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NEBRASKA DURING THE CIVIL WAR
(1861-1867)

BY
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A THESIS

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OMAHA, 1948
To an inspiring teacher

who has made the study of History more fascinating than fiction.
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this investigation is to show how the Nebraska Territory and its people between 1861 and 1867 were affected by the Civil War and the political and economic issues of the period. Attitudes and reactions on the frontier were shaped by Territorial politics, federal legislation, economic developments in the far West, and by the war itself. Regardless of political upheaval that eventually prompted it to agitate for state organization in 1864 to 1867, its marvelous internal growth and resultant prosperity will be given due consideration as well as the effect of outside forces upon the settlers. It was a time when the length and breadth of our country was sounded for its loyalty to the Union, and Nebraska was not found wanting.

This study is based primarily on material gathered from the Nebraska Territorial newspapers, both Democratic and Republican, periodicals, and works from 1861 to 1867 inclusive until the time when Nebraska became a state in the Union.

At times it was difficult to determine in every instance public opinion and relative attitudes that would answer for the people of a given section, since individual expressions from local newspaper columns without doubt do
not always voice the opinion of the majority, especially if politics influences the local press. Sometimes it seemed merely an attempt to mold public opinion. The temper of the people can quite accurately be gauged, however, on the various individual incidents that receive corresponding reactions throughout the Territory. The Nebraska Territorial newspapers that were used by the author to substantiate most of the information in this study are as follows: The Nebraska Advertiser, edited by Robert W. Furnas, later governor of Nebraska, was one of the most influential Republican papers in the Territory, especially in the vicinity of Brownville. The Nebraska Republican was the foremost Republican paper in the Territory. The Omaha Nebraskan, a Democratic sheet established in 1854 and published in the interest of Bird B. Chapman, Nebraska's first Territorial delegate to Congress, was probably the most influential Democratic paper in the Territory. The Omaha Daily Herald and the Nebraska City News were both Democratic papers, the first established in 1865 and the latter established by J. Sterling Morton in 1860 to 1862 at Nebraska City. The remaining newspapers, periodicals, and works will be found in the footnotes and bibliography.

A conscious effort has been made to sift the facts from the various sources, especially from newspapers.
that carried party affiliations but wove the interesting historical reactions of a frontier people influenced by conflicting forces at work from within and especially from without during this period of our American history.

At the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 the Nebraska Territory lost much of its original area of 351,556¹ square miles by the creation of the Dakota Territory out of that part lying north of the Niobrara river between forty-three and forty-four degrees north latitude, while the southwestern corner became a part of the Territory of Colorado that same year. In 1863 all that district west of the twenty-seventh meridian and east of Washington became a part of the Idaho Territory.² This reduced Nebraska to its present size and shape. The southern boundary remained fixed at forty degrees north latitude in spite of the fact that the district south of the Platte had attempted to secede and become a part of Kansas; but Kansas had enough troubles of its own and did not care to annex a country largely Democratic.³ So the Territorial boundaries throughout the


³Mrs. Alexander C. Troup, History of Nebraska Compiled for Colonial Dames (Omaha: 1915), p. 34.
period of the Civil War embraced an area of only 77,520 square miles of prairie land.

A territorial government functioned in the Nebraska Territory during the Civil War period. It conducted five sessions of the legislative body during that time. This body consisted of a council of thirteen members and an assembly of at least twenty-six which might be increased by the legislative assembly in proportion to the number of qualified voters. The number in the assembly never exceeded forty during the Civil War. For the first time in the history of the Territory the Republicans controlled both departments and in 1861 received an appointment of a Republican governor.

With the National Government in the hands of the Republican party, Alvin Saunders of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, had been appointed the fifth governor of the Nebraska Territory by President Lincoln on March 26, 1861. Before Mr. Saunders assumed his duties as governor on May 15, 1861, ten states had seceded, the Confederacy had been organized, the call had been issued for 75,000 men

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5Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska, 1854-1887 (Lincoln: A special publication of the Nebraska State Historical Society, 1941), I, 157.
in the North and 32,000 in the South, and President Lincoln had ordered the blockade of all Southern ports.

After four years of successful service, Mr. Saunders was reappointed by Lincoln in April 1865, just previous to the president’s assassination. The circumstances of this reappointment were so peculiar and yet so interesting that we quote from Saunders’ account as given in Mr. Tipton’s article the exact incident of a sacred memory:

I saw Mr. Lincoln, who told me to return home, as it was all right and he would attend to the commission. I started for home in the morning, and in the evening of the same day he was killed. I telegraphed back to find out what had become of my commission, and learned that the commission was found on the table unfolded, with his signature attached. It was not signed by Mr. Seward. I have the commission in Mr. Lincoln’s name, but the appointment was actually made out by Mr. Johnson. 6

He served six years until Nebraska became a State in 1867.

At the request of Seward, Algerin S. Paddock, a strong anti-slavery man, was appointed secretary of the Territory. He served as acting governor during a considerable part of this period because of the frequent

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6 Thomas W. Tipton, "Forty Years of Nebraska at Home and in Congress," Proceedings and Collections of the Nebraska Historical Society (Lincoln: State Journal Co., 1902), IV, 61-63.
and prolonged absence of Governor Saunders. The Democrats referring to the Governor's frequent absence from duty made the following comment in the Nebraska City News, a pertinent indication of that political bickering of party politics in the Territory.

Governor Saunders, of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, is in Nebraska on a visit. He arrived at Omaha on last Wednesday.

The breaking out of the Civil War caused a temporary relaxation of party spirit, but by 1864 the Democratic party became extremely critical concerning the prosecution of the war. Hence there developed a strong pro-war and pro-union group which led to the adoption of the "Union" party platform instead of "Republican." This was done partly to draw into their ranks Democrats who favored the war and those who would never want to be known as "Black Republicans." Both parties, nevertheless, were interested in the political and especially the economic development of the Territory, notwithstanding the many conflicting forces that shaped the attitudes and destiny of a frontier people.

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7 Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska, 1854-1887, 1, 233 (1941).

8 The Nebraska City News, August 31, 1861.

9 Addison Erwin Sheldon, Nebraska: The Land and the People (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1931), 1, 325.
CHAPTER I

THE EFFECTS OF THE WESTWARD MOVEMENT
ON THE NEBRASKA TERRITORY

Amidst the turmoil of the Civil War, Congress in 1862 passed the first Homestead Act. This Act granted land to actual settlers on the public domain and made it easy for those without money to obtain farm homes.

Nebraskans were quick to perceive the economic and political significance of such legislation. It meant wealth for the Territory in material production as well as an increase in population that would eventually make possible their one ambition (at least to the Republicans) --organization for statehood. Territorial newspapers emphasized the advantages of the Territory and encouraged settlers by advertising the opportunities for the poor man to become wealthy. A suggestion was offered by the

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1U. S. Statutes at Large, XII, 392 (1862).

2When the Homestead Act went into effect on January 1, 1863, the first claim in the Territory as well as in the United States was taken by Daniel Freeman along Cub Creek in Gage county a few miles from Beatrice. To this day it is a landmark of interest and is called the Freeman Homestead. Daniel Freeman was a soldier in the Union army who had taken a short furlough at which time he made a fast trip to Nebraska, looked over the country for a new home for post-war days, and made his claim. Rev. Eugene Hagedorn, O.F.M., Franciscans in Nebraska (Humphrey, Nebraska: Democrat Publishing Co., 1931), p. 12.
editor of The Nebraska Advertiser as to how one could make a fortune by raising one hundred acres of black locust that would yield $10,000 in ten years. If this timber could not be used for anything else the railroad company would buy it for ties. The editor insisted that letters inquiring about the advantages and the securing of a homestead in Nebraska be answered. Thus friends would be assured of obtaining good lands. Slowly but surely the immigrants took advantage of the cheap land and free homes. The real immigration did not begin, however, until after the war; the percentage of increase in homestead acreage of 1865 exceeding that of all other years of the period by ten per cent, 1864 being the lowest.

Most of the farmers in Nebraska came from the Northern and Eastern states, for the Homestead Act of May 20, 1862, favored Northern homeseekers over Southern. All those who had borne arms against the government or had given aid or comfort to the Confederacy were tarred.

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3The Nebraska Advertiser, June 26, June 5, 1862.


5L. R. Hafen and C. C. Rister, Western America, the Exploration, Settlement and Development of the Region Beyond the Mississippi (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1941), p. 423.
Even though a large Southern element entered the southern counties to escape the confusion of war, they were never strong enough to be a power in society. Price's invasion of Missouri in 1864 caused a great number of secessionists to migrate into Nebraska along with deserters from Price's army who thinking the war was about over had started for the mountains. Hence it was that during the latter part of November and through December of 1864 a vast number of emigrants and mule teams came through mostly from Missouri.6

By the late spring of 1864 Nebraskans could truly say

... the emigration has really commenced. For the past three weeks, small trains of one, two, three wagons have passed through almost daily, but now the tide has fairly set in. Our streets are thronged with pilgrims and our merchants are doing a "big thing" in the outfitting line. One firm ... in two days made sales amounting to $7,000.7

Between 1864 and 1866 train after train passed through Omaha where the merchants reaped a lucrative trade from the emigrants. The Nebraska Republican stated that fifty-seven emigrant teams with one hundred voters

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7 The Omaha Nebraskan, April 22, 1864.
(Prussians) had come from Wisconsin during the month of July 1866, to find homes along the Elkhorn River, and that about three times as many were expected the following year from the same locality. Most of these immigrants that intended to remain in the Territory found homes along the Platte, Elkhorn, and Missouri rivers.

The mustering out of the Union troops after the war between 1865 and 1866 brought vast numbers of veterans to Nebraska to try their fortune. Most of them came in groups or by families to become permanent settlers of the Territory or to work on the railroad.

The roads to the gold fields of Colorado, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana lay through Nebraska. Streams of migration struck Nebraska at Brownville, Nebraska City, and Omaha converging at Fort Kearney where they went on together into the valley of the Platte following either the Mormon or the Oregon trail on the south side of the river. This mass of wagons with their occupants and live stock moved slowly on, not for a day but for weeks. No less than 3,263 emigrant wagons passed through Omaha during May 1864. Some five to ten thousand persons migrated

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8 The Nebraska Republican, July 20, 1866.
9 Curley, op. cit., p. 194.
10 The Omaha Nebraskan, June 3, 1864.
across the plains of Nebraska each summer.\(^\text{11}\) During the month of June 1865 approximately 4,000 emigrants passed Fort Laramie bound west with nearly 18,000 head of stock.\(^\text{12}\) In 1866 there was still no let up to the stream of emigration.\(^\text{13}\)

An account in the *Nebraskan* of a day in Omaha, in April 1864, tells us that:

... streets are jammed with teams from morn till night. In fact, everything betokens good times and indicates better at no distant day.\(^\text{14}\)

The merchants did a tremendous business. The river towns, such as Nebraska City, Florence, and Bellevue, competed with each other in being the outfitting center for the gold seekers.\(^\text{15}\) Omaha continued to maintain that she was the best outfitting point on the Missouri.\(^\text{16}\)

Although but a small proportion of those on their way to the far west stopped in the Territory, farmers in the Platte Valley found a sure market for their produce

\(^\text{11}\)Sheldon, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

\(^\text{12}\)*The Nebraska Republican*, July 28, 1865.

\(^\text{13}\)*Ibid.*, July 6, 1865.

\(^\text{14}\)*The Omaha Nebraskan*, April 1, May 6, 1864.


\(^\text{16}\)*The Omaha Nebraskan*, April 1, 1864.
in providing for the trains to Denver or Great Salt Lake, while Omaha profited by selling large supplies of goods for the mountain regions.\textsuperscript{17} The coming and going of strangers that brought new life and energy into the river towns was indeed a distraction from the confusion of war and molestations of Indians.

Not only gold seekers but Mormons trekked their way across the plains of Nebraska to their new location at Great Salt Lake. Most of them, however, had gone between 1853 and 1860,\textsuperscript{18} but in July 1861, Mormons who resided at Florence, Nebraska, left for their new settlement. Others by the hundreds passed through Omaha from the Missouri towns; in 1863 some two thousand awaited passage to Omaha from St. Joseph and thence across to Utah.\textsuperscript{19} Many were still migrating as late as 1866,\textsuperscript{20} for from five to ten thousand Mormons yearly took the Overland Route to Salt Lake.\textsuperscript{21}

Military protection for overland emigrants to

\textsuperscript{17}\textit{The Nebraska Republican}, December 28, 1866.

\textsuperscript{18}Alfred Sorenson, \textit{Early History of Omaha or Walks Among the Old Settlers} (Omaha: Daily Bee Office, 1876), p. 16.

\textsuperscript{19}\textit{The Omaha Nebraskan}, Aug. 7, July 31, 1863.

\textsuperscript{20}\textit{The Nebraska Republican}, July 6, 1866.

\textsuperscript{21}\textit{The Omaha World-Herald}, December 1, 1865.
the Pacific and gold miners of Idaho became necessary because the West was inhabited by hostile tribes. Under military orders no train was permitted to leave Fort Kearney with less than one hundred armed men. But Mormons, evidently not fearing the Indians, traveled the North Platte Road and through the South Pass without a military escort. However, The Nebraska Republican of September 29, 1865, tells a different story and gives an account of a Mormon train actually attacked by Indians:

A Mormon train of 200 armed men was attacked by 12 Indians, 15 miles west of this place on the 24th. One man was killed and six wounded and one woman taken prisoner. The parties had been straggling two miles from the road, and had been warned of the proximity of hostile Indians.

The route north of the Platte was abandoned during the troubled years of 1864-1866, but with the return of more peaceful relations the original trail was resumed.

Homesteaders, Mormons, and gold seekers poured with increasing momentum over the western banks of the

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22The Omaha Nebraskan, March 11, 1864.
23Ware, op. cit., p. 102.
24The Nebraska Republican, September 29, 1865.
Missouri and out on and over the plains of Nebraska. The natives grasped the opportunity to increase their economic wealth, while the politician welcomed and encouraged the influx of travelers. He thought of them as permanent residents to swell the population, for an increase in population was vitally necessary for state organization. Sometimes local papers influenced by this motive greatly exaggerated the possible increase and stated the number by 1866 between 80,000 and 100,000. In 1860 the population numbered 28,684. No accurate census was taken after that, but these fabulous figures were derived from the great influx of immigrants. It was assumed that all who came into the Territory remained.

26 The Nebraska Republican, December 28, 1866.
28 T. M. Marquett, "The Admission of Nebraska into the Union," Transactions and Reports of Nebraska Historical Society (Lincoln: Lincoln Printing Co., 1893), V, 125-27.
CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS
AND RELATIVE PROSPERITY

All through the great struggle a lively interest in local transportation and communication animated the Nebraska frontier. While the war raged furiously during those first years, telegraph lines were constructed over the great plains of Nebraska and across the continent.

The first incentive for telegraph building came June 16, 1860, when Congress granted a $40,000 subsidy a year for ten years for the construction of telegraph lines from some point on the Missouri to San Francisco. This line had to be in actual operation within two years from July 31, 1860, before the contract could be signed.¹

The first telegraph line was completed between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Brownville, Nebraska, August 29, 1860.² By September 10 the line was completed to Omaha and from there to Kearney in time to receive the news of Lincoln’s election.³ From Fort Kearney the wires followed

²Sheldon, Nebraska Old and New (Lincoln: The University Publishing Co., 1931), pp. 181-82.
the south bank of the Platte for about two hundred miles to old Julesburg. In 1861 the Missouri and Western Company had also contracted to build a line from Brownville to Julesburg.

Edward Creighton, one of Omaha's most prominent citizens, who had long been interested in telegraph lines, made history in the telegraph world for Nebraska. When he was appointed superintendent and agent of the Stebbins and Pacific lines on May 29, 1861, he proceeded at once to carry out his contract to build a telegraph line from Julesburg to Salt Lake City. A telegraph office was established in the station house at Julesburg in charge of a Mr. Reynolds and work began on the line July 2, 1861. On July 5 Creighton left the construction crew to check on workmen along the line and scout for poles, the lack of which was their greatest problem. Practically all, however, were hauled from Cottonwood Springs.

In the attempt to complete a continental line the Pacific Telegraph Company had agreed to meet the

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4G. F. Root and W. E. Connelly, Overland Stage to California (Topeka: Published by the author, 1901), pp. 133-35.

5Nielson, op. cit., pp. 68-69, citing Omaha Daily Telegraph, April 2, April 16, May 25, 1861.

6Ibid., pp. 70, 72 (January, 1942).
Overland Telegraph Company from California at Salt Lake. The receipts were to be divided and the loser was to pay a bonus to the party that first reached Salt Lake. Creighton reached the place just one week before Mr. Street, thus completing the continental line October 17, 1861. That same day Creighton sent this telegram to his wife.

Fort Bridger, 17 Oct. 1861

To Mrs. E. Creighton

This being the first message over the line since its completion to Salt Lake allow me to greet you. In a few days two oceans will be connected.

E. Creighton

In 1863 Creighton sold one-third of his 300,000 shares in the Pacific Telegraph Company for $85,000. The following year he built another line from Julesburg to Denver and Central City, Colorado. March 17, 1864, the Western Union became a part of the Pacific Telegraph Company on a share for share basis. Until February 1867, Creighton remained superintendent of the lines out of Omaha.

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7P. A. Mullens, Edward Creighton (Omaha: Creighton University, 1901), pp. 15-16.

8Nielsen, op. cit., p. 72, citing from Mary Lucretia Creighton's scrapbook.

9Ibid., p. 73.
The completion of the telegraph lines in 1861 superseded the pony express which had operated only eighteen months along the old Oregon trail in Nebraska and from Fort Kearney westward.\textsuperscript{10} Telegraph lines made Nebraska the link of communication between the East and the West.

It is of some significance that stage coach service, while it had been abandoned in the South, continued to operate during the Civil War in the Territory until the railroad superseded it in 1866. Between 1861 and 1866 the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company operated between Omaha and Salt Lake, traveling by way of the Great Platte Route.\textsuperscript{11} By 1866 a daily line of "Concord Coaches" and tri-weekly fast freight lines had been established. In 1865 the Overland Stage Line operated from Omaha to Denver, carrying passengers to and from the mining regions of the West.\textsuperscript{12} In the same year Benjamin Holladay, who managed all stage lines, also carried the mail from Nebraska City and Omaha

\textsuperscript{10}John Sterling Morton, Illustrated History of Nebraska; a History of Nebraska from the Earliest Explorations of the Trans-Mississippi Region, 1905-1906, 1911 (Lincoln: Western Publishing & Engraving Co., 1905-1906, 1911), I, 98.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., pp. 94-95.

\textsuperscript{12}The Nebraska Republican, April 13, 1866; September 22, 1865.
to Kearney. All stage coaches, however, carried government mail.

The most dangerous part of the trip across the plains lay between Fort Kearney and Fort Cottonwood because of hostile Indian bands who made the country unsafe; consequently all people traveling in the coach were armed. Stage stations were about ten miles apart depending on the location of ranches. After the stage lines were abandoned the old station located about forty rods west of Fort Kearney was used by the army personnel for an office, eating station, and storehouse.

As the telegraph lines were being built across the plains and the railroad penetrated farther west, the Nebraska Territory did not neglect to carry on a local program for internal improvements. Between 1861 and 1867 the Territorial legislature passed laws for the construction of forty-four roads, six bridges and eight ferries. It is interesting to note the principal places where roads were to be constructed as listed in the

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13 Morton, op. cit., 1, 90.

14 Ware, op. cit., pp. 93-94.

Nebraska Territorial Laws, 1861-1867. However, the actual construction of these roads and bridges proposed by the Legislative Assembly between 1861 and 1867 cannot be substantiated since records on road construction in Nebraska give no information prior to 1916.

In 1861 Territorial roads were to be constructed from

St. James to Columbus,
Calhoun to Fontenelle,
Nebraska City to Tecumseh,
Plattsmouth to Fort Kearney,
Nebraska City to Brownville,
Rockport to Elkhorn,
Weeping Water to Salt Creek,
Table Rock to Nebraska City,
Fontenelle to the north bounds of Washington county,
Omaha city to or near a place called Hazelton,
Dakota City to Fort Kearney,
St. John to Ionia,
Nebraska City to New Fort Kearney (repealed),
Nebraska City to Plattsmouth (repealed).

In 1862 from

Omaha to Fontenelle—(to change the location of a part of Territorial road), Paid by two counties.
Columbus to Shell Creek,
A point on the Military road between Harshberger's and Bushnell's to Clear Creek (Paid by County),
St. John's to Ionia (Paid by the county),
Fort Calhoun to Elkhorn City,
Omaha to Fontenelle (Paid by two counties),
Omaha to Bellevue,
Dakota City to Fort Kearney, or some point on the Platte river,


Bellevue to Elkhorn City,
Cumming City to the Military bridge across the Elkhorn river,
Rockfort to the Florence and Fort Calhoun road near Ponca City,
Ponca City to Niobrara—road shall pass through towns of St. James, St. Helenea, Elm Grove, Frankfort, and Greentoro to Niobrara (Paid by two counties).\(^{18}\)

In 1864 roads were to be constructed from

Nebraska City to Brownville,
Dakota to Elkhorn river,
Brownville to Salt Basin,
Nemaha City to Kansas State line.\(^ {19}\)

In 1865 from

Plattsmouth city to intersect the Territorial road south of Salt Basin in Lancaster county,
Wyoming to Lancaster,
West Point to Ponca City,
Fort Calhoun to Fontenelle,
Forest City to south line of Lancaster county,
The toll bridge on the Little Nemaha to Roy's ferry on Big Nemaha,
Rulo to Blue Springs (to change a portion of the road),
Brownville to intersect a territorial road from Falls City to Nemaha City,
Simpson's Landing via Tekama to Logan Creek Mills,
St. Stephens to a point on the Military road from Leavenworth to Fort Kearney.

In 1867 from

Forest City to the Washington county line, near Elkhorn City,
Ionia City to the mouth of Humbug in Stanton county,
The North line of Gage county up the valley of the Big Blue river from West Point to Ponca City,

\(^{18}\) Laws of the Nebraska Territory, Dec. 5, 1860, 7th sess., pp. 227-36.

\(^{19}\) The Omaha Nebraskan, Jan. 22, Feb. 5, 1864.
A point on the wagon road in Otoe county to Columbus, Fort Clinton to Fontenelle, Jackson to intersect a road from Ponca to West Point, Lancaster to the Platte river opposite Fremont, West Point to North Fork, Plattsmouth to Blue river, Fontenelle to Columbus, St. Stephens to a point on Military road from Leavenworth to Fort Kearney. 20

Fifteen post roads were also to be built in the Nebraska Territory as legislated by the second session of the thirty-seventh Congress. 21

The people agitated not only for roads but also for bridges, pontoons, and ferries across their streams to help them expand their commercial interests in the Territory and to provide for the greater safety of emigrants and freighters. 22 In 1862 Territorial laws provided for the construction of five ferries across the Missouri River at Peru, Arago, and De Soto, as well as across the Nemaha River in Richardson county and at Decatur. Again in 1866 ferries were chartered to go across the Platte river in Sarpy county and Saunders county and across the Missouri at Rulo and Fort Calhoun. 23 By 1866


21 The Nebraska Advertiser, July 19, 1862.

22 The Omaha Nebraskan, May 25, 1865.

the Nebraska Ferry Company had a thriving business augmented by the immense tide of emigrants that came west that year. Through the efforts of General G. M. Dodge, Nebraska procured in 1865 several pontoons from the government, one across the Loup Fork and another across the Platte at Kearney. The Howe Truss railroad bridge 1505 feet in length was constructed across the Loup Fork at Columbus that same year and a pile bridge of 2640 feet across the North Fork of the Platte, east of North Platte, late in 1866.

The climax of this enthusiastic period of internal development in the Territory came in 1867 when acting Governor Paddock in his opening message to the twelfth session of the Legislative Assembly asked for the construction of a bridge over the Platte river. A balance of $78,000 in the treasury to be used for internal improvements, and the need for connecting more closely the north and south sections of the Territory.

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24 The Nebraska Republican, Aug. 4, June 16, June 19, 1865; July 27, 1866.

25 Statement by Paul Rigdon, Curator, Public Relations, Union Pacific Historical Museum, Omaha, personal interview.

26 There had been a toll bridge across the Platte at or near what was known as Shinn's Ferry constructed in 1862.—Laws of the Territory of Nebraska, Dec. 2, 1861, pp. 146-51.
seemed sufficient reasons for building the bridge. Information concerning actual construction of other than railroad bridges between 1861 and 1867 is unavailable. In 1867 the Territorial legislature authorized the cities of Omaha and Bellevue to raise money to aid in the construction of a railroad bridge across the Missouri. The generous sum of $450,000 in city and county bonds from Douglas county and Omaha, along with $200,000 in bonds from Council Bluffs influenced the company to build the first bridge at Omaha instead of at Child's Mills or Bellevue. The citizens of Omaha and Council Bluffs were opposed to the change of route which involved a southern curve into Sarpy county within three miles of Bellevue over a threatened crossing of the Missouri. Actual construction, however, did not begin until 1869.

27Nebraska Journals of the House of Representa-
tives, 12th sess., Jan. 11, 1867, pp. 19, 24-25 (Omaha: Balcomte State Printer, 1867).
29Laws of the Territory of Nebraska, 1866-1867, pp. 106-14, 147.
30The Union Pacific vs The People, The Truth of History (Omaha: Balcomte State Printer, 1867), pp. 3-17. Pamphlet found in the files of the Union Pacific Historical Museum, Omaha.
31This was the first iron railroad tridge between Omaha and Council Bluffs. It was completed and ready for
The freighting business during this time grew in proportion to the increase in population. Across the plains from Omaha to Salt Lake and Montana the freighters carried groceries, merchandise, goods for Indian agencies, sacks of mail, and supplies for soldiers and military posts.32

Some impression of the volume of trade can be gathered from the amount of money realized from a single train. James Creighton of Omaha, who drove the first train to Montana consisting of thirty teams, made $33,000 on the sales over a period of thirty days. The next year he took a train of forty mule teams and made on this trip the fancy sum of $52,000.33 In 1866, when the freighting business was at its height, the sum of $31,000,000 was realized from freight hauled from Missouri river points to the mountain regions.34

About 1,800 wagons engaged daily in this hauling

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32 Ralph Henry Gabriel, "The Lure of the Frontier," The Pageant of America (Yale University Press, 1927), II, 278.

33 Sorensen, op. cit., p. 188.

of goods and stores to the West according to *The Omaha Nebraskan.* To be even more specific, one St. Louis firm, Russell, Majors, Waddell and Company, operated 6,250 wagons with 70,000 oxen. This represented an investment of some $2,000,000.

During the sixties Omaha thrived not only on the business that came from the gold seekers but still more on the freighting business of the plains. This intensified the rivalry between neighboring river towns. *The Omaha Nebraskan* boasted that Omaha could beat any town or city in the West when it came to the commerce on the plains.

One can readily visualize the scene on the streets of Omaha in '64 from accounts found in *The Omaha Nebraskan*:

One hundred fifty wagons, horses, mules and loose cattle almost beyond comprehension passed up Farnham street, on their way to the camping ground near the military bridge whence they returned to the city to lay in their outfits for the mountains. The streets are jammed with emigrant wagons, and the stores with eager buyers. It seems as if all the world knew that Omaha was on the Great Central North Platte Route, and the best outfitting locality on the river.

But Brownville asserted that its streets were alive with freight wagons that were loading and leaving

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35 *The Omaha Nebraskan*, Oct. 23, 1863.


37 *The Omaha Nebraskan*, May 6, March 30, 1864.
for the mines. "Freighters found the route from Brownville to be THE route."38

In 1861 Omaha with a population of about 1,800 had a great fear that it might just remain a forgotten river town.39 There were at this time only two other towns in the Territory with more than five hundred people, Nebraska City with 1,922 and Bellevue with 929.40 In 1863 Omaha seemed to have very little local business41 although, as has already been noted, she carried on a tremendous outfitting and freighting business. Small wonder that her newspapers recounted minutely the weekly freighting and steamboat transactions of the locality. But real impetus to permanent growth came with the construction of the Union Pacific when these activities lost their significance as a factor in prosperity.

It was a common sight to see the river bank lined with teams all day waiting for a steamer to come

38 The Nebraska Advertiser, March 7, 1861.
39 A. J. Hall, Early and Authentic History of Omaha, 1857-1870 (Omaha: A. J. Hall, Publisher), p. 49.
40 Pinney, op. cit., p. 3--In 1865 Brownville, Nebraska City, Plattsmouth, Nemaha City, Bellevue, Florence, Saratoga, Fontenelle, Mt. Vernon, St. George, Columbus, and Omaha are listed as towns worthy of mention. . . . . Omaha is said to have had a population of 9,000.--Hafen and Kister, op. cit., p. 423.
41 Ware, op. cit., p. 9.
Boats traveled to and from Fort Benton and St. Louis bringing passengers and freight to the river towns. A daily steamboat line ran between the Hannibal and St. Joseph terminus and Omaha. Packet lines between Omaha, St. Louis, and St. Joseph were of great service to the Territory, especially during the period of railroad construction. During the month of June 1864, a total weight of 300 tons of railroad supplies came into Omaha from St. Louis. In 1866 the local press frequently reported such items as: the "Metamora" hauling a locomotive for the Union Pacific; the "Glasgow," 400 tons of iron rails; the "War Eagle," 1,600 bars of railroad iron; the "St. Joseph," a lot of platform cars and 780 bars of railroad iron; the "Columbian," 1,335 bars of iron rail; the "Yellowstone," 1,040 bars of iron. In 1866 the five Government owned steamboats, which brought railroad supplies for the Union Pacific, plied the waters of the Missouri.

Both the North and the South made use of steamboats to further their cause in the war. The "Emilie" in 1861 was employed by the Confederacy to distribute

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42 The Nebraska Republican, Aug. 18, July 28, 1865.
43 The Omaha Nebraskan, March 4, 1864.
44 The Nebraska Republican, Mar. 30, April 13, 1866; June 16, 1865; Aug. 17, July 6, June 8, 1866.
45 Ibid., June 5, 1866.
munitions and arms along the Missouri river. In 1863 the "West Wind" brought twenty tons of clothing and camp equipage for the Union troops in Omaha and soldiers were transported to the Nebraska frontier.

Steamboating on the Missouri declined rapidly with the coming of the railroad. From forty to fifty boats carried on a river trade in the early sixties but after the war only a few ferries and one or two steamboats a year navigated along the shores of Nebraska.

With the development of such a program of internal Territorial growth as manifested in the building of roads, bridges, telegraph lines and railroads the natives of the Territory took a local interest at a time when the nation was distracted with the Civil War. It accelerated the push west and brought more immigrants to the Territory.

The various commercial enterprises such as the freighting business, the outfitting of gold seekers, and steamboating on the Missouri brought a temporary period of prosperity which satisfied their economic wants until the late sixties, when all these enterprises gave way to the railroads that virtually changed the economic life.

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46 The Nebraska Advertiser, May 16, 1861.
47 The Nebraska Republican, Jan. 3, 1865.
48 The Nebraska Blue Book, 1944, p. 88.
on the frontier.

The telegraph pioneered the path for still greater advances into the West, for not long after came the completion of the transcontinental line. July 1, 1862, Congress voted a charter to the Union Pacific Railroad Company which called for a railroad to be constructed westward from Omaha, Nebraska, and eastward from Sacramento, California.

For the settlers of the Territory the railroad meant more traffic, increased population, a rise in the value of railroad land, and an opportunity to carry on a more successful commercial program throughout the frontier. Pioneers took new heart, for here was a concrete example that not even a terrible war could stop the economic growth of a people.

December 2, 1863, just after Grant had crushed Bragg at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, Omaha held the formal breaking of the ground for the Union Pacific railroad. The program was held at Ferry Landing amidst waving of flags and booming of cannons, in the presence of a large gathering and Mayor B. E. Kennedy

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50 Gabriel, op. cit., II, 279.
of Omaha and Mayor Palmer of Council Bluffs, Governor Saunders addressed the crowd and moved the first earth.

The exercises of the day closed with the raciest, liveliest, tip top speeches ever delivered west of the Mississippi river. In the evening the city of Omaha was brilliantly lighted, a railroad banquet was served, and a ball given at the Herndon House. The pick and shovel used in breaking the ground was brightly polished, suitably inscribed, and sent to Thomas C. Durant, vice-president of the Union Pacific railroad at New York City. Durant, one of the greatest civil engineers of his day, was the controlling spirit of the entire project.

A most exciting episode occurred in connection with the building of the Union Pacific which greatly affected Nebraska interests, especially the city of Omaha. Omaha was looking forward to becoming the mart of trade on the Missouri, the future railroad center where the mighty tide of emigrants would pass. According to the

51 The Omaha Nebraskan, Dec. 4, 1863.
52 G. C. Griswold, "When the 'Iron Horse' Came to the Prairie Country," The Omaha Sunday World-Herald, Oct. 27, 1929.
53 The Omaha Nebraskan, December 18, 1863.
55 The Omaha Nebraskan, Feb. 19, 1864.
Railroad Act of 1862 the Union Pacific was to be extended westward across the Platte Valley to the hundredth meridian with Omaha as its eastern terminus. Omaha became very much excited when the Company took it upon itself without the permission or approval of the President to change the terminus to a place about three miles west of Omaha near Bellevue. The road was to go down the Mud Creek Valley known as the ox bow line and then northwest to the original line. President Lincoln in his orders of November 17, 1863, and March 7, 1864, had fixed the initial point at Omaha with no intention of changing what was planned in the Act of 1862. Edward Creighton, who wanted Omaha to be the "Gate City to the West," used his influence through land donations to make Omaha the eastern terminus of the Union Pacific.

The Nebraska Republican does not hesitate boldly to accuse the parties who disregarded the presidential location of the terminus of the railroad of doing this for the purpose of extorting money, town lots, and lands from the people residing in the Missouri river country, and to brand with disgrace those who had charge of the construction and management of the project.

56 Morton, op. cit., I, 93, 116.
57 Nielson, op. cit., p. 74.
58 The Nebraska Republican, July 14, 1865.
everything was finally settled in Omaha's favor, and the work began in earnest in the spring of 1864.59

Local editors grew impatient, however, with delays in the departments of the Union Pacific at Omaha. All work stopped on occasions. Ties, spikes, chairs, bridge-timbers and bridge-irons had already arrived while large quantities of iron were still on the way.

... the president and Congress should see to it (as we believe they will) that there be a speedy end to the inexplicable and inexcusable follies which have thus far retarded its progress.60

The intense interest with which the Nebraska people watched preliminary preparations can be found in the slightest reports in the weekly local papers. It is significant, however, that actual construction of railroad did not begin until after Appomattox when the first miles of track were laid in the summer of 1865. From then on with an average speed of a mile a day rails crept west across the prairies of Nebraska.

According to the report of Springer Harbaugh made to the Secretary of the Interior, the first locomotive was sent to Omaha July 8, 1865,61 and the first

59Sorenson, op. cit., p. 199.
60The Nebraska Republican, June 23, 1865.
61Ibid., July 14, 1865.
tracks were laid on July 10. By September 22, ten miles of track had been laid. Omaha witnessed the running of the first locomotive on the Union Pacific tracks.

The iron-horse had several hundred admirers and all hailed the 'General Sherman'! The shrill neighing of the iron-horse and the almost continual ringing of the car bell are losing their charm and novelty already. The youth of our city (from 5 to 10 years old) after riding one or two trips, quit the thing in disgust, saying it went entirely too slow for them.

By November 24, thirty miles of track had been laid in the valley of the Platte and excursions ran to the Elk-horn river. By December forty miles of track west from Omaha were completed. July 1866 brought 135 miles more railroad, and by the last of August one could make the trip from Omaha to Fort Kearney in about fifteen hours. By 1867 four regular trains ran daily between Omaha and North Platte, a distance of about 294 miles. The track was completed to the 305-mile post,

62 Ibid., July 28, 1865.
63 Ibid., September 22, 1865.
64 The Nebraska Republican, November 24, 1865.
65 Ibid., December 15, 1865.
66 Ibid., July 8, 1866.
67 Ibid., August 31, 1866.
262 miles of which were laid in 1866.68

Most of the employees of the Union Pacific Company were ex-soldiers who came west to get jobs, Irish "Paddies," and a few friendly Pawnee Indians. The Omaha Nebraskan, January 12, 1865, reported that one hundred Pawnee Indians earned good wages working on the railroad and incidentally were becoming civilized. Laborers continued to arrive from the East almost every day while the work was being vigorously pushed. Most of the employees received board and from $2.50 to $4.00 of prompt pay per day.69

Because the Indians regarded the railroad as an intrusion and were therefore hostile to those constructing it, detachments of troops were assigned to protect the men while at work. The construction train as well as the men were equipped to resist Indian attacks. The men had to know how to use a rifle and pistol as well as a pick and shovel. Every mile of grading was done while scouts protected the men.70

68 Nebraska Journal of the House of Representatives, 12th sess., Jan. 11, 1867.--Taken from Governor Paddock's opening address to the 12th session of the Nebraska Legislative Assembly, 1867, p. 25.
69 The Nebraska Republican, June 22, 1866.
CHAPTER III

DISTURBING FACTORS AND THEIR RELATIVE REACTIONS

When the Civil War broke out there were probably some 20,000 red men within the newly adjusted borders of the Territory.\(^1\) All the Indians in Nebraska except the Pawnees, who belonged to the Caddoan, were distinctly Indians of the plains from one common stock—the Siouan.\(^2\) Omahas were found in the northeast section of the Territory along the Missouri river; the Pawnees were west of Omaha and north of the Platte; the Otoes, south of the Platte and west;\(^3\) the Foxes, Sacs, and Iowa, in the southeast corner; Arapahoes and Cheyennes, in the southwest,\(^4\) and the Sioux, who were always at war with the Omahas, in the northeast. Eventually the Omahas retired as a depleted tribe to the Bellevue vicinity under the protection of the white man.\(^5\)

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\(^{1}\)The Nebraska Republican, Dec. 28, 1866, reported this information from "Nebraska, Its Organization and Early History," in the Chicago Republican.


\(^{3}\)Morton, op. cit., II, 207.

\(^{4}\)The Nebraska Republican, Dec. 28, 1866, citing "Nebraska, Its Organization and Early History," Chicago Republican.

\(^{5}\)The Omahas were reduced by smallpox and wars.—Troup, op. cit., p. 23.
During the sixties the Indians on the plains became uneasy, a change said to be the result of Confederate efforts to incite the Indians to rise up against the whites in the North. Yet these suspicions cannot be supported with sufficient evidence. But the reason for expressions of resentment on the part of the Indians can best be found in the push west that brought whites into more immediate contact with large and powerful tribes who retaliated in the form of depredations and raids against the pressure of settlements. For almost a decade before the beginning of the Civil War, their fierce and powerful warriors exhibited a sullen, smoldering resentment toward the whites who had made inroads on their homes. The multitude of immigrants, the gold seekers to Colorado, and wagon freighters destroyed the grass, killed the buffalo, and ruined their vast hunting grounds. They saw their trails obliterated by the stage lines, caravans of schooners, and the building of railroads.

Even the Pawnees in Nebraska, who had never made war on the United States, suffered much from the depredation of the white men who destroyed their crops, stole

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their horses, and changed their way of living until they eventually found themselves so reduced in numbers that they ceded their land to Nebraska and were confined to a reservation.8

In June 1861, news came to the Territory through the local papers that Cherokee Indians were joining the rebel ranks in defense of North Carolina and that these rebel Indians were trying to influence the Kaws, Sacs, Foxes, Otoes, and Missourians of the plains to meet them in grand council.9 The Advertiser reported that a delegation of Indians had responded, supposedly to enlist in the Confederate army.10 The Cherokee council was believed to be under the supervision of Southern secessionists. Indians within the vicinity of Brownville became saucy, impudent, and made mysterious trips here and there. The South appeared to be organizing the Indians of the West for guerilla purposes to disturb the western settlers.11 Even white men were suspected of being disguised as Indians.12 Some writers mention as fact that

8 Troup, op. cit., p. 22.
9 The Nebraska Advertiser, June 13, 1861.
10 Ibid., June 20, 1861.
11 Ibid., June 27, 1861.
12 Ibid., July 4, 1861.
in many raids Indians were commanded by white men disguised as savages. These whites the frontiersmen thought were rebel emissaries.\(^\text{13}\) All this is indicative of the unrest apparent on the frontier just before the Sioux uprising immediately following the firing on Fort Sumter. From here on one has only to read the local papers of the period to note the series of raids and repeated appeals to the Federal Government for protection against the terrors of the frontier.

On December 2, 1861, Governor Saunders in his message to the eighth Legislative Assembly asked for an arsenal for the Territory because it was beset with tribes who, he said, had been "more or less tampered with by wicked men and traitors to the Union." Since a large number of men from the Territory had answered the call of the Union, the Governor felt that Congress should be strongly urged to furnish the people of the Nebraska frontier adequate protection against the Indians. At the same time he also asked for the organization of an effective Territorial militia.\(^\text{14}\)

A memorial was sent to Congress after this appeal

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\(^{13}\) Sorensen, op. cit., p. 163.

\(^{14}\) Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska, 1854-1887, I, 164.
asking that the Governor be given authority to raise five companies of soldiers for protection against the Indians. They were to be paid and equipped by the Federal Government, since in the first place the authorities in the Territory expressed the supposition that Indians had been led to molest and destroy the white population through the influence of insincere and wicked government agents and since, in the second place, the Territory had neither money nor weapons with which to help themselves.15

The first real blow from Indian resentment came during the summer of 1862 when the Sioux Indians in Minnesota went on the warpath and in 1863 succeeded in gathering the Indians on Horse Creek in Nebraska to do likewise.16 The raids came when the war looked darkest for the Union. The Federal forces were completely out­generalled by Lee at the second battle of Bull Run and the "frontier was aflame with murder."17

Nevertheless Nebraskans never wanted the rest of the world to get the impression that the Territory was a place to be shunned because of Indian perils. The

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15Morton, op. cit., i, 468.
16Sheldon, Nebraska Old and New, p. 213.
Territory must continue to grow in population and prosperity. Settlers were urged by eastern friends, who had learned of the Minnesota raids, to abandon Nebraska immediately, before they were killed by the savages. But the Advertiser assured the Easterners that Indians were "A THOUSAND MILES away," and that those living near the Pawnees and Otoes had nothing to fear for these tribes had been subdued. And even the Pawnees were two hundred fifty miles from Brownville. To talk otherwise would only keep settlers from coming to the Territory and break down what little morale remained among the native settlers. Those who had come to make permanent homes would rather not think of Nebraska as a vast wilderness or a frontier overrun with barbarous savages,\textsuperscript{18} for here they had staked their claims and their fortunes.

Between 1862 and 1868 the Sioux and Cheyennes carried on almost a continual warfare on the Nebraska frontier, shifting the scene of attack from time to time to the various parts of the West. We shall confine ourselves, however, to that part of the Indian struggle that affects the settlements within the new boundaries of 1861. Travelers, ranchers, stage stations as far as Thayer and Platte counties were attacked. It has been said that

\textsuperscript{18}The Nebraska Advertiser, Dec. 27, 1862.
not a single station on Ben Holladay's stage route was left untouched. From the Missouri river to the western-most boundary Nebraskans lived in fear and terror of Indians.\textsuperscript{19}

During the summer of 1864 a panic stricken people from the Upper Platte Valley down to Columbus were leaving their homesteads. It was reported that even in Omaha the clerks were armed, that sentinels guarded the city from the surrounding hills. Rumors were afloat that even the Governor and his family, fearing a sudden attack from the Indians, had gone to Council Bluffs. On August 13 and 14, some twenty miles along the military road people could be seen fleeing for their lives with herds of horses and cattle and with wagons loaded with household goods, provisions, and clothing. People on foot and on horseback hurried away in great confusion.\textsuperscript{20}

Rumblings of distant Indian attacks and detailed accounts of Indian atrocities were carried by local

\textsuperscript{19}Sheldon, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 213. We find no evidence among these Indians of the plains of a general agreement to attack, but simultaneously they rose up against the oppressive whites along the border.—Dan Elbert Clark, \textit{The West in American History} (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1937), pp. 572-73.

\textsuperscript{20}William Stolley, "History of the First Settlement of Hall County, Nebraska," \textit{Nebraska History, a Quarterly Magazine}, XXVI (January-March, 1946), 51-52.
newspapers so as to influence the government to provide suitable defense on the frontier.\footnote{21}{The Omaha Nebraskan, July 8, 1864.} But the Federal Government was evidently too busy and too far away even to realize the peril of the West.\footnote{22}{Ibid., July 1, 1864.} With a bitterness intensified by the loss of precious lives and possessions, the people cried for war, "no prisoners, no treaties."\footnote{23}{Ibid., June 24, 1864.} They realized more than ever their helplessness in the face of an organized Indian attack.\footnote{24}{Ibid., Aug. 5, 1864.} In desperation they repeatedly urged the authorities of the Territory to protect them.\footnote{25}{Ibid., Aug. 17, 1864.}

Protective measures were taken which displayed an attitude of half war and half peace with the Indian tribes. Men at the posts found it cheaper to feed the Indians than to fight them since they had learned from experience that surprise attacks meant heavy losses in horses and men, often without victory.\footnote{26}{Ware, op. cit., p. 290.} Following this policy the Federal Government, in 1861, distributed $5,000 worth of provisions to the Indians to pacify an
uprising Indian population. But a few months later a company of troops was placed on the Platte border as a protection to emigrants that seemed in great danger of being molested. We note an interesting announcement that appeared in the Republican during the summer of 1865 to instill a feeling of safety in those who wished to travel across the Platte river where Shinn's old Ferry crossed it:

. . . . their scalps are in no possible danger between Omaha and that point . . . . notwithstanding, General Conner will not be 'responsible' for them.

The inference is, of course, that they traveled at their own risk, since there were not enough troops to protect travelers on both sides of the Platte.

In the Sioux uprising Nebraskans were interested in General Sully's campaign of 1863. He was sent to march against the Dakota Indians with 2,500 of the Second Nebraska Cavalry attended by three steamers and a train of 200 wagons with supplies for four months. September 3, Sully surprised some Brule, Yankton, and Blackfeet Sioux at White Stone Hill, North Dakota, and completely

27 The Nebraska Advertiser, June 13, 1861.
28 Ibid., Aug. 22, 1861.
29 The Nebraska Republican, June 16, 1865.
30 The Nebraska Advertiser, June 9, 1863.
defeated them, although the Second Nebraska Cavalry lost heavily. About four hundred lodges were destroyed, one hundred fifty Indians killed, tepees, horses, dogs and about 200,000 pounds of dried meat and other provisions burned.

One of the most terrible massacres of this period broke out August 7, 1864, all along the Platte Valley and hit some of the most strategic stations such as Plum Creek in Dawson county. This was important because of its stage and telegraph connections between Fort Laramie and Fort McPherson. On the same day the stations between Fort Laramie and the Big Blue river were raided and most of them burned. This raid was particularly severe in the Little Blue river valley where settlers were driven from their homes and emigrants from the roads. Almost simultaneously an attack was made by a

33 The Nebraska Advertiser, Sept. 19, 1863.
36 Andreas, op. cit., p. 240.
united confederacy of Sioux, Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowa, Comanches, and Apaches at these various places. According to reports in the Nebraskan, Governor Saunders declined to send protection after three requests because he did not believe the emergency imminent. Two companies of equipped militia—one at Nebraska City and the other from Brownville—were ready to march but could get no authority to move.

The Nebraskan being a Democratic organ, one is not too much surprised at such statements that do not bear out the facts of the case. We do know that on August 11, 1864, Governor Saunders sent out a proclamation calling for organization of minute men to aid the United States troops in this fight against the Indian attacks. By the first of September Federal troops, the First Nebraska Regiment, were called home and appeared for duty on the Nebraska front. They were sent to the Little Blue Valley and Plum Creek where raids had been

37 Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska, 1854-1887, 10 sess., Jan. 7, 1865, I, 220.

38 The Omaha Nebraskan, August 12, 1864.

39 Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska, 1854-1887, I, 223.

40 Sheldon, Nebraska, the Land and the People, I, 318.
very bad. Until after the Civil War the First Regiment was engaged in protecting overland mail routes, coaches, and emigrant trains between Fort Kearney and Fort Sedgwick, Colorado.  

Democrats voiced their sentiments of impatience toward the General Government when the Nebraskan accused it of being more concerned about the freedom and welfare of the negro than for the citizens on the molested frontier. Her editorial column carried this scornful comment:

But wait a little longer ye impatient and ungrateful wretches and think not of your own precious lives while that dear, sweet scented and much beloved sufferer—the negro—and his interests are at stake.  

Again in early February when Senator Doolittle introduced a joint resolution in Congress to provide for a Board of Commissioners to investigate wrongs and injuries inflicted upon the Indians by the civil and military agents of the government, the Nebraskan stated that Congress could DO LITTLE LESS than to inquire into the oppressed condition of the poor Indian, but at the same time [it] might DO MUCH more good if it would but inquire into the cause of our troubles on the frontier and forward a few MILITARY AGENTS to the disturbed district, with orders to put an end to the


42The Omaha Nebraskan, January 19, 1865.
wrongs and injuries inflicted upon the brave and hardy and truly loyal citizens who have suffered much at the hands of the red men.  

As the struggle with the Indians continued there developed in the Territory first, a deeper resentment toward those who they thought would have helped them more and secondly, an intensified hatred for the Indian, since they still saw in 1865 western forts burned, telegraph wires torn asunder, stage stations reduced to ashes, and wagon trains captured. There came a new cry for troops and a determination to carry on a war of extermination, for the savage "deserved and must have a thorough thrashing." "Stop the annuities and give them powder and shot" was the attitude expressed by the Nebraskan in 1865, indicative of the spirit of the people after three years of Indian terrorism and war. The Sioux were still immovable, and Indians on the upper Missouri were said to be more hostile than ever. But the Cheyennes and the Arapahoes had been crushed temporarily by the massacre of 1864, and in October of

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43 Ibid., February 2, 1865.
44 Ibid., February 9, 1865.
45 Ibid., February 16, 1865.
46 The Nebraska Republican, July 14, 1865.
47 Clark, op. cit., p. 576.
1865 rumors of peace treaties reached the Nebraskans. The desire for peace came because their families and ponies were starving and the warriors were discouraged.48 The Republican reported seven written treaties in 1865 which included 1,750 lodges or 10,500 Indians. These were made and signed by chiefs of the following tribes: Lower Brules, Omkpaphs, Black Feet Sioux, Minneconjus, Sans Arès, Lower Yanktonais, and Two Kettle.49

Indian disturbances had apparently come to an end. Governor Saunders in his message of January 7, 1865, congratulated the people of the Territory on the termination of the Indian war on the Nebraska frontier. The Governor was of the opinion that the outbreak had been the work of rebel agents.50 But Indians were not to be trusted, at least not by the Democrats who voiced their sentiments by offering their congratulations to the Governor in these words:

"Yellow Saunders! I congratulate you on the termination of the Indian War on our frontier—bully for old termination—Saunders saw it, nobody else did."51

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48 *The Nebraska Republican*, October 20, 1865.
50 *Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska, 1854-1887*, 1, 220.
51 *The Omaha Nebraskan*, February 9, 1865.
The removal in 1865 of troops that were protecting the overland route and escorting coaches between Fort Kearney and Sedgwick brought down the wrath of the Territorial press on the War Department at Washington. Bitter comments came forth from The Omaha Weekly-Herald which felt that politics in the war office at Washington had spurned the great interest of the West. Its comments ran as follows:

... Millions of money has been spent in Military expeditions to subdue the Indian by force and years of time and hundreds of lives of white men have been sacrificed by the blundering and execrable want of capacity in the administration to handle these Indian difficulties. ... Counselling by the wise Sherman, Grant, Dodge to a certain military course, he first assents to prosecute vigorous war against the Indians. The work barely begins, when he countermands everything, cuts off supplies, recalls the army in the Indian field ... and thousands upon thousands of men, women and children, and millions of property exposed to the scalping knife and ravages of the murderous bands—who are again let loose to destroy the lives of our people and the commerce of the Plains. The Indian war has just commenced. Millions of money has been worse than wasted by the criminal stubbornness and self will of EDWIN M. STANTON. Settlements on the frontier are worse off today than a year ago.

By the summer of 1866 Indians had become furious along the western border near Fort Laramie and the Powder

52Andreas, op. cit., p. 242.
53The Omaha Weekly-Herald, November 10, 1865.
river district. The Plains Sioux under Red Cloud began war against the troops of the United States because of efforts to open up and fortify a wagon road through their choicest hunting grounds from Fort Laramie along the Powder river to the mines of Montana and Idaho. Aided by the Cheyennes, who were closely allied through intermarriage, they resisted until 1868 when the government gave up the fort. 54

However, there was a brief lull with the signing of the Fort Laramie treaty of 1866. Some two thousand Indians were present when the treaty was signed by fourteen prominent chiefs. 55 The terms as agreed to by Red Cloud, Black Table, The Man afraid of his Horse, Bear Blanket, Thunderfire, Spotted Tail, Running Bear, and Standing Elk, stipulated that

thes indians hear give you poder river rode
you can make the rode on ther [fort] 100 wagon loaded with indians goods 1000 Marcon [American] horses 1000 Rivel[s] [rifles] 500 head cattle 500 head cows 2000 head of Sceeps [sheep] 1000 head hogs 500 rusters 1000 chickens 200 culed [colored] man to rase cornn. 56

The Republican wondered if Indians were not "culed" men, and added that the Indians probably had not seen all of

54 Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 270.
55 The Nebraska Republican, July 20, 1866.
56 Ibid., August 10, 1866.
the Emancipation Proclamation and the Constitutional Amendment owing to their limited facilities or they might not have asked for the "200 culled man to raise cornn."

The document was written by Bad Hand, "an intelligent Indian who wrote plainly but spelled poorly." 57

As soon as the shadow of war disappeared from the Territory, Congress authorized the Nebraska troops to disband, and consequently they were mustered out of service July 1, 1866. 58 The road was opened and lines of emigrants and freighters traveled westward. 59

On July 27, 1866, Congress appropriated $45,000 to meet the expenditures of the United States troops who suppressed Indian hostilities and protected the lives and property of citizens during the Indian war of 1864. 60

In spite of the late Fort Laramie treaty, however, it was necessary to take precautions again in 1867. Acting Governor Paddock issued a proclamation September 2, 1867, to the effect that the militia be kept up in the organized counties of the Territory and that organized companies of militia keep drilled for any emergency that

57 The Nebraska Republican, August 3, 1866.
59 The Nebraska Republican, August 3, 1866.
60 United States Statutes at Large, XIV, 307, 39 Cong. 1st sess.
might arise. Because national affairs were becoming more complicated and the neighboring states had again suffered Indian uprisings, he feared that Indians might cross the borders and again induce Indians in the Territory to make a concerted movement against the whites along the whole frontier. He said that "the surest way to avert attack is to let the enemy know that we are prepared for him. . . . ." 61

A state of unusual excitement prevailed throughout the southern portion of the Nebraska Territory during the late months of 1861 and the early part of 1862 not only because of Indians but also on account of a group of disturbing, lawless bands of armed men who called themselves "Jayhawkers." They professed to be supporters of the Union, acting under government authority to disperse rebels. 62 This had the effect of creating a feeling in their favor. Even the Advertiser in October 1861 saw no reason for those who had been loyal to the United States to be alarmed at Jayhawkers, for there were worse individuals than Jayhawks,

... such men are those who burned Platte Bridge and are yet unhung; such men as those

61 Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska, 1854-1887, 1, 252.
62 Sheldon, op. cit., 1, 314.
who are daily secretly engaged in giving 'aid and comfort' to the enemy . . . .
Most of the operations of Jayhawkers are retaliatory or inflicted upon men who are open and avowed traitors. 63

As we understand it it is a fight between traitors and Jayhawkers. Let them fight it out, and so long as they keep it among themselves, ok. Those who favor the rebellion are responsible for this condition. 64

As a matter of fact, before three years had elapsed the Advertiser admitted that many had been misinformed and were led to believe that the authorities approved of Jayhawkers. 65 These so-called Jayhawkers were discovered to be marauders, stealing horses, robbing stores and homes, and threatening the lives of Union men. 66 Personal property which they gained was never turned over to the government as they pretended to do. By January 23, 1862, Advertiser accused the Jayhawkers of violating the Constitution through their activities because of the unauthorized depredation of life, liberty, and property of American citizens. 67

To provide security and counteract the

63 The Nebraska Advertiser, October 17, 1861.
64 Ibid., October 31, 1861.
65 Ibid., January 23, 1862.
66 Sheldon, op. cit., I, 314.
67 The Nebraska Advertiser, January 23, 1862.
destruction of lives and property, one hundred fifty citizens of Nemaha county took an oath to support the laws and Constitution and to protect the lives and property of all loyal citizens. Eventually this organization resolved itself into a military company and made several runs through the county promoting a feeling of safety.

Nebraskans had seen enough of Jayhawkers to pronounce them enemies of the government to be treated as traitors by legally constituted authority, both civil and military. The Governor’s attention was called to this state of affairs, and he issued a proclamation January 2, 1862, that expelled all lawless bands of armed men who called themselves Jayhawkers under penalty of grave punishment. If they were found in the Territory both civil and military forces would be brought to "bear against them." In March 1864 some forty or fifty bands were arrested, charged with murder and robbery.

For the sake of peace and quiet of Brownville county, no stranger was allowed to settle unless he could

68 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
70 Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska, 1854-1887, I, 219.
71 The Omaha Nebraskan, March 11, 1864.
produce evidence of being a loyal man. Without a doubt these bands of murderers and plunderers were secessionists that had been banished by the hundreds from Missouri. "Let them go back to Dixie—better off." 72

A league of citizens organized the Knights of the Golden Circle at Brownville to do away with Jayhawkers, but it was condemned as unpatriotic and against the government. Members took an oath to support the Constitution, the laws, and the Democratic party, but to Nebraskans of the period they seemed to oppose the war measures of the administration and were soon considered as virtual traitors. 73 But now we know that this supposed secret society merely wished to promote the success of the Democratic party. 74

The agitation between Union men and rebels that ended in disgraceful brawls and murders in the border counties, along with the terror of Indian attacks were enough to try the soul of the most stout-hearted pioneer. But the hope of military protection, the spirit of new

72 The Nebraska Advertiser, May 14, 1863.

73 Ibid. Over 200 citizens became members of the league at Nebraska City for protection against these marauders both Democrats and Republicans.—Morton, op. cit., I, 467-68.

enterprises in a new West, and the promising future prosperity of the region compelled him to remain with the homestead on the Nebraska frontier.
Although Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers April 15, 1861, Nebraska was slow to respond because at that time the Territory had no organized militia and had no means of defraying the expense of keeping the men until they were mustered into service as required by law.\(^1\)

Since the War Department had assigned one regiment to the Nebraska Territory, Governor Saunders, May 18, 1861, called upon the militia of the Territory to form volunteer companies in the different counties to be inducted into the service of the United States. Companies were to elect a captain and two lieutenants and were to consist of at least seventy-eight men until more information came from Washington.\(^2\) The Governor also requested the War Department to allow the companies to be turned over to the Federal Government as fast as they were recruited so as to relieve the Territory of the extra expense. His request was granted.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) *A Military History of Nebraska* (Lincoln: Works Progress Administration, 1939), p. 22.
\(^2\) *Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska, 1854-1887*, I, 216.
\(^3\) *Andreas, op. cit.*, pp. 230-31.
John M. Thayer applied to Governor Saunders for a commission as colonel and organized the first Nebraska regiment of ten companies. There was strong opposition to sending the First Regiment out of the Territory because of the possibility of an Indian uprising on the frontier and border maraudings on the south. However, a large number responded immediately in 1861, and by July the regiment was organized and the first battalion left Omaha. It embarked for St. Louis and from thence to Fort Donelson and Shiloh on the Cumberland river in Tennessee where they won, after four days of hard fighting, their first battle under Grant. The Advertiser made special note of the honorable conduct of the Nebraska Regiment at the Battle of Fort Donelson, for they deserved praise for being a credit not only to the

4". . . Appointed Brigadier General of the militia of the Territory 1859. . . . In 1861 he was appointed Colonel of the 1st Nebraska infantry. . . . He became the first Senator to serve Nebraska upon entrance into the Union."--The Nebraska Republican, July 20, 1866.

5Sheldon, op. cit., I, 309.

Territory but to the country at large. Many of them, however, would not have volunteered had they known that they were not going to be used to protect the home front. An editorial in *The Nebraska City News* stated that a letter from "Mr." Secretary Cameron made it distinctly understood that the regiment was not to be ordered out of Nebraska.

On October 11, 1863, the First Nebraska Infantry was given orders to mount and thus became known as the First Nebraska Cavalry which engaged in scouting, picket duty, and skirmishes with the enemy from December 1863 to June 18, 1864. However, mounted cavalry had been added to the Nebraska First Infantry as early as 1861 when on August 12, 1861, acting Governor Paddock issued a proclamation to raise two companies of cavalry in the Nebraska Territory to be attached to the First Regiment of Nebraska Volunteers. One company came from the counties north of the Platte river and the other from the counties south.

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7 *The Nebraska Advertiser*, March 20, 1861.
8 *The Nebraska City News*, January 18, 1862.
9 *Andreas, op. cit.*, p. 234.
11 *Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska, 1854-1887*, I, 231.
After the First Nebraska Cavalry was no longer needed to put down the southern rebels, they were rushed to protect our borders from hostile Indians, for this was the year when Indians were carrying on the 200-mile raid across the Platte river valley. Before reporting at Fort Kearney for active duty on the frontier, the regiment took a short furlough. On June 30, 1864, the heroes of Donelson and Shiloh received an enthusiastic welcome from the Governor and city folk of Omaha. Only about half of those who had left in 1861 returned, for the others had "died for the Constitution and the Union."

A large gathering assembled in front of the Pioneer Block on Farnham street and joined in the procession of welcome. A banquet was served in the afternoon and a ball was given that night.12 During the time of their furlough the soldiers made an earnest effort to recruit the ranks of the regiment. People were asked to help in some way. If they could not give their time, money would be accepted to defray the expenses of the recruiting soldiers, since soldiers received so little pay.13

By August 23, 1864, the First Nebraska Cavalry reported for duty at Fort Kearney to protect the overland

12 The Omaha Nebraskan, July 1, 1864.
13 Ibid., July 22, 1864.
emigrants and settlers. They marched 198 miles and on August 31, 1864, encamped at Plum Creek where Indians were particularly annoying.

They continued to fight Indians until after the signing of the Fort Laramie Treaty of June 1866. Immediately Congress ordered the disbanding of the First Nebraska Volunteer Cavalry, and on July 1, 1866, it was mustered out of service at Omaha.

On August 11, 1865, five months after the war closed, the Curtis Light Horse Cavalry was mustered out. It was the only unit besides the First Nebraska that served at the front. However, there were four companies recruited in Omaha and afterwards consolidated with the Fifth Iowa Cavalry.

The people of Nebraska were very proud of their soldiers and in various ways showed their appreciation. In a speech delivered by Mr. Holladay of Nemaha before

14 A Military History of Nebraska, p. 27.
15 Andreas, op. cit., p. 236.
16 The Nebraska Republican, July 6, 1866. The regiment marched some nine hundred miles and traveled some 15,000 miles during the time that it was in services.—Andreas, op. cit., pp. 242-43.
17 A Military History of Nebraska, p. 31.
18 Sorenson, op. cit., p. 171.
the Council of the Territory in behalf of an increase
in the soldier's pay, they voiced their gratitude and
appreciation:

The gory battle grounds of Fort Donelson,
Shiloh and Pittsburg Landing testify to their
brave and meritorious conduct. . . . Nebraska
is willing to make all possible sacrifices to
sustain the arm that is inflicting the death
blow to Treason and beating back the savage
foe from the frontier.19

Governor Saunders in his opening message of the
ninth session of the Legislative Assembly on January 8,
1864, thus praised the Nebraska soldier;

Nebraska soldier, whether called on by his
country to confront the wiley savage on the
frontier, or the rebel hosts in battle array,
has never shrunken from duty, quailed before
dangers, or turned his back on the foe.20

He spoke also of giving the soldiers the right to vote
as a soldier, recommended that necessary provisions be
made for keeping correct records of the names of all who
enlisted in the military service of the Territory, and
the preserving of a Roll of Honor for future generations
to admire. It should be inscribed with the names of
those who were wounded or had fallen in battle. He
recommended too that a monument be erected at the Capitol

19The Omaha Nebraskan, February 16, 1865.
20Nebraska Journals of the House of Representa-
tives, Jan. 8, 1864, pp. 10-24.
in memory of the Nebraska heroes who have died in the Civil War.21

Through the Legislative Assembly the Nebraska people expressed their thanks to those who fought almost unaided and "achieved one of the most brilliant and decisive victories that will adorn the annals of the recent struggle," and extended warm and sympathetic words to the relatives and friends of those who had given up their lives for the Union cause.22

How did soldiers feel about fighting the war? Their attitude for the most part can be gleaned from letters that reached the editor's desk. In June 1865 a letter from Lieutenant ------ from Edgefield, Tennessee, was written to the editor of the Republican:

We have a share in knocking the bottom out of the so-called Confederacy and in taking in Old Jeff with his regimentals on. We are quite proud of our share in it besides a great deal of satisfaction of having been on this last greatest campaign of the war. . . . The greatest glory of all is that our honor has been gained without comparative loss. . . . our march from Chattanooga here was one of joyful anticipation changed, however, to disappointment by the announcement on our arrival that only those whose term of service expired prior to October 1st were to be mustered out.23

21Ibid.

22These thoughts were expressed by Mr. Marquette of Cass county in the editorial of The Omaha Nebraskian, January 22, 1864.

23The Nebraska Republican, June 30, 1865.
After the war, the boys expressed an eager desire to get back to civilian life. People in Nebraska favored the mustering out of the men but also wanted re-enlisting as fast as it was necessary for public safety.

Since the frontiersmen felt that Indians had made themselves part and parcel of the rebellion the Nebraskans felt that a large number of good men—veterans—could be recruited for Indian warfare. But it was difficult to make the discontented soldiers realize that they ought to fight until the Indians were subdued.\(^{24}\) Soldiers did not seem eager to fight Indians after the war was over.\(^{25}\)

Financially the Nebraska Territory contributed nothing to the war effort. Congress had levied a direct tax on the people of the Territory amounting to \$19,312.\(^{26}\) But the scattered settlements found the Federal tax a serious burden and at the urgent request of the people, Congress credited the Territory with \$19,312 in place of the \$20,000 annual appropriation made to the Territory toward the expense of the Legislative session. Consequently no session was held in 1863 so that Nebraska

\(^{24}\)The Nebraska Republican, August 18, 1865.

\(^{25}\)Ibid., October 13, 1865.

\(^{26}\)Governor Saunders' first Message to the 8th Leg. Ass., Nebraska Journals of the House of Representa-

would benefit by this concession. This arrangement was the result of a "gentleman's agreement" between leaders in Nebraska and members of Congress. According to an account in the Advertiser, Omaha alone objected to the omission of the legislative session because of the great financial loss to the city.

The withdrawal of United States troops from the forts in Nebraska at the outbreak of the Civil War brought dismay to the western settlers and made it necessary for Governor Black to call for volunteer forces to be organized for home defense. Before he turned his office over to his successor he issued an order on April 30, 1861, for all volunteer military companies to report, the first to Major General Thayer and the second to Brigadier General Down. Counties combined to form enough men for a company which was not to be less than forty men nor more than sixty-four.


28 The Nebraska Advertiser, April 10, 1862. "About twenty members of the legislature assembled at Omaha, but finding that a quorum would not meet, they returned home paying their expenses out of their own pockets."--The Nebraska Advertiser, January 17, 1863.

29 The Nebraska Advertiser, May 9, 1861.

30 Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska, 1854-1887, I, 154.
During the month of June 1861, several contingents were formed for home protection: a Union Rifle company of eighty-four German citizens, the Omaha Guards for home protection, the Nebraska Rangers, a company of dragoons from Cass county, and the Nebraska Frontier Guards.  

When the Minnesota uprising occurred, acting Governor Paddock telegraphed to Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, informing him of the grave danger that demanded immediate action to protect the Territory which was without weapons, credit, or money. But with the authority to act for the General Government he believed that he had the necessary militia, provided the Federal Government would assume the expenses of the undertaking. Paddock received permission to do what he could to protect the settlers from the depredation of the Indians. Federal officers came to Nebraska in September 1862, and organized the Second Nebraska Cavalry, who carried on a vigorous campaign against the Sioux defeating them in the battle of White Stone Hill. The Seventh Iowa

31 A Military History of Nebraska, pp. 22, 23.
33 A Military History of Nebraska, p. 25.
34 Sheldon, "Mighty Saga of Nebraska's Pioneers," Omaha World-Herald, October 27, 1929.
Cavalry replaced the Second Nebraska mustered out in September 1863.35

Loyal Indians from the Indian country had been expelled because they were unable to defend themselves or remain neutral. The Federal Government, bound by treaty stipulations, protected these Indians and took steps to rid the Indian country of rebels, and return their lands to those who had been compelled to leave. The result was the formation of two regiments of Indian Home Guards consisting of nine thousand refugee Indians, who were used to guard the Indian country against the invasion of enemies. United States troops escorted them into the Territory where they served for a comparatively short time.36

By the end of the summer of 1862 the Advertiser reported that nearly the entire regiment had returned to the vicinity of Fort Scott, about seventy-five miles south. When this happened the leader of the Indian Home Guard regiment, Colonel Robert W. Furnas, was sent to the Nebraska Territory as a recruiting officer to aid in organizing the Second Nebraska Cavalry.37

During the fearful summer of 1864 the Federal

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35The Omaha Nebraskan, August 31, 1863.
36The Nebraska Advertiser, June 5, 1862.
37Ibid., August 30, 1862.
Government sent General Curtis, commander of the Department at St. Louis, to the Nebraska Territory to help suppress the Sioux and Cheyennes. He brought with him a few regulars and organized the settlers into fighting squads. Scouting parties were suggested. It was then that he met Frank North from Columbus who followed this suggestion and hired by the day seventy-five Pawnee Indians to act as government scouts. As the War continued a Pawnee Indian company of one hundred men was formed with Frank North as their captain. They rendered valuable service throughout the period of the war until June 1866, when they were mustered out.38

Military posts were warehouses and protective bases in the Territory. At the outbreak of the war there were two forts in Nebraska—Fort Randall surrounded by Indians, with a garrison of five hundred soldiers of the regular army,39 and Fort Kearney, on the overland trail with several companies of United States troops who were there to guard the wagon trains through the hostile Indian country. To the alarm of the Nebraska settlers these troops were summoned from Nebraska in

38 The Omaha Sunday World-Herald, October 27, 1929.

response to Lincoln's call for men. 40

Until after 1865 Fort Kearney was the main base of supplies and military operations west of Omaha. 41

Then Indian troubles moved farther west and north, and the railroad became the highway to the West. It was no longer necessary for troops to guard the travelers on their way to California and Oregon at this point. 42 As a supply house it carried enough for an emergency with rations sufficient for the army. In fact, everything needed on the frontier could be obtained here. 43

The life of the soldier at Fort Kearney was much like that of any other frontier post where he followed the routine of a soldier's life broken occasionally by the arrival of emigrants on their way to the gold fields, by scouting trips, news over the telegraph lines, and the mail that regularly came to the post. 44

It is an interesting fact that from 1864 to 1867


41 Root, op. cit., p. 242.


43 Ware, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

44 Root, op. cit., p. 242.
the fort was garrisoned by two regiments of rebel soldiers. They had taken the oath of allegiance to the United States and were sent West to fight Indians. At the fort they were called "galvanized" rebels or "white washed" yanks. These regiments, however, were known as the Fifth United States Volunteers and were men who had been taken prisoners. They were mustered out in the fall of 1866. General Sherman visited the fort at this time when he found two companies of these rebels still at the fort and two more about thirty-five miles farther up at Plum Creek where they still feared roving bands of Indians.

One other very valuable frontier outpost established in 1863 was Fort McPherson, better known as Cottonwood Springs. It was later abandoned and converted into a National cemetery where many Civil War veterans are buried.

Julesburg was considered the most important military post on the Overland Route, although it was not in

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47 Troup, op. cit., p. 41.
The days of 1862 brought much talk about recruiting to supply men for the vacancies in the old regiments. Dispatches from Washington stated that if quotas were not filled by volunteering they would be filled by drafting. Recruiting officers had no trouble finding any number of men willing to serve as officers. Every able-bodied man in the Territory and "many who would be invalids in case of draft" would go through any hardship in army life for the title of Captain, Colonel, or Brigadier General; but it was not so easy to get men to enlist as "high privates." "Patriotism plus thirteen dollars" a month was not an inducement for men who needed enough money to support their families.49

Recruiting officers from other states came into Nebraska, thereby cutting the Territorial defensive man power. It therefore became necessary for Governor Saunders to issue two proclamations to the effect that enlistments were not to be made in regiments organized outside the Territory until the First Nebraska was filled. Everyone was happy that the Governor had put a stop to

48. The Nebraska Republican, March 2, 1866.
49. The Nebraska Advertiser, August 23, 1862.
Rumors of conscription brought interesting comments from local papers. Many citizens of Nebraska favored drafting but the Advertiser presented some strong arguments against it. Nebraska had already furnished 2,500 soldiers from her scattered population. If all the loyal states had done as well proportionately, our army would have had a million and a half men. The residents of more wealthy states who might be drafted and could not leave their business could well afford to hire a substitute. Then again, Nebraska was facing frontier dangers and needed all the manpower that remained, for it had already given generously through enlisted volunteers. But the editor closed his argumentative discourse with this generous patriotic gesture, characteristic of a Republican paper, but true, nevertheless, of the Territory in its attitude towards the war effort.

If we are called upon to raise another regiment it will be done without one word of complaint. The three hundred thousand drafted men will not be inferior to any in the army, either in loyalty, bravery, or patriotism.51

The notification of the conscription issued by

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50 Ibid., August 30, 1862.

51 The Nebraska Advertiser, August 9, 1862.
the president that appeared in the local paper stated that all "able bodied men in the United states are to be enrolled and subject to military duty at the call of the President." The Advertiser presumed that Nebraska could rest easy for she had given more than her portion of volunteers and therefore would not be subject to the draft. But, should it affect the Territory, not more than seven hundred would be required to fill the Territorial quota.52 By July 31, 1863, the Nebraskan announced that the draft law had been suspended for Nebraska for two reasons: first, because of the "exposed conditions on the frontier," and secondly, because Nebraska had already supplied a large number of troops.53 Late summer brought Democratic sentiments definitely denouncing the draft law saying that the only "sound, sure, honest way of raising troops" was through the volunteer system.54

The Democrats supposed that everyone in the country knew that the conscript act was, to say the least,

52 The Nebraska Advertiser, March 5, 1863.

53 On July 15, 1863, August F. Harvey, editor of the Nebraska City News wrote to Mr. Reynolds, editor of the Nebraskan, informing him of the suspension of the draft law for Nebraska.—The Omaha Nebraskan, July 31, 1863.

54 The Omaha Nebraskan, August 21, 1863.
an "impracticable, imprudent and impolitic law." They objected strenuously to the §300-clause because it discriminated in favor of the rich and against the poor, to which class a majority of the people belonged. Such a stipulation would practically nullify the enlistments, in a legal manner, of course, since the better class could buy substitutes. How was the depleted army going to be filled with the veterans' term expiring in the spring of 1864? To the Democrats of Nebraska there was but one way.

... but two plain and simple things to be done. Let the President promptly convene Congress. Let him ask them, and let Congress have the patriotism to do it, to repeal and wipe out the present partial and unfair conscription act, and reinstate one in its stead that is fair and honest ... an act that bears alike upon the rich and the poor. And let Congress and the President and the administration give up this infernal nigger business. It don't pay. There is patriotism enough still left in the country to save it from everlasting destruction ... if need be, by fighting, and that to the bitter end. But there is not patriotism enough (if you call it patriotism) to sacrifice so many valuable lives and so much of treasure for the mere doubtful advantage of the negro. Until the negro mania had seized upon the administration there was no lack of troops--no want of men. Why not return to the ... safe and sure path that our fathers trod, that we have tried and found was leading us on to an honorable peace, to a reunion of the states and to glory? 55

It is apparent that Nebraskans were not too much interested

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55 The Omaha Nebraskian, July 24, 1863.
in all the talk about negroes and slavery because of the diversified local interests on the frontier. Obviously Democrats never quite forgot that the administration was not of their affiliation, however interested they were in winning the war of the rebellion.

With the scant population of some 30,000 in 1861 the Nebraska Territory furnished 3,307 officers and men to defend the Union cause, in spite of the fact that they were harassed from all sides by the barbarous savage. Nevertheless the frontiersmen tried to battle it through on the home front as best they could.\textsuperscript{56} Their chief difficulty in providing for National defense was the lack of funds with which to recruit the army.

Army records tell us that Nebraska ranked second among the territories in its contribution to national defense. It supplied 960 infantry and 1,246 cavalry soldiers.\textsuperscript{57} Besides this many Nebraskans enlisted in regiments from other states. One company in Kansas was composed entirely of Nebraska boys. The four companies that made up the Curtis Light Horse Cavalry that served throughout the war as the Fifth Iowa Cavalry is another

\textsuperscript{56}\textit{A Military History of Nebraska}, p. 21.

\textsuperscript{57}\textit{Shick, op. cit.}, citing \textit{Records of Union and Confederate Armies}, Series III, 1018, November 11, 1863.
example of all Nebraskans.

In comparison to the number recruited, losses were very slight. According to Fred Dyer's *Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, the total number of casualties out of the 3,307 men in service was 239. Thirty-five of these were killed in battle, one died in prison, 159 died of disease, 23 from accident, and 31 from causes other than battle.58

On the one hand, a wholehearted love for the Union brought forth from the struggling Nebraska frontier an enthusiastic response to the call for defense; while on the other hand, the dreadful fear of Indian attacks and the lack of understanding on the part of the Federal Government brought bitter criticisms of the War Department which failed to give them adequate protection when they needed it most. Nevertheless, Nebraska made an excellent military record for the Territory and for the Union cause.

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58 *A Military History of Nebraska*, citing Fred Dyer's *Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*. 
CHAPTER V

POLITICAL ATTITUDES BETWEEN 1861 AND 1867

With the election of Lincoln on November 8, 1860, the "eve of a revolution" dawned upon a nation. December brought the secession of South Carolina but people still refused to believe that troubled times lay ahead.1 The Nebraska Advertiser carried an interesting editorial on election day that reflected the opinion of the Republi­cans of the man just elected:

We prophesy one of the most conservative harmonious and useful administrations ever known. . . . . The people have elected an HONEST man "one of the noblest works of God." All fears of secession or disunion may be put to rest. Should Southern fire-eaters ever make an attempt to bring about internal troils there is a conservative element at home which will promptly check and put it down. . . . . The motto of the country yet is, "The Union must and shall be main­tained."2

Even though there were misgivings as to whether Lincoln would be peaceably inaugurated, the celebration on March 4th was carried out without a disturbance. The inaugural address was characterized as "peaceful in its character and correct in its positions." Of course,

1The Nebraska Advertiser, December 28, 1860.
2Ibid., November 8, 1860.
secessionists called it a war document. The Nebraska Territorial papers carried the full address, which made it possible for all to read it. Robert Furnas, editor of the Advertiser, made an appeal to the people of the Territory to uphold the Executive, whatever party he might belong to, as one who would preserve the Constitution and enforce the laws.

A gloomy tone pervaded the editorial columns of the Democratic papers while the Republican press took an optimistic attitude and attempted to mold public opinion in favor of the Administration and the Union cause. A true picture must be given the frontiersman of the Southern people. The Southern vote for Lincoln was published with the emphasis on the fact that even Southerners voted for the "Black Republican"; 26,599 votes came from the Southern states of Missouri, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky (border states) which were pointed out to Nebraskans as not in favor of slavery. News like this prepared the way for the correct attitude in placing the responsibility for the spirit of disunion, not on the Southern people as such.

3The Nebraska Advertiser, March 7, 1861.
4Ibid., March 4, 1861.
5Sheldon, op. cit., I, 309.
but upon the politicians. 6 After examining the exchanges from all parts of the country the Advertiser drew the conclusion for the public that there was enough opposition to disunion in the extreme South and the border states to quiet the storm. 7 We know now the fallacy of this conclusion. It seemed a way of hoping that the South would remain loyal. As a matter of fact the holding of these border states, Virginia excepted, was a difficult task. As for the deep South, they had definitely followed South Carolina within a month after the latter had seceded without much opposition.

Early December brought no material change in Southern affairs, but matters seemed a little calmed down. Rumors of secession reached the Territory through the local press that carried excerpts from the National Intelligencer and others informing them of the course pursued by both sections. The Nebraska Advertiser endeavored to give a fair picture of both sides of the question, and insisted that Northerners were using the press to foment discontent. It warned the people against exaggerated news.

The Southern press and Southern statesmen speak a different language; and yet further

6The Nebraska Advertiser, November 5, 1860.
7Ibid., November 15, 1860.
when we get to the Southern people the mass of them are unwilling to entertain even a proposition for disunion. 

From letters that came to the editor’s desk one began to feel that the masses of the South were unaware of the meaning of secession. In a letter that the Advertiser quoted from The Brooklyn Eagle we find confirmed sentiments against disunion among the southern farmers:

. . . . we always get a good price and ready pay for our cotton. . . . . No, sir, I've always been treated tolerably well in the Union and would rather stay in such a place than try what I kin do in some other; and if you're going to begin your new government by giving me a little more than half price for my cotton, I can't see why I should go in for disunion.

Like the Nebraska frontiersman, the Southern planter had one absorbing interest—economic prosperity; and as long as he managed a good price for his produce there was no reason to be interested or concerned about the political aspect of the situation. The same story could be heard in the cotton markets from each of the simple hearted planters, who were unaware of the cause of disunion. Such propaganda strengthened union sentiments in Nebraska and helped to place the responsibility for disunion on the political leaders.

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8Ibid., December 6, 1860.
9Ibid., January 3, 1861.
In the fall of 1860 the Republican press predicted that the rumblings of secession would subside without the shedding of blood. Neither would there be a conflict between the North and South, and if any blood were shed it would be among the Southerners themselves. It endeavored to show the futility of secession for Southerners for they would still have with them the "negro-thieving abolitionist, their own class of oppressed poor whites, and a predominating negro population; and the final result would be insurrection" within a period of one year. They were said to have seized the election of Lincoln as an excuse for their treasonable design, and her leaders were accused of being disloyalists and traitors to the country.10 But in less than a month the secessionists from South Carolina, the Advertiser continued, no longer claimed that the election of Lincoln was the cause of their actions. They admitted that it had been growing upon them for the last twenty years, and that now they were going to break with the North forever.11 During November and December of 1860 detailed accounts of secession movements in South Carolina were carried regularly on the inside page of the

10 Ibid., November 15, 1860.
11 Ibid., January 31, 1861.
local papers with no apparent reaction from the people of the Territory.

With disturbances from within and the excitement of the rising conflict from without, Nebraskans carried on a busy useful existence on the frontier with firm allegiance to the Federal Government and a determination to help preserve the Union.

Governor Saunders in his message to the Legislative Assembly on December 2, 1861, urged sacrifice for and loyalty to the preservation of the Union. Nebraskans from the outbreak of the war stood firmly for the Union even though they grew more hostile toward the Lincoln administration as time went on. Their one great concern was loyalty or disloyalty to the general government. Nebraskans failed to understand any half-hearted loyalty. If it were to be saved, men must be for the Union without any "if's" or "and's." Difficulties that could not be settled in the Union surely could not be settled out of it. They felt that it was no time for party strife among themselves. The Advertiser reported

13 Sheldon, op. cit., I, 328.
14 The Nebraska Advertiser, February 28, 1861.
15 Ibid., July 19, 1862.
in 1862 an interesting attempt to abolish party lines. On September 20, both parties held a joint convention at Omaha to see what could be done to ignore partisanship and thereby concentrate their energies to uphold the Government, preserve the Union, and win the war. When an attempt at the convention to bring about a coalition of the two parties failed, the group of Democrats from Washington county withdrew from the convention as they had planned if the attempt should prove unsuccessful. This ended the first formal attempt to abolish party lines.

In the fall of 1863 the Democrats alone met in convention at the Court House in Omaha to adopt a party platform that rang with loyalty for the Union. They intended to uphold civil liberties, to continue and to improve the Democratic party, to oppose secession in the South and abolition in the North, to stand for "the Union as it was and the Constitution as it is." Democratic conventions throughout the nation adopted the favorite catchwords of the time; "the Constitution as it is and the Union as it was," and incorporated it into

16Sheldon, op. cit., I, 316, 317.
17The Nebraska Advertiser, August 23, 1862.
18The Omaha Nebraskan, October 9, 1863.
their platforms. 19

By 1864, when the Territorial Republican Central Committee of the Union League met to put in suitable form their views on political questions, they unanimously adopted the following resolution:

... that since our country is engaged in a civil war of such magnitude, as to require the united efforts of loyal men of all parties to maintain the constitution inviolate ... resolved that Republicans abandon for the present, their distinctive organization as Republican party and that we request the Union members of the Territorial Legislature to unite with us in ... recommending unquestioned loyalty and unconditional support of the proclamation of President Lincoln, the arming of negroes, and any other constitutional measure necessary ... to crush out this wicked rebellion.

This movement was signed and endorsed by the Legislature then in session, but party contention was so bitter that these good resolutions were shortlived.

The Union League, however, functioned throughout the Territory as a propaganda club to express especially the Republican ideals. As a substitute for a council of defense in Brownville, the Union Club was organized February 28, 1863, during the time of great difference of


20 The Omaha Netraskian, February 19, 1864.
opinion on the war question even in Nebraska. The mem-
bbers took an oath to support the Constitution of the
United States and the Organic law of the Territory.21
The Democrats opposed the League as a political scheme
of the Republicans to express their policies. They
called it an offspring of "Know Nothingism,"22 and ac-
cused the Republicans of adopting such radical views as
favoring

the Emancipation Proclamation, the Confisca-
tion Act, the arming of negroes and each and
every other extreme, ultra, radical abolition
act committed by the party in power.23

The League accomplished little toward defense but gave
politicians an opportunity to express their views on the
issues of the day with, however, little results towards
unity of political parties.

It is significant that local party papers con-
tributed considerably toward shaping public opinion on
the frontier. They brought regular accounts of the war
news, most of the time without comment; but the editors
displayed a real interest in the politics of the day,
the election campaigns of 1860 and 1864, and the rising

21Sheldon (ed.), "Nebraska in 1864-1867,"
Nebraska History of Pioneer Days, I, April-June, 1918.

22The Omaha Nebraskan, September 18, 1863.

23Ibid., October 2, 1863.
surge of disunion, even though the front page carried local strife, legislative activities of the Territory, local election returns, economic interests, and their tribulations with the Indians. Local affairs were emphasized because Nebraska being a Territory did not vote in the national election, and the people themselves were concerned primarily with the struggles of daily life at home. Therefore both the Democrats and the Republicans showed an interest in sustaining practically the same program for internal improvements. Both organs strongly supported the Union. But Democratic papers were always hostile to anti-slavery sentiment; and when the Republican press became out-spoken against slavery, the Democrats became bitter in their retaliation.24

The struggle to keep slavery out of Nebraska has given the Territory a prominent place in the history of our country and linked it with the Civil War. Before 1861 two attempts to abolish slavery in Nebraska had failed. But the sentiment in favor of abolition grew rapidly between the sixth and seventh sessions of the Legislature, and the measure to abolish slavery became a law over the governor's veto, January 1, 1861. Democrats were said to be liberal in their attitude and as

supporters of Douglas' popular sovereignty they could not consistently oppose slavery in any territory. But Republicans talked frequently about the abolition of slavery and made much of what Lincoln said in his speech to the delegates of the Illinois State Convention who had nominated him for senatorship in 1858, that the nation could not long exist part slave and part free, and that with slavery the nation was like a house divided against itself. The attitude of the Republican party was well expressed in the Brownville press in the words of editor Furnas:

... the "institution" is an aggravated cancer, eating rapidly into the moral, social, commercial and political system, and cannot fail if not arrested in time, to destroy the patient.

However, the 1860-census showed eighty-one negroes in Nebraska, ten of whom were slaves. A few had been brought in by some Missourians who held that the Constitution gave them the right to hold slaves here.

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27 *The Nebraska Advertiser*, February 28, 1861.

28 Morton, op. cit., II, 71.

Obviously one reason for so few slaves was their economic uselessness because of climatic conditions in the Territory. Nebraska would have to be located a few degrees farther south to make slavery profitable. There were, however, a few stations of the "underground railroad" located at Nebraska City in the southeast corner of the Territory. Here fugitives passed through under the guidance of John Brown. Most of the time they came to the stations one by one, before sun up or after sun down, guided by abolitionists from the various stations along the way whose locations were apparently changed from time to time in order to throw off the state or federal officials who were after the escaping slaves.

The President's proclamation for the freedom of slaves in the rebellious states appeared in the September issue, 1862, of the Advertiser. It met the disfavor

30"In the valley just north of the cemetery in Nebraska City there was a cave, which was undoubtedly a hiding and resting place for fugitives. It was nearly 16 feet deep, dug into a steep bank. . . . A hollow log or gun reaching to the surface of the ground was used as a ventilator. The owner claimed to be a rank Democrat."—G. M. Lamberton, "The State as a Political Entity," Transactions and Reports (Lincoln: Nebraska Historical Society), V, 73.


32The Nebraska Advertiser, September 27, 1863.
of the Democrats whose bitterness found an outlet in the local newspapers of the period. When the Legislature of the Territory formally adopted it in February, 1864, the Nebraskan scathingly condemned the Republican law makers of Nebraska.

The bill raising white men to the equality of the colored race has passed the Legislature. White trash can now testify in courts as well as "any other man." We congratulate the white folks and intelligent darkies upon being placed on a footing with the red men of the plains. What a pity we haven't a few orang-outangs and cannibals to raise to a level with civilized beings. Of the plastic hand and gushing humanity of lawmakers in Nebraska.33

Both the July and September issues denounce the work of abolitionists and their doctrine of miscegenation.34

However much the Democrats disliked anti-slavery sentiments they nurtured a strong prejudice against associating with negroes on a level with whites.

The true Democrat is the truest friend of the negro, because he is the truest friend of the white race. He believes it to be the best for both races to be kept separate and distinct --each in Heaven's own way to perform its divinely appointed mission.35

Governor Saunders in his annual message to the Legislative Assembly at the tenth session, January 7,

33The Omaha Nebraskan, February 19, 1864.
34Ibid., July 29, September 2, 1864.
1865, made an appeal to Nebraskans in behalf of the relief of freed negroes. He suggested that suitable labor be furnished them so that they might earn an honest living for themselves and their families. Against the Republican governor, the editor of the Nebraskan expressed party antagonism as well as race prejudice.

Alvin desires the people of Nebraska to find suitable employment for charcoal images of God, to be suitably employed boarding round among the abolition officials of Nebraska. In short the nigger is the biggest and whitest thing in the message.

When the Democrats held their convention at Plattsmouth in September 1865, they openly declared negroes inferior to white men and were opposed to letting him hold office or vote. They adopted as a part of their party platform this resolution:

... That negroes are neither by nature nor by education, entitled to political nor social equality with the white race, that we are opposed to permitting them to hold office in this Territory themselves or to vote for others for office, that we are bitterly hostile to the project of amending the Organic Act so as to permit them to vote, now sought to be secretly accomplished by the Republicans.

From 1863 to 1867 there was among the politicians

36 The Nebraska Republican, January 13, 1865.
37 The Omaha Nebraskan, February 9, 1865.
38 The Nebraska Advertiser, September 28, 1865.
much contention between Copperheads and Republicans over the National issues colored by local party politics. In 1863 the Advertiser defined Copperheads as those who sympathized more or less with rebels, who wanted the war discontinued, wanted a recognition of the Southern Confederacy, and a dissolution of the Union. They were said to be opposed to all measures of the Administration that were calculated to suppress the rebellion. There were said to be many kinds of Copperheads, from the real rebel down to the "weak-kneed Union man." They made themselves known by constantly criticizing the Administration, by opposing the draft, by various exaggerations concerning the rebel successes, often showing favor to southern victories or ignoring the important Union victories. Copperheads as defined in the political language of 1864 in the Nebraskan were those who were said to be opposed to Mr. Lincoln's re-election, to high taxes, and to state government for the Territory, and who failed to swear by the "Proclamation." The Nebraskan predicted a heavy "crop" of Copperheads for 1865.  

By January 1861 there was much talk of war brought through letters and Northern newspapers. There

39 Ibid., July 25, 1863.
40 The Omaha Nebraskan, June 3, 1864.
were rumors of "an early disruption of government, the incompentence of the administration, demoralization of government, and evil designs of traitors," propagated by the Democratic press. The leaders of the South were accused not only of hastening a rupture between the two sections but even of causing open conflict—war, so that the Southern people might not have time to reflect or make an investigation. The Advertiser reported that Southern leaders hoped that all government buildings and records would be destroyed so as to cover up their wrong deeds, that the President and the leading members of the Cabinet had given South Carolina possession of the United States forts, that Cabinet members had resigned, that traitors had placed immense quantities of arms and ammunitions in all prominent posts in the seceding state, and that they even talked of taking possession and burning the government buildings at Washington. They were said to have even planned to prevent the inauguration of Lincoln, and would unquestionably use United States money to carry out the "treasonable designs of the secessionists." It seemed that before very long the people of the North together with all Union loving people everywhere would be forced to say to the agitator:

But if madly bent on strife;
And all reason speaks in vain;
The only hope seemed to rest in those who were unwilling to be destroyed. To these the Union leaders looked with confidence to spur the masses so as to save the nation. War now seemed inevitable.

When the news of the fall of Fort Sumter reached Nebraska in April, 1861, the frontier folk manifested a spirit of unswerving loyalty to the Union everywhere. Omaha hoisted the stars and stripes on her civic buildings, held public gatherings, and immediately took steps to assist the general government. The rebellion must be suppressed. Regardless of all rumors and the infiltration of Southern troubles and propaganda many thought that war might be averted.

Some of the first evidences of war came with the transferring of about five hundred troops from Fort Kearney to Leavenworth. But the inhabitants along the Niotrara river became fearful of their Indian neighbors.

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41 The Nebraska Advertiser, January 10, 1861.

42 Andreas, op. cit., p. 230.

43 The Nebraska Advertiser, January 17, 1861.
and were reluctant to let the troops leave Fort Randall. Nevertheless, by May 3, 1861, the steamer "Omaha" passed down the river carrying the heavy equipage of three companies of the Fourth Artillery from Fort Randall.

Day after day as the war continued, news of the military activities appeared in the columns of the Territorial papers with little or no comment nor glaring headlines. On July 10, 1863, Nebraskan reported severe fighting and heavy losses on July 1 and 2, at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, with headlines for the victory at Vicksburg. There was much more interest shown in the latter, an event the Nebraskans had been looking forward to for some time. Favorable reports came the following week from the army at Vicksburg. Nebraskans were fighting here. They had helped Grant carry on the hammering campaign to victory. Many of Nebraska volunteers had seen service under Grant from the time they left the Territory until they returned to fight Indians.

More than a month later the editor of the Nebraskan spoke of the victory at Vicksburg as a "ray of hope"
shining through the dark cloud that hung over the Na-
tion at that time. Gettysburg was called hardly a vic-
tory for us but "a disheartening and discouraging de-
feat to the rebels." Great praise was given to Southern
soldiers and the "brilliant strategist and successful
military chieftain, Robert E. Lee." 47

After the battles of Gettysburg and Vicksburg
the days were filled with the spirit of peace at the
thought that the rebellion was coming to an end. Rumors
of Southerners desiring to return to the Union reached
the Northern press although no formal request had been
made. 48 When the South asked for peace, the Nebraskan
editor said that hopeful encouragement should come from
the Administration to increase the growing Union feeling
in the South. The Administration ought to say to the
seceded states for the next three months:

Lay down your arms, come back to the good old
Union, with all your rights guaranteed you under
the Constitution of our fathers. . . . 49

An appeal was made to all political parties to act to-
gether to secure this great objective.

During the summer of 1864 military failure brought

47Ibid., August 21, 1863.
48Ibid., January 29, 1864.
49Ibid., August 21, 1863.
a gloomy outlook concerning Republican success in the fall election. But the spirits of the nation rose with Sherman's successful march to the sea and the driving of Early from the Shenandoah valley just three weeks before election day.

A vigorous campaign against the re-election of Lincoln was carried on in the local Democratic press. Speeches appeared every week, and in early fall the Nebraskan openly proclaimed its withdrawal from the support of "Honest old Abe." Democrats were definitely opposed to him or anyone else that held his political sentiments because they did not consider him capable of guiding the nation in the midst of so dangerous a revolution. "We want a statesman . . . . endowed with the soul and statesmanship of Washington and imbued with the stern unflinching spirit of Jackson." Democrats preferred McClellan for then they said the war would be prosecuted so vigorously that the South would be compelled to return to the Union. The Nebraskan insisted that if Republicans were honest they would retract the

50 Ibid., September 2, 1864.
51 Ibid., April 29, 1864.
52 This information was reported from the Rock Island Argus as electioneering propaganda.—Ibid., July 8, 1864.
labels attached to McClellan: "unsound," a "Copperhead," a "sympathizer with the rebellion," and "one who was defeated by the rebels because he was a traitor at heart himself."\(^{53}\) Those who voted for Lincoln were said to be voting for four more years of war, immediate drafts and an enormous debt, the placing of military power above the civil, against free speech and press, and against the freedom of the American people.\(^{54}\)

The Democrats of the west defended McClellan for reasons we quote from the Nebraskan, May 13, 1864:

> We defend him because we think he is the worst abused man of the age; because the entire batch of officer holders would not tell the truth about him if it was in his favor; because we believe that he is the ablest general in the country that the nation has produced, during the war; because we know that he is a patriot and would have taken Richmond if he would have been properly supported; because of his honesty and integrity; a good and popular leader is always well slandered by his enemies.\(^{55}\)

Nebraska was strongly Republican, and a Republican Legislature passed the following resolution at the ninth session on January 20, formally expressing the attitude of the Republican party in Nebraska towards the policies of the Lincoln administration:

\(^{53}\)Ibid., May 13, 1864.

\(^{54}\)Ibid., October 21, 1864.

\(^{55}\)Ibid., May 13, 1864.
. . . . We heartily endorse the general policy of the administration . . . . especially the president's Emancipation Proclamation, and the arming of negroes for the suppression of the rebellion.56

And when Lincoln was re-elected in November 1864, Democrats were without enthusiasm over national affairs.

The spring of 1865 brought the fall of Richmond and the collapse of the Confederacy followed by celebrations of victory. Farnham street was decorated with flags, the stars and stripes proudly waving over the capitol. The entire population of Omaha seemed to be in the streets contesting with one another in their expressions of joy.57 A military salute of two hundred guns was ordered by the Secretary of War to be given at all posts and arsenals in honor of the surrender of General Lee and his army to General Grant. Citizens were asked to join in the commemoration of this great event with bonfires, illuminations and the firing of cannons.58

56 Nebraska House Journal of the Legislature, 9th sess., January 20, 1864, p. 98.

57 The Omaha Nebraskan, April 3 and 6, 1865.

58 This dispatch came from the governor's office, Omaha N.T., sent out April 10, 1865 by acting Governor Paddock, the day after the surrender to the Mayors of Omaha, Plattsmouth, Nebraska City, Brownville, Fremont, and Columbus—ibid., April 20, 1865.
In less than a week after the collapse of the Confederacy and without comment but with a deep sense of respect the account of the assassination of President Lincoln ran in the Territorial newspapers of April 20, 1865. About a week later when the nation had recovered somewhat from the shock and began to realize the loss of a great public leader the Democratic press respectfully paid him this tribute:

We bow in sadness to the terrible blow and while thousands grieve over the death of Abraham Lincoln, they will curse the hand that directed the fatal shot. At this time the life of the President was of incalculable value to the nation. We cannot justly estimate this loss. Yesterday tens of thousands of flags were proudly unfurled to the breeze—today they will be draped in mourning, and hang in silent folds at halfmast. The tragedy is ended; and we are called upon to weep.

The following day the Republican press called attention to the fact that Lincoln was assassinated on the fourth anniversary of the fall of Fort Sumter "at a time when the loyal heart of the people beat higher than it had for four years."

About nine months later, in view of Andrew Johnson and a peace program, the Democratic sheet spoke.

59 Ibid., April 20, 1865.
60 Ibid., April 27, 1865.
61 The Nebraska Republican, April 28, 1865.
reverently of the deceased president, upholding his illustrious example and expecting his successor to do likewise.

He planted the tree of peace, let his successor cultivate and nourish the same with a benign care and unborn generations will rise up in their day and bless Andrew Johnson. 62

Immediately following the fall of Richmond there was general talk of reconstruction.

There must be no south, no east, no west, no north, but one grand national outburst of fraternity and forgiveness. No recrimination. Let the bloody past, with all its horrors be spurned from the natural heart, and sunk deeply into the gulf of political oblivion. 65

When the Republicans held the Union Party Convention at Plattsmouth, September 19, 1865, just before the opening of Congress in December, they expressed a confidence in Andrew Johnson's policies of reconstruction with little explanation. 64 The Omaha Weekly-Herald did not hesitate to accuse the Republicans of a left-handed indorsement of the President's policy. Instead of Reconstruction the basis of Johnson's plan was Restoration and here is where the Republicans were said not to agree. It called the President a "terrible old Copperhead,"--

62 The Nebraska Advertiser, September 21, 1865.
63 Ibid., April 13, 1865.
64 The Nebraska Advertiser, September 21, 1865.
for he dared to say he loved the Southern people and even declared himself one "of them." 65

The Democrats, who held their convention two days later at Plattsmouth, regarded the Republican endorsement of Johnson's program insincere. They felt that his plan was "ultra mild and conciliating and much too favorable to late 'rebels'" to suit the radical Republicans. The Democrats themselves commended the mild policy in very general terms. 66 They considered Johnson as a man of the people, and intended to verify his historic saying "that this is and shall be a government of white men and for white men." 67

In February 1866 the Legislative Assembly pledged itself to sustain the policy of the president "in all just and proper measures irrespective of party." 68

By September 1866 Republican leaders denounced completely the president's policy and asked the party to give its wholehearted support to the 39th Congress and the 14th amendment. 69 Although it still called itself

65 The Omaha Weekly-Herald, October 20, 1865.
66 Sheldon, op. cit., I, 333.
67 The Nebraska Herald (Plattsmouth), May 2, 1866.
68 The Nebraska Republican, February 9, 1866.
69 The Nebraska Advertiser, September 13, 1866.
the Union Party, its policies moved rapidly toward "thorough" reconstruction.70

Most of the people within the Territory were too deeply concerned with their own prosperity, internal improvements, difficulties with Jayhawkers and Indians to take a definite stand on such a removed situation as reconstruction, however interested the politicians in the Territory might have been in the political issues of the period that prompted them to agitate for statehood.

During the closing period of the Civil War statehood again became the all absorbing question. Nebraska had become a strong Republican territory and naturally desired more Republican representatives and senators at Washington.71

Abraham Lincoln also considered it necessary to create a number of new states out of the Northwest so that new constitutional amendments might be adopted by the necessary three-fourths without depending upon the states that were in the recent rebellion.72 He saw the

70 Ibid., September 20, 1866.
71 Nebraska Blue Book, 1944, compiled by the Nebraska Legislative Council (Lincoln, 1915-1944), p. 42.
72 John Lee Webster, "Controversy in the United States Senate Over the Admission of Nebraska," Publications (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society), XVIII, 371, 346.
need of increasing the number of loyal states in order to destroy the balance of power between North and South in the United States Senate. Before Nebraska had formally applied for admission, however, Lincoln had been assassinated and Andrew Johnson became president.

The ninth Territorial Legislature by joint resolution sent a memorial to Congress on January 16, 1864, asking for an enabling act to be passed so that Nebraska might prepare for entrance into the Union. But the Democratic party in Nebraska opposed statehood and eleven out of the thirty-seven members of the House voted against the memorial. They did not object so much on political as on economic grounds, although they had not been burdened with taxes during the war and were getting along tolerably well after the war. Nevertheless, the people felt they were unable to bear the additional expense entailed in statehood. Politically they feared a strengthening of the "radical" Republicans in Congress. Congress responded almost immediately by passing the Enabling Act signed by Lincoln on April 19, 1864.

73 Nebraska Blue Book, 1944, p. 42.
74 Webster, op. cit., p. 347.
75 Nebraska Party Platforms, 1858-1940, sponsored by the University of Nebraska (Lincoln, 1940), pp. 12-31.
It authorized the people of the Territory to form a Constitution and state government for the admission into the Union. 76

The people of the Territory elected delegates for a constitutional convention that met at Omaha, July 4, 1864. Immediately after organizing they voted to adjourn without proceeding to business. They gave as their reason for adjourning the fact that they wished to save expenses for the Territory and that there was too much opposition from the Democrats. 77 Although the first attempt to organize a state was a failure, friends of the administration did not want the question dropped and it again came before the Assembly which met in December 1865. A committee composed of Democrats and Republicans were appointed. This committee prepared a constitution that provided for the barest necessities of government and refused the right of suffrage to negroes. It was submitted to the vote of the people June 2, 1866, 78 and was adopted by a vote of 3,938 in its favor to 3,838 against. 79 State officers were elected at this time and the

76 Congressional Globe, 38th Cong., 1st sess., Part II, 1876.

77 Nebraska Blue Book, 1944, p. 42.

78 Marquett, op. cit., V, 114.

79 Nebraska Blue Book, 1944, p. 43.
Legislature proceeded to elect two United States senators—Major General John M. Thayer and Thomas W. Tipton. David Butler was elected the first governor of the new state. T. M. Marquett was elected first congressman.

The constitution of Nebraska was brought by John M. Thayer to a radical Congress engaged in carrying out its reconstruction program at a time when Andrew Johnson opposed these same measures on reconstruction. He had made the "swing around the Circle" and in his speeches at Philadelphia and St. Louis he had called Congress a body of tyrants, usurping the powers of government.

The bill for the admission of Nebraska into the Union was introduced for the first time by Benjamin F. Wade of Ohio, on July 23, 1866. It met opposition on the ground of insufficient population, the slender majority by which the constitution was adopted, and on the suffrage basis. The 1860-census showed about 28,000

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80Webster, op. cit., p. 369.
81Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska, 1854-1941, I, 259.
83Webster, op. cit., p. 371.
84Congressional Globe, 1st sess., 39 Cong., Part V, 4044, 4207, 4275.
but by 1865 Nebraskans had counted those who had come into the Territory across the Missouri on the ferries. In this way the population figured as high as 70,000 or 80,000. Men were counted when they moved into Nebraska but never subtracted when they moved out beyond the borders.85

The first admission bill of July 23 received a pocket veto but a new bill was quickly reintroduced in the Senate on December 5, 1867.86 Republicans objected to the word "white" in the constitution since it was a time when Congress was reconstructing the states of the rebellion and had made it imperative that negroes be given the right to vote in these states. Therefore, it was obviously impossible to admit two northern states (Nebraska and Colorado) with constitutions allowing franchise only to whites.87

Many in the Territory opposed the Morrill bill that gave suffrage to negroes in the territories. The Omaha Weekly (Democratic sheet) feared the suffrage bill would convert Nebraska into a negro colony to which negroes might be imported to vote down the white man. The

85Marquett, op. cit., V, 125-27.
87Lamberton, op. cit., V, 192-93.
people of Nebraska would never submit to such an outrage on popular rights.\textsuperscript{88} The Democrats found it hard to accept enfranchisement of the negro because they felt that he was not ready to accept political responsibility and that it would retard or even prevent the restoration of the Union.\textsuperscript{89} Even The Nebraska Republican believed that it voiced the opinion of "nineteen-twentieths" of the people in the Territory when it regarded this act of Congress "as a direct outrage upon our rights as American citizens."\textsuperscript{90} But the Republicans out of hatred for the South and because of the influence of radicals pretended to regard the negro as one who could be trusted with the exercise of political rights.\textsuperscript{91} By the time another year had passed the weekly had changed its attitude and upheld the measure in the cause of justice.\textsuperscript{92}

On the floor of the United States Senate Boutwell of Massachusetts proposed an amendment to Nebraska's constitution to the effect that Nebraska should amend her constitution so that there would be no denial of . . . .

\textsuperscript{88}The Omaha Weekly, June 1, 1863.

\textsuperscript{89}Sheldon, op. cit., I, 333.

\textsuperscript{90}The Nebraska Republican, January 19, 1866.

\textsuperscript{91}Sheldon, op. cit., I, 333.

\textsuperscript{92}The Omaha Weekly Republican, February 1, 1867.
the elective franchise or of any other right to any person by reason of race or color excepting Indians not taxed."93

The bill was passed January 15, only to be vetoed a second time by the president. But Congress promptly passed it over the president's veto and provided that the amendment insisted upon by Congress should be ratified by the Nebraska Legislature.94 When the Legislative Assembly convened for the twelfth session in January 1867, acting Governor Paddock spoke in favor of the right of franchise to the negro.95 A special session was called February 20, 1867, when the Territorial Legislature formally accepted the 14th amendment and on March 1, 1867, President Johnson proclaimed Nebraska to be a state.96

During the summer previous to the State Constitutional Convention, Republicans agitated for statehood. The Republican pointed out that economically it would be a great loss to her river towns, not to be in the Union

93United States Statutes at Large, 2nd sess., 39 Cong., XIV, 391.
94Congressional Globe, 2nd sess., 39 Cong., Part I, 125.
95Nebraska Journals of the House of Representa-
tives, January 11, 1867, p. 29.
96Nebraska Blue Book, 1944, p. 43.
for all trade would be monopolized by the border states; and just as long as Nebraska was content to remain in a Territorial condition without a voice in Congress, just so long would it make little progress. Kansas would be getting all the advantages of our trade and transportation. Nebraskans must "decide for themselves on June 2, whether it will remain 'out in the cold,' a 'tail to the Kansas kite.'" 97

The *Omaha Weekly Republican*, February 5, spared not a word in its condemnation of President Johnson's veto of the Nebraska bill. It accused him of being made of "that true Southern stuff out of which rebels are made" and of being behind the times about five years, because years ago people did not dream of impartial suffrage, that conditions and times were different and that such things were not asked for. "It is the old fogy method of argument and the President is the chief of old fogies."98 But when the measure passed over the veto by the overwhelming majority of 120 to 44 in Congress we read the following expression of joy on the part of the Republican press:

97 *The Nebraska Republican*, March 30, 1866.

98 *The Omaha Weekly Republican*, February 5, 1867.
We are out of the wilderness. Call us nigger suffrage, et-skinned—anything. Our only retort will be STATE.\(^99\)

The fact that Nebraska contributed so little in the way of direct taxes during the war found it neither poor nor in debt when the war was over. This made the tax-payers feel secure enough and carried great weight as an argument in favor of Territorial government.\(^{100}\)

The Constitution of Nebraska provided that the first state legislature was privileged to locate the seat of government. The first meeting was called by Governor Butler to meet at Omaha in May but during that same session the capital was moved to Lincoln. Omaha raised no opposition because her prosperity did not depend on the capital but upon the railroad.\(^{101}\) All settled down to continue Nebraska history as a state in the Union.

\(^{99}\) Ibid., February 15, 1867.

\(^{100}\) Nebraska House Journal of State Legislature, 1st sess., pp. 12-17.—Butler's Inaugural Address, July 6, 1867.

\(^{101}\) Sorenson, op. cit., pp. 91-92.
CONCLUSION

This investigation has revealed the marvelous economic and political development of a people apparently far removed from the activities of one of the darkest periods of American history. Within boundary lines well established as early as 1863 Nebraska Territory steadily worked out its destiny to become a part of the Union of States by 1867. Available source material recounts the struggle for economic and political supremacy as the homesteaders, soldiers, gold seekers, and Mormons left their footprints on the Nebraska soil or decided to remain as permanent residents of the Territory and face with grim determination a life of hardship in the spirit of all frontiersmen of the period.

The building of the Union Pacific across the Territory began in earnest just as the nation emerged from the great struggle. But during the preceding years construction of telegraph lines, the continuation of the stagecoach service, the building of territorial roads, bridges, and ferries, the carrying on of the prosperous freighting business to the far West, and the thriving steamboat industry on the Missouri held the attention and absorbed the energies of the natives. It is significant that a people collected on a wild frontier
could be so vitally interested in the development of such an active program of internal improvements in spite of a civil war and constant disturbances from Indians.

Between 1862 and 1868 newspapers recount over and over the constant fear and terror in which Nebraskans lived because of the Indians. These detailed accounts of Indian uprisings in the form of massacres, plunderings, and raids like the one in 1864, give us a faint realization of what it meant to the pioneer to remain on the homestead. But the white man is not to be exonerated from all blame. Long before the outbreak of the Civil War the Indians had silently shown their resentment toward the whites who had made inroads on their homes, destroyed the grass, killed the buffalo, ruined their hunting grounds and destroyed their trails across the prairie. With the firing of the first shot at Sumter they seized the opportunity to retaliate in raids up and down the Platte valley against their hated white neighbors who had been the cause of so much of their sufferings. Even the peaceful Pawnees who had suffered the loss of their crops and their ponies found themselves eventually living on a reservation.

Since repeated appeals to the Central Government for protection remained unanswered settlers grew bitter towards their savage neighbors and resentful to the War
Department at Washington. By 1862, however, the Second Nebraska Cavalry was organized in the Territory to carry on a vigorous campaign against the Sioux. The First Nebraska Cavalry returned from the front in 1864 to help fight the Indians only to be removed altogether too soon when the first glimpse of peace appeared, much to the displeasure of the inhabitants who had become distrustful of their red neighbors beyond the Nebraska borders.

Although the Territory contributed nothing financially to the war effort it was not outdone in producing recruits for both home and national defense. As a reward for these superior efforts and contribution in men, Nebraska was exempted from the draft in 1863.

In its relation to the Federal Government, the Territory gave a consistent response of loyalty to the Union and the winning of the war. The local press helped to shape attitudes toward Southerners and when rumors of secession reached the Territory, it upheld the executive and opposed secession. But public sentiment was often formulated from inaccurate and insufficient knowledge of the facts, as well as by the general spirit of the times and the influence of party politics. Many times the people merely reiterated the personal interpretations of a political newspaper editor.
Their attitude on the slavery question was largely due to fomented public opinion. From the very outset, slavery was a dead issue in the Nebraska Territory because it was not a factor in their program for prosperity on the frontier. Nevertheless, there is evidence of race prejudice, especially among Democrats because of party platform issues and the agitation of politicians. They seemed willing enough that slavery exist and that negroes be deprived of the right to vote which would place them on the same level with whites. Newspapers of the time indicate that the majority of the people in the Territory held this attitude in spite of the fact that Nebraska was strongly Republican at the time. However, Congress insisted that the 14th amendment should become a part of the state constitution when it applied for admission into the Union. The rush for the adoption of the state constitution in 1866 that had been formulated by a Legislative committee was a political development directly ushered in by Republicans who were agitating for statehood and indirectly promulgated by the issues of the Civil War. If it had not been for ambitious Republicans in Nebraska, the people of the Territory would probably have been satisfied with more than thirteen years of territorial existence.
The situation as described in this research eventually led to the admission of Nebraska as a state in 1867. The sturdy pioneer who had so well weathered the hardships and difficulties of early settlement was prepared to take his place in the great prosperity of the United States of America.
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The Territorial newspapers, particularly the Brownville Advertiser, The Nebraska Republican, The Omaha Nebraskan, The Weekly Herald, and The Nebraska City News, were basic primary sources for the study of attitudes and reactions of the people of the Nebraska Territory between 1861 and 1867.

The House Journal of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Nebraska for the seventh, eighth and ninth sessions, the Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska, 1855-1887, and the Nebraska Blue Book were indispensable documentary sources for fixing official data around which the political life of the Territory rotated.

Authors especially helpful in rounding out and clarifying the material gathered from fragmentary newspaper articles were J. Sterling Morton, Addison E. Sheldon, A. T. Andreas, and Alfred Sorenson. For the most part these works covered the same material.

Leroy R. Hafan and Carl Coke Rister's Western America, publication of the State Historical Society of Colorado, Everett Dick's Sod House Frontier, and F. L. Paxson's History of the American Frontier helped to contribute an excellent background for the westward
movement and life on the frontier.

The best single volume of secondary sources on Indian fighting from the viewpoint of an army man was found in Eugene F. Ware's *The Indian War of 1864*. The small pamphlet, *A Military History of Nebraska*, proved valuable for a detailed account of the part Nebraska soldiers played in the Civil War.

Individual articles found in publications, proceedings and collections, and publications of the Nebraska State Historical Society, gave specific answers to the kind of spirit that animated the Nebraska settlers and contributed the best background for an understanding of the controversy over statehood for Nebraska.

Most valuable for information on the building of the telegraph was the article written by Dr. P. Raymond Nielson, "Edward Creighton and the Pacific Telegraph," in *Mid-America, an Historical Review* (January, 1942), volume XXIV. Other periodicals such as *Nebraska History a Quarterly Magazine*, Nebraska State Historical Society publication, also furnished valuable details about pioneering the frontier.

The unpublished theses on phases of Nebraska history gave some material with which to complete the picture under consideration.
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