with precision. The Milligan contingent took part in the various classes and did exceptionally well; the girls' drill with rings being particularly good."—*Signal*, May 27, 1926.

The Sokol spirit was high at this time, and another tournament was held in August at Wilber, a neighboring town. An estimated 5,000 people watched Milligan teams win several prizes. At Thanksgiving a Sokol benefit was given to help the Omaha lodge finance a new hall. The community responded liberally and furnished food and other items to help make the day a success; more than \$200 was raised.

ZCJB Lodge

ZCJB Lodge is mentioned here because it has close ties with Milligan; but, as it was organized and still meets in Liberty township, it is described in that chapter.

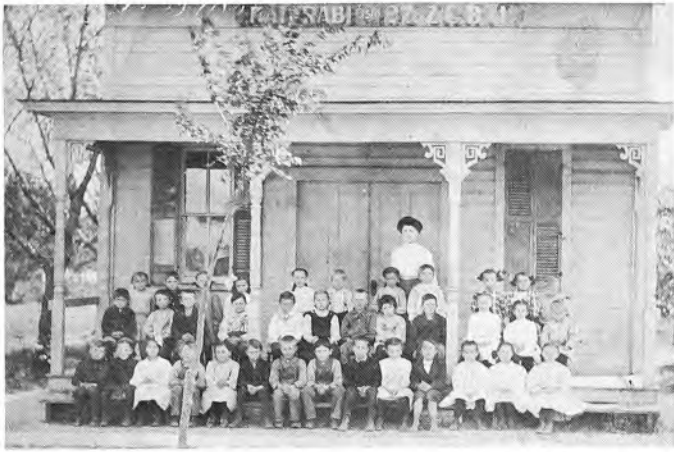


Photo from Mrs. Emil A. Havel

Z. C. B. J. Lodge Hall about 1910. School was held here while the schoolhouse was being built.

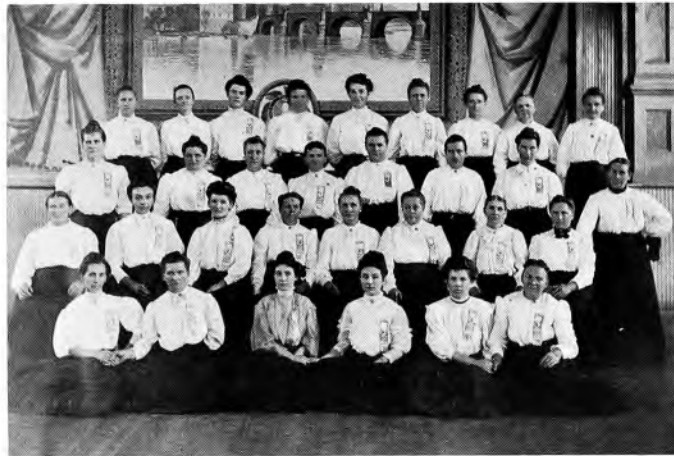


Photo from J. J. Klima

Milligan Chapter of Royal Neighbors of America — about 1905.
Bottom row, left to right: Mary Jicha, Mary Rohla, Amelia Cerveny, Malinda Cerveny, Agnes Naimon, Mary B. Krisl.

2nd row from bottom, left to right: Teresa Frycek, Fanny Stech, Marye Stastny, Kate Laun, Anna Podlesak, Josephine Kilma Jansky, Mary Kotas, Anna Ondrak.

3rd row from bottom, left to right: Julia Yeck, Josie Loukota, Antonie Bulin, Marie Steinacher, Frances Brt, Anna Novak, Anna Sredl, Anna Soukup.

Top row, left to right: Mary Sirucek, Mary Justa, Emma Yeck, Mary Simkovsky, Josie Rohla, Anna Placek, Anna Kubicek, Anna Barbora Slezak.

Children's Clubs

In the early days the children of the Milligan community had to wait until they were grown before they could belong to clubs and lodges. Whatever spare time they had, they spent at the old swimming hole at Placek's or filled in with various forms of informal play. In the last decades of the last century they had but little leisure. Men, women, and children spent most of their waking hours working. The newspapers of the time mention dances, masquerades, and other activities, but carry no reference to clubs organized to pursue the interests of the young.

All this has been changed in recent years. Each issue of the county paper carries notices describing activities of numerous children's clubs. The school has been responsible for the formation of most of these. In connection with the agricultural courses, 4-H clubs have been organized. Boys learn how to raise pigs, cows, corn, and other animals or plants. Records are kept of the methods used and of the cash outlay. At the end of the season, prizes are awarded to those who have been most successful, and exhibits are prepared for the county and state fairs. Most of the clubs to which girls belong are restricted to activities in which only women engage, such as sewing, cooking, and housekeeping. Milligan was quite proud one year when two of their girls from the cooking club won the state championship in bread baking.

Boys' clubs are concerned mainly with activities which do not require many meetings of the entire group. On the other hand, girls' clubs hold frequent meetings, and the activities carried on are often reported in the county paper.

"The Sunny Side cooks held their meeting at the home of Miss Sylvia Rischling Friday, July 25. Plans were made for attending the

4-H club camp at Alexandria from August 4 to 7. Plans were made for a demonstration team at the county fair, demonstrating how to make muffins. . . .

"Sylvia showed us how to knead bread by pushing it once or twice and turn around quarter way and fold it over toward you. Anna Prokop told us how to take care of bread after it is cooled and ready to be put away. The bread that the girls brought to the meeting was then judged. In the white bread Irma Havel had the best. . . . In the whole-wheat Marian Kassik had the best. . . . A delicious lunch was served. . . ."—*Nebraska Signal*, August 7, 1930.

"A hike has been planned [by the Healthy Hustlers] for Tuesday, August 5. The group will walk to Placek's creek and there have lunch before walking back home.

"Some plans were discussed for the county fair. By the next meeting everyone must have a health poster made. These will be brought to the meeting and the best ones selected to send to the fair. Rose Placek and Arlene Bors will be the demonstration team. The topic of their demonstration has not been selected.

"A part of the fourth lesson was read and exercises for the feet taken. Some of these proved to be quite difficult."—*Nebraska Signal*, August 7, 1930.

Movies

"Saturday, June 28, and Sunday, June 29, *Billy and Dot* and *The Last Kiss*, both of them Czechoslovak films, will be shown at Central Hall."—*Nebraska Signal*, June 26, 1924.

If the producers of the Czechoslovak films had any hopes that they might find a ready market in Milligan they were doomed to disappointment. Such films were regarded more as curiosities than as regular film diet. Perhaps once a year films do penetrate from the European hinterland to the Nebraska prairie. When some important event such as a Sokol tournament occurs in Bohemia, films are usually made and sent to the United States. Pictures of the tournament held in 1920 were shown in Milligan several months after it was held.

Czech films are infrequent visitors to Milligan, while Hollywood productions are seen several times weekly. Here a typical hero pursues a typical villain and rescues a typical heroine from his clutches. The effect of these films on Milligan is much the same as anywhere else in America. This indicates the type of movie often shown locally:

"*The Sage Hen*, which will be shown at the Gem Theater Sunday, April 9, is a drama that goes straight to the mother heart of the world, being the poignant story of an outcast woman of the early West who was branded with the scarlet letter and turned out in the desert with her little son to die."—*Nebraska Signal*, April 6, 1922.

When "talkies" came, Milligan did not lag behind. Early in the spring of 1930 the talkies made their first appearance in Milligan:

"The Central Theater . . . has installed talkie equipment and gave its first public performance Saturday. . . . This equipment is being installed at an expense of about \$2,000. It compares favorably with that of the smaller theaters in our neighboring towns."—*Nebraska Signal*, March 20, 1930.

See also account of *J. J. Klima*.

CIVIC ACTIVITIES

Funrall Park (City Park)

The Funrall Park is located in the northern part of Milligan on the four 50-foot lots where stood Milligan's first schoolhouse, built in 1888. The ground was donated for this purpose by the Kansas City & Omaha R.R., operating through Milligan at that time. The park is bounded on the north by the American Legion Park and a part of the present school grounds. On the east, it is bounded by Nebraska Highway 41, as it comes through the town.

Such a park had long been of interest to the Woman's Club. The first beginning is credited to a "Krousek" (club) of public-spirited women who, between 1914 and 1920, started the project on this site when the Milligan school was shifted to its present location in 1913. The women got help in cleaning up the old site and built the arbor (which still stands) and tables and benches. Later, the Woman's Club adopted the park; with an eye to business as well as to general hospitality, it was called the Tourist Park. The American Legion (J. V. Charvat, Commander) was responsible for planting the cedars.

For a few years before 1939, the club paid for the mowing of the grass and some members planted and cultivated shrubbery there. However, upon hearing a report that the village board would prefer that the women stay out of the park, so far as upkeep was concerned, the club discontinued these activities.

In 1939, the Woman's Club members each planted two Chinese elms in the park, as described in the account of the club. Ten years later, in the spring of 1949, when the club entered the "Build a Better Community" contest, they convened a meeting of presidents or representatives of all the organizations in the Milligan community to discuss the project, and were pleased to find a general consensus in favor of renovating the city park.

The organizations made an impressive roster. Besides the club itself, they were: the Knights of Pythias, Pythian Sisters, American Legion and Auxiliary, Lodge Cechie, Lodge Rabi, Lodge Cornhusker, Lodge Svatopluk Cech, Altar Society, Women's Society of Christian Service, Milligan Project Club, Milligan Junior Project Club, Liberty

Homemakers, Jolly Farmerettes, Sunnyside Club, Volunteer Firemen, Sokol, Dramatic Club, Village Board, and Board of Education of District 71.

On May 17, 1949, the Woman's Club then voted to carry out the project, and the newly installed president, Miss Agnes M. Capek, appointed a park committee: Mrs. A. R. Jensen, Mrs. Norman Dunker, and Mrs. James Vavra. This committee drew up the plans and appointed the Rev. C. C. Stirn, pastor of St. Wenceslaus' Church, as general manager.

Chairmen were appointed to take charge of various units of the work: Fence building, James Laun; Sand boxes and general repair, Norman Dunker; Painting, Robert C. Dvorak; Fireplaces, Fred Hospodsky; Tennis and volley-ball court, A. R. Jensen; Lighting, Ernest Kotas; Necessary removal of trees, William H. Kotas; Weed control and mowing, Norman Steinacher; Picnic tables and benches, Joe M. Oliva; Installing water fountain, moving in bandstand, and leveling dirt, and taking pictures, J. J. Halama.

It would perhaps not be worth the space to list such details except to show the complexities, and the real need for unified co-operation, in even an apparently simple community project. From the moment the plans were made, every effort was put forth to see that every organization had some part in the actual fulfillment.

All work was donated. Everyone was enthusiastic and pitched in, with hopes of completing the project by the middle of June; but a rainy season slowed or halted progress many times. When the project was started, the neglected park had an arbor badly in need of paint; a table of very little value inside the arbor; a practically unrepairable picnic table with attached benches; outdoor toilets with doors breaking off at the hinges, much in need of paint and rather too well hidden in shrubbery; broken trees in need of trimming, and dead branches all over the place; and weeds, and more weeds. There was much work to be done.

Finally, not too much later than originally planned, the work drew to a close. The park had a complete new look. There were two open fireplaces, with near-by picnic tables and benches; facilities for horseshoe-pitching and croquet; a tennis and volley-ball court: sand boxes (old tractor tires put to use) for the children; and a rustic rail fence, running the length of the park. The bandstand was moved into the park and screened. Lighting facilities made the park usable in the evenings. The toilets were repaired and painted, and playground equipment was purchased.

Figuring the donated labor at about 50 cents an hour, and costs for material and equipment at wholesale prices, thanks to the co-operation of local businessmen, it was calculated that the cash value of the park project came to about \$2,500.

A "Name-the-Park" contest was held which was entered by more than 30 people. Miss Betty Ann Slezak won the prize for her suggestion of "Funfrall."

The park was formally dedicated on a late-July evening in 1949, with the Rev. C. C. Stirn as speaker and a gathering of about 700 people. Since the dedication, more picnic tables and more recreational equipment have been added, using money from occasional donations and money raised by the Woman's Club, largely from lunch sales at the annual picnics.



Photo from Mrs. Emil Havel
Professor Vesley's Band. This group played for all orations and even funerals. Standing, left to right: George Boxa, Joe Yeck, Lou Philysi, Frank Laun. Seated, left to right: Emil Yeck, Albert Boxa, Professor Vesely, John Styskal.



Left: Organizers of Funfrall Park: Mrs. Frank Hamouz, Rev. C. C. Stirn, and Betty Ann Slezak (who won the prize for naming the park). Right: View of the park.



Photo from Guy Brown, Jr.
Milligan Auditorium, with Post Office on left.

The New Auditorium

For some years Milligan had needed a new auditorium. The old hall had been built in the 1890's and was very inadequate. In 1929, a campaign for funds was inaugurated and about \$15,000 was raised. When bids were asked, the committee discovered that a suitable hall could not be built for less than \$50,000. An appeal was made to the lodges to raise the necessary money. They put on an intensive drive for funds, and succeeded in raising an additional \$10,000. The committee decided to start building the hall, relying upon the sale of \$25,000 worth of bonds to complete the cost of the building.

It was not an easy matter to sell the bonds. But if the committee had waited until all the bonds had been sold, the auditorium would never have been built. Before ground was broken for the new building, the committee expressed its disappointment at its lack of success.

"... The committee which undertook to raise the money by voluntary subscriptions was very much surprised and disappointed in the raising of funds. With but a few exceptions the amount subscribed by different individuals was far below that which the committee expected. In a number of cases they came away empty-handed, when they had felt sure of a liberal donation.

"The difficulty seems to lie in the fact that the people who have means haven't the generous spirit and the people who have the generous spirit haven't the means. It is no small project that the community has undertaken and it will require the loosening of the purse strings more than the exercise of the vocal cords to put the project through."—*Nebraska Signal*, October 17, 1929.

After the ground was broken, the community took great interest in the construction and longed to see the building completed. In November, 1929, the committee decided to issue the bonds, urging everybody to "Buy a Bond and By a Bond be Bound to Milligan." In this same month the necessity of completing a given piece of construction before freezing weather set in made it imperative for the men of the community to give of their muscles as well as of their money.

"'Everybody works but father' is a thing of the past in the present day when necessity requires everybody working, including father. Friday the contractor at work on the community auditorium was particularly desirous of having as much concrete poured as possible for fear freezing weather might set in and seriously retard the progress of the work. He let his wants be known to Jim Charvat and Jim said to him, says he, 'I can get you all the men you want who will stay on the job until it is finished.'

"So Jim proceeded to spread the news that all able-bodied men were requested to be at the auditorium by 6:30 that evening and help pour concrete until the contractor hollered 'nuff.' About 50 fellows were on the job at the appointed time.

"It was a jolly crowd. Wheeling that wheelbarrow up a steep incline wasn't light work, either. Some of those wheelbarrows didn't seem to have the carburetor working right and some of them seemed to be running on flat tires, but the push behind them kept them going until the job was completed. The building of King Solomon's temple or the construction of the Chinese Wall must have been some job, but when you get together a bunch of fellows who seem to have the spirit there just isn't anything that can't be accomplished."—*Nebraska Signal* November 21, 1929.

In April, 1930, a month before the auditorium was dedicated, the last of these bonds were sold. More than one person borrowed money at a high rate of interest to buy bonds which gave a smaller return. When the bonds were all sold the local correspondent complimented the community on its achievement:

"The financing of this \$50,000 project speaks volumes for this community. The past six months haven't been especially favorable for the raising of ready cash for the reason that prices of farm products have been unsatisfactory and farmers haven't been selling, but in spite of all this the money has been raised and we have witnessed another demonstration of what a community can do when a respectable number of people get behind a project and determine to stay with it until it is achieved."—*Nebraska Signal*, April 17, 1930.

Each week the newspaper reported the progress made during the previous week. As the building neared completion, the committee was confronted with the problem of its dedication. Elaborate plans were made, and for three days Milligan gave itself up to rejoicing and congratulations.

"As originally planned, the dedication of the new auditorium comprised three days. It had not been planned, however, that they should be three hectic days. The plans and specifications called for three sunshiny days, but the committee had some misgivings about this and as a precaution invested in some rain insurance, and they surely had need of it. It rained Friday and it rained Saturday. It didn't rain Sunday, but that made no difference, because the roads couldn't have been any sloppier if it had rained for the last 30 days.

"But even the rain couldn't stop the fitting climax which had been planned for observing in a fitting manner the completion of so fine a project as the construction of this splendid public building. All of the programs were carried out as planned, and while they were not witnessed by capacity houses, the attendance was such as to demonstrate conclusively that under favorable weather conditions the attendance would have been of such proportions as to have made it beyond all power to take care of the throngs. As it was, it was possible to handle the visitors satisfactorily and send them home with a desire to come again."—*Nebraska Signal*, May 1, 1930.

On Friday the ceremonies opened with a concert and a dance. On Saturday the governor of the state and other notables gave addresses. But on Saturday evening a problem confronted the committee.

"Saturday evening was designated for the jazz dance. A ten-piece high-priced orchestra was engaged from Omaha for the occasion. At about 7:30 they called up from Seward that they were having trouble with one of their cars, but would send seven of their men on ahead and the rest would follow later, if possible. About an hour later they called again that they couldn't come at all. The dance committee sweated blood and oozed tears and almost swore.

"They called up frantically everywhere they had ever heard of an orchestra being. They called up York, Clay Center, and Lincoln. They called Crete and Tobias, thinking dances there might have been called off and their orchestras be available. But to no avail. Something had to be done. So finally Jim Ach with his accordion and the help of his two sons and John Kucera took their places on the stage and substituted for Jimmy's Serenaders. Jim did a good job of it. That is, Jim Ach did. If the Omaha Jim with his serenaders had made half the effort to fulfill his contract that Jim Ach made to please the crowd, there would have been no disappointment."—*Nebraska Signal*, May 1, 1930.

On Sunday afternoon and evening local dramatic societies presented two Czech plays in the native tongue. Bad roads cut down the number but not the spirit of the audiences.

"During all three days the bazaar was in progress and meals were served in the basement. The total receipts from all sources have not yet been definitely ascertained, but they will not be far from the \$3,000 mark. Hundreds of people were kept away by the rain and the condition of the roads. The management is considering repeating the two plays, giving one of them on one Sunday evening and the other the next Sunday evening. This would give our friends from a distance an opportunity to see the new hall and witness a demonstration of how it meets the needs of the community. Should this be determined upon, the final announcement will be made in a few days. In the meantime, the hectic days are over and the auditorium is formally dedicated."—*Nebraska Signal*, May 1, 1930.

So Milligan reached another peak, took another step along the long road which is called progress. After the dedication was over, life returned to normal again, and the people of Milligan let down and began to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

People cannot always live on the heights, nor is all community spirit exhibited there, although it is at these times of high achievement that the spirit of the community is most manifest. It finds expression also in its modern school, its seven blocks of paved streets, its water department, and its electric lights, which are no longer turned off at midnight.

FAMILIES

J. J. Klima, who became president of the Farmers and Merchants Bank in 1954, is also known for his interest in motion pictures. He first became interested in movies in 1937, when he acquired a motion-picture camera and projector. During following years, he took motion pictures of various community events and family get-togethers and each year showed the pictures at some public gathering. From this project stemmed his interest in a community theater, and in the fall of 1940, he succeeded in interesting the Milligan Auditorium and the business houses in entering into a co-operative motion-picture enterprise.

He purchased the equipment with his own funds, and agreed to donate it to the Community Club when the profits of the project returned his investment to him. The business houses contributed weekly to the cost of the operation. The first show was held on September 19, 1941. The admission for a Saturday night show was 15 cents, and every customer at the Saturday show received a free ticket for the following Wednesday's show. The theater was operated on this basis for 17 years, although the price had to be raised when World War II increased costs.

Mr. Klima operated the enterprise without any compensation

until 1958, when he transferred the motion-picture equipment to the Community Club. Leonard Kassik then took over the management, and continued to operate it, also without compensation, until June, 1962, when the rising competition of television forced it to bite the dust.

The projector is still housed in the Auditorium, and gets used now and then on special occasions.

The building which now stands on Lot 8 in Block 7 was perhaps visited by everyone in this community at one time or another because for over 30 years it was occupied by **William Lohberger**, who operated a general shop there. He repaired everything from the minutest item to tractor engine.

The building was also occupied at various times by a butcher shop, a hardware store, and a theater. The theater was known as the Gem Theater and was run by E. J. Kotas and J. V. Kotas. (See *Movies*, earlier in this chapter.)

After Mr. Lohberger's death, the building was bought by Norman Steinacher, who operated an appliance store, with James Pavelka. In 1958, it was bought by Edward Bulin, who used it for storage.



Photo from Mrs. Ken Barnard J. J. Klima (1954).



Photo from Mrs. Joe Oliva Alois Petracek and grandson Robert Oliva (1935).



Photo from Mrs. Fred Kassik Dr. V. V. Smrha (1946).

Alois Petracek started to work for C. J. Cerveny in 1899. In 1904 he started a restaurant in the Vaclav Bernasek building where the Alois Jezek building is at present, later moving next door into the larger Bernasek building. Petracek walked 3 miles out in the country to buy milk and cream to make ice cream, and was the first in town to sell ice-cream cones. He also baked bread every other day for public sale, baking as many as 36 loaves in one day. For some time, Mr. and Mrs. Petracek made up 15 lunch pails daily for men working on the railroad.

In 1910, Mr. Petracek bought the Cerveny store and did business there until 1921, when he sold it to F. R. Soukup. In 1922, the Petraceks started a general merchandise store in the Frank Rozanek building. In 1923, they built a new store, and operated it until 1930, when they retired. Their daughter married Joe M. Oliva, who started in the construction business in Milligan in 1931.

Frank A. Placek started in the hardware business in 1887 and held the longest record of continuous service. Selling out the hardware store to William H. Kotas in 1937, Mr. Placek built the first electric light and power system, which served the town for many years, giving Milligan electric lights when most towns its size did not have them.

W. B. Saunders, known to everybody as Boone Saunders, was one of the lumbermen who made more than an average impression on the community; he learned to understand the Czech language, and was a charter member of the Milligan Knights of Pythias. During his stay in Milligan, he organized and managed a boys' baseball team, which, during his two years of management, lost only one game. On the team were boys from the families of Havel, Kotas, Lauvetz, Leisher, Trobaugh, Smrha, Janda, Holpuch, Motis, Luksik, Deams, Hrdy, and Rybin. Mr. Saunders left Milligan in 1905, to operate a lumber business in Gillette, Wyoming.

Dr. V. V. Smrha came with his parents to Milligan in 1894 at the age of 15. In 1895, he started teaching school, and in 1901 he entered Creighton University. After graduation in May, 1905, he returned to Milligan and started to practice medicine. During horse-and-buggy days, he crossed Turkey Creek many times when the horses had to swim and the buggy floated on the water. He also traveled in blizzards and on icy roads to answer sick calls, first using an automobile to answer calls in 1911. Dr. Smrha delivered more than 1,300 babies.

BLIZZARD

In the winter of 1951, in response to a query in the *Nebraska Signal* as to how many were still around who remembered the blizzard of Jan. 12, 1888, many interesting letters were received. Almost every township had its story.

Henry Podlesak of Chicago, who was a rural teacher at the time, wrote as follows:

"In the forenoon it was warm, springlike, enough so that the older pupils went home at noon to help cut and clear cornstalks so the fields could be plowed. By afternoon recess it was getting cold and somewhat windy so that I rang the bell right after recess started. By the time all pupils got in it had begun to blow quite hard. All pupils got in and a few tiny icicles made themselves felt.

"I knew at once what was coming. We had very little water in the bucket and very little coal in the shed, so I decided to apportion the children to the nearest farms. I took seven of the smaller ones to the Steinacher farm, which was nearest, and believe me it was some job against the wind which was blowing very hard by then. I carried Tenny Placek and dragged Emil Placek, that now famous banker at Wahoo.

"The Biba and Hodek children were among the first allocations. Then I took six to the old Kotas farm. That trip was not so bad, being with the wind, but coming back to the school house was no fun. I took five to our farm which was with the wind, though a little across it. Two of the largest boys I took to Anton Kotas's farm to the east of the school. The trip was across the wind and believe you me when I got home I was all in, froze out and worn out.

"The school was District 44 in Glengary township. There were two deaths due to freezing in our neighborhood, a Mrs. Masek who lived north of where the town of Milligan now stands but which at that time was non-existent, and a man who was found frozen near the old Andrle farm which was north of the Masek farm. The man was never identified. All of the quail and rabbits were frozen and it took about two years to replace them."

A later issue of the *Signal* gives further details reporting on Mrs. Masek's death. We read: "Hitherto all stories of the blizzard have dealt with escape from human tragedy, but this week our first story is about a little known tragedy that stands out clearly in the mind of a Geneva resident, Mrs. Mary Matejka, who lost her mother in the big blizzard. Newspaper files of the time do not seem to report the tragedy but several residents of Geneva recall that a woman was frozen to death, although the name of the woman and the details of her death are apparently not known to many.

"Mrs. Matejka, the former Mary Masek, was 12 years old at the time of the storm and she gives a good description of the blizzard which took her mother's life.

"Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Masek, were immigrants to this country and the family lived in a sod house one and one half miles west of the present town of Milligan. Mary and her brother Charles were not in school the day of the storm but their brother Thomas was. Her father was ill and unable to be out so he sent her to feed the horses. She said the wind blew the hay out of her hands as fast as she could pull it out of the stack. The snow was like rice and the wind whistled so loud she couldn't hear anything else. She could just barely see her hand in front of her face.

"When the storm struck, Mrs. Masek became worried about Tom (in school) and decided to walk the one and one half miles to school to get him. Mrs. Matjeka says her mother arrived at school all right but everyone was gone. It developed later that Tom spent the night with a family by the name of Hanson. Mrs. Masek started home but apparently she became exhausted and fell beside the road in front of what was then the John Kotas home. Mr. Masek and the children worried all night about their wife and mother, but they decided she must have remained all night at the school house.

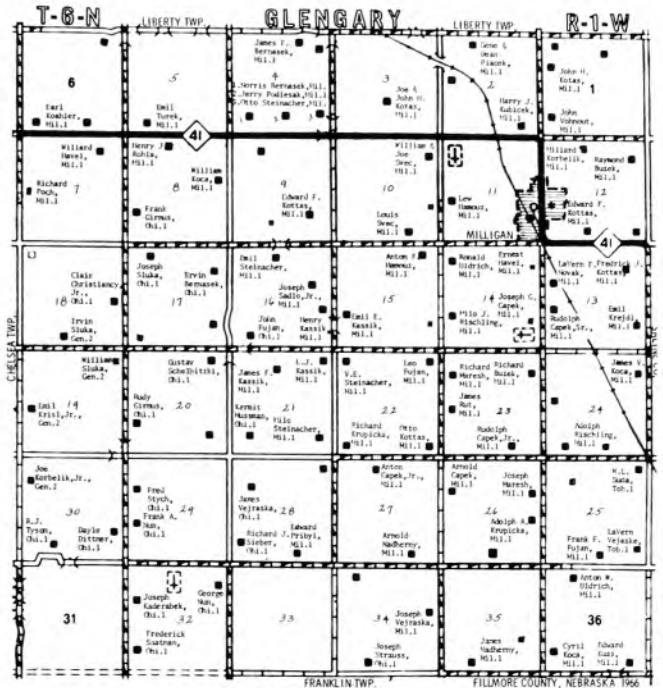
"When Mrs. Masek failed to arrive home the next morning, Charles went to find her. He found her frozen to death. Neighbors came to the assistance of the Maseks and helped them bury her in a private cemetery near Milligan. Later Mr. Masek was buried in the Milligan south cemetery. Here Mrs. Masek rests in an unmarked grave, one of the unsung heroines of the storm which took so many lives."

PUREBRED SIRE TRAIN

It was in 1924 that the purebred sire train came to Milligan. The article in the county paper which describes the affairs has a headline in large capital letters, "Milligan's Big Day." Subheads contained the words "A Tremendous Crowd, Great Enthusiasm and Remarkable Parade." An understanding of the great day is best through the description of the town correspondent:

"The big day came Thursday, October 23, and 3,718 individuals passed through the train and viewed the exhibits. The afternoon was given over to the biggest and finest parade of floats ever seen in Fillmore County. Thirty-one floats of local business houses, local lodges, district school, old-time farm implements, flail threshing, and retired farmers were in line.

"The Farmers and Merchants Bank float led the parade. It was



prettily decorated, advertising over half a million dollars on deposit and saying that the local bank reflected the prosperity of the locality. Adolph Zeman had four International tractors in line advertising the fact that one can plow for gold by plowing deep. James Bors had a nicely decorated Fordson resembling a submarine. The Milligan Lumber Company had a pretty bungalow with children playing in it and a decorated lawn.

"The Farmers Co-operative Company had about 24 men pulling a loaded farm wagon, [representing] . . . the idea that enough men must pull together to make the proper progress. Kassik & Sons had a well-decorated truck advertising their mill products and their elevator.

"All three local Western Bohemian Fraternal Association lodges had floats. The most elaborate of these was that of Lodge Rabi, which displayed a large emblem and a home fireside with the breadwinner absent and the widow and the children receiving the benefits of the fraternal insurance. They displayed the motto, "Keep the Home Fires Burning." Lodge Svatopluk Cech displayed an old-time Cech plow and depicted an event in Bohemian history. The ladies' lodge Cechie had a decorated car in which rode Mrs. Katherine Smrha, the oldest local member, together with the youngest members, the six-year-old Elenore Hrdy and others."—*Nebraska Signal*, October 30, 1924.

Several of the district schools had floats depicting the value of education and the necessity of using purebred sires. The American Legion float won first prize.

"The finest float and the one receiving first prize was the American Legion float. They had a truck decorated to resemble a hospital room. The truck driver was hidden under a piece of furniture. On a cot lay a stricken soldier who was attended by two beautiful nurses. No wonder he was stricken! The float was escorted by soldiers and sailors and had a most beautiful emblem worked out in corn and wheat. It was certainly a dandy float, and well deserved the prize.

"The old-time flail threshing was pictured by Mrs. Ignac Sebesta and Mrs. Vaclav Halama, Albert Frycek and Vaclav Svajgr, dressed in Bohemian national costume. Their float was prettily decorated and they made a pretty picture threshing wheat, oats, and rye. Following this float was one decorated with farm products in which rode many retired farmers and their wives, sitting in rockers, some reading, others smoking and talking amongst themselves and having much enjoyment. They illustrated the fact that this territory is prosperous enough to retire its older members to comfort and rest. Their float bore the motto, "We have Earned Our Comfort."

"The surrounding farmers got up a float that was a joke on the businessmen. About twenty-five farmers decorated a float that was escorted by four pretty clowns, while they themselves were decorated with scarfs across their noble chests, each with the name of the businessman he burlesqued. The whole represented a session of the Chamber of Commerce. E. E. Slepicka represented Dr. Smrha as president of the chamber and he explained the meaning of the assembly. He was followed by Vaclav Ach, who has much forensic ability and who represented Charles Smrha. He read the minutes of the previous meeting. The motions that were made and the debate that followed were read out of the minutes and were most comical and entertaining."—*Nebraska Signal*, October 30, 1924.

"The train visited thirty-one points in the state. At but one stop did the number of those passing through the train exceed that at Milligan, and this was Broken Bow. Something over 4,000 people passed through the train there, so that Milligan lacked but few to be the top-notch of the state."—*Nebraska Signal*, October 30, 1924.