

## COUNTY AND TOWN.

### Griggs and Its Capital, as Seen by an Interested Spectator, With a Sketch of the Business Houses of

#### COOPERSTOWN.

A prominent capitalist of Maine, who owns wild lands in nearly every western state and territory, said over his own signature, in a letter to the Kennebec Journal, over a year ago: "Of my landed interests in the West I regard my North Dakota property as, ultimately, of the most value, and my acres in Griggs county as the most valuable of my North Dakota investments, as far as quality and character of the soil are concerned."

The county is one of the smallest in the territory, 720 square miles in area, made up of gently rolling lands, lower than the coteau lands of the Missouri, and some 200 feet higher than the Red River Valley—all magnificent wheat land, drained by the Shyenne river and its main branch, which pass through the county, and diversified by beautiful lakes and productive meadows. The spring floods and the autumn drouths affect this "heart of Dakota" less than any other section of the wheat belt.

The capital of the county is Cooperstown, the terminus of the Sanborn & Cooperstown branch of the Northern Pacific. The road was designed to end here, and here in all probability the terminus will remain. Directly north of us is the unproductive reservation of the Cuthead Sioux, and Devil's Lake, north-east is the territory of the Manitoba railroad, whose line from St. Paul to Chicago is a diagonal, as distinguished from the right angle which the branch makes with the Northern Pacific railroad at Sanborn, and against which railroad (in the Wamuduska Lake country) the Northern Pacific cannot compete. To the northwest of us, but a few miles, are Carrington and Minnewaukan, with a branch of the Northern Pacific railroad extending from Jamestown, and obviating the extension of our branch in that direction. An extension east or west would only be made after the lapse of years. A great country trade naturally results for Cooperstown. Over a thousand car loads of wheat have already been shipped from this point this season, a showing that can be equaled by no other town of 300 inhabitants in the world. A fine court house of red brick, erected at an expense of \$30,000, insures the holding of the county seat for all time, and ornaments the town.

A commodious hotel, erected at an expense of \$20,000, furnishes accommodation to the traveler, and two enormous elevators are engaged day and night in handling the product of the county.

A magnificent high school building and numerous churches demonstrate the respectability and intelligence of the people.

Timber is abundant upon the river and wood is furnished in town at \$5 per cord. The roads are at all times in admirable condition, and no pleasanter spot for a country life could be selected in the west. Among the most prominent business houses of Cooperstown is that of

#### WHIDDEN BROS.

The universal experience, that men in emigrating naturally seek a climate similar to that of their nativity, is well exemplified in Dakota. As the Italian and Chinaman seek California, the Spaniard seeks Mexico and Louisiana, and the German seeks the middle states, so do the hardy Norsk men, the Canadians and Nova Scotians seek the bracing air of the table lands in Dakota. The subjects of our sketch came from Antigonish, in Nova Scotia, just far enough from the Atlantic to, occasionally, get a stimulating breath of the salty fog of the banks, and far enough inland to be surrounded by a delightfully diversified and fertile country. Nova Scotians are, as a general rule, a buoyant, ruddy, intellectual people, who enjoy fine facilities for culture, and make the most of their facilities. The Whiddens are no exceptions to the rule, and are the kind of people with which Dakota is as well supplied as any other territory, and yet of the kind we need more of. Young, energetic, tireless, their very presence is stimulative of exertion. The original firm was composed of W. R. Whidden and J. B. Whidden. They came to Cooperstown in May, 1882, and built themselves the commodious store building now occupied by the firm and started a general mercantile business. The senior member of the firm, W. R. Whidden, had for several years been a partner in the house of C. B. Whidden & Co., dealers in flour, feed, and general supplies, wholesale and retail, at Antigonish. C. B. Whidden was an uncle of W. R., and the firm prospered, until, seized with the Dakota fever, after a correspondence with his brother, J. B.

Whidden, entry clerk in the house of Murphy, Grant & Co., in San Francisco, they determined to join their fortunes and cast their lot in the land of the Dakotas. Both were young married men with varied experiences, and after severing with their respective business houses, started trade most auspiciously in the then paper village of Cooperstown. In October, however, the junior member of the firm, J. B., died, leaving a wife and one child, an infant. Shortly afterward the wife died. This change in the firm, and settlement of the estate of the deceased, naturally affected the large business they were then doing. Another brother, however, C. T. Whidden, came to Dakota to fill the vacant place, and is now with the firm. The first year's business, in spite of the inconveniences of building and transporting freight before the railroad arrived, and the extreme newness of the country, was over \$60,000 in extent; and this last year over \$110,000 worth of goods have been handled by the firm. Mr. W. R. Whidden, the surviving partner, is now about 38 years of age, and has a lovely wife and one child, born this spring. They suffered a terrible bereavement in the loss of a little boy and a baby, by diphtheria while visiting in New York, the old home of Mrs. Whidden, last winter. Both the gentleman and his estimable lady are active members and the main supporters of the Baptist church in the terminal town. They are as conspicuous for their charities as they are in their outward observance of religious form, and are among the most cultivated and agreeable of our people. Of those connected with the firm are Mr. C. T. Whidden, a brilliant young Scotian, Fred Thompson, an accomplished dry goods salesman, A. B. Cox, a model bookkeeper and rustling business man on his own hook, Geo. B. Clark, our newly elected judge of probate, and Hans Jensen, the only and original kid, who equals anybody as a salesman, and surpasses a Philadelphia lawyer as a collector. The store building of the firm is a picturesque old pile, built like a feudal castle for corners and semi-detached additions and general lack of oneness, and is hardly sufficient for their business. It is supposed that the firm will, in the spring, build a block suitable to their enormous stock and rushing business. Everything in general demand is dealt in, and what the firm have not on hand they send for at the drop of the hat. When a neighbor cuts on sugar or some staple, the whole line is attacked fiercely, and a general slaughter attracts the farmer like crows to the cornfield. Of all the merchants in the Northwest Whidden Brothers are the most liberal with farmers and most merciful when he becomes necessarily and honestly delinquent. The firm have laid in a magnificent stock of winter and holiday goods, and Mr. W. R. Whidden predicts an early return to flush times.

#### DRUGS AND MEDICINES.

The drug business is represented in town by Dr. Geo. F. Newell. Dr. Newell is a Vermonter by birth, educated at the University of Vermont, and the Casselton medical college. He practiced medicine for nearly forty years continuously in Racine county, Wisconsin, with the exception of two years, when he served as surgeon of the Fifteenth Wisconsin regiment of volunteers. He was with Grant at Cairo and Island No. 10, and was at Chickamauga where his gallant regiment were nearly annihilated. They went into the battle a thousand strong, and came out a blood-begrimed company of three hundred. He was mustered out in June, 1864. For three weeks he operated constantly, at the Mound City hospital, after the battle of Shilo. As a surgeon the doctor ranked with the ablest in Wisconsin, and acquired a competency. Worn out with his long labors, and having met with some serious losses, the doctor, in May, 1882, came to Cooperstown, where he and his estimable wife had relatives, and settled down to retailing weapons he had formerly used in combating disease. His store is large and convenient, and his stock always complete, and the doctor always at hand. He has given up practice, except in extreme cases. He still attends to surgical cases. The active medical practice is now attended to by

#### DR. T. F. KERR,

an accomplished physician, who devotes his time exclusively to the practice of medicine, in which he is very successful. He is also superintendent of schools for the county. He and Mrs. Kerr, a very refined and literary lady, occupy a pleasant residence on Roberts street, which he built last year.

#### STEVENS & PICKETT.

A striking peculiarity of business in Dakota is the youth of its business men. In the east, gray heads predominate; in the west they are in a minority. In the east, youth in a merchant or banker is indicative of ten cents on the dollar; in Dakota it is generally indicative of that enterprise that is essential to conquering success in the rushing unprecedentedly hurrying business life of the wheat belt.

We have never known a young man to fail in business in Dakota, and the few

failures have in nearly all cases been by men who were, when they came here, by long eastern training, unfitted to grasp the Dakota style of business. Activity, decision, boldness, liberality, are necessary to success. These qualities in a marked degree are manifested in Julius Stevens and H. G. Pickett, the Cooperstown bankers. They have by a residence of years in Dakota, become thoroughly acquainted with the methods of the country.

Mr. Stevens came from Rushford, Minn., to Valley City in the spring of 1879, with a small capital, and embarked in the hardware business with C. A. Benson, treasurer elect of Barnes county and Geo. A. Thompson. The firm made money, but at the end of two years, Mr. Stevens, having amassed a snug sum, concluded to embark in a business more congenial to his tastes. He therefore sold out his interests in the hardware business, and embarked in a land and brokerage business with M. D. Hills, the successful young business man of Valley City, under the name of the "People's Loan and Trust Company." The firm was successful and made money; but ever ready to grasp a chance of advancement, at the founding of Cooperstown, Mr. Stevens freed himself from his Valley City business connections, and was one of the first on the ground to avail himself of the magnificent opportunities offered by the capital of Griggs.

The county was settling up rapidly and a great amount of business in the hardware line was promised. In connection with a former Minnesota townsman, Anton Enger, Mr. Stevens returned to the hardware business, and was in at the early hardware harvest. The firm made money, and in connection with the hardware business, Mr. Stevens conducted his old land and brokerage business, until he joined his capital with Mr. H. G. Pickett and purchased the Bank of Cooperstown some time since.

Mr. Stevens was married to Miss Julia Iverson, of Lanesboro, Minn., in 1882, and they have one daughter.

In addition to his other businesses, Mr. Stevens has the legislature on his hands this winter—he having been elected at the late election in the Ninth district by an overwhelming majority. He understands the wants of the farming community and settlers in general, and will be an active mover in all measures looking to a reform in wheat transportation, and taxation of railroad lands during the coming session. He is the owner of large tracts of wild and improved land, both prairie and timbered, and owns considerable real property in the terminal town, and has the fullest faith in the county of his adoption, and particularly in Dakota. He was born in Norway, and is thirty years of age.

Mr. Pickett is a Ft. Atkinson, Wisconsin, boy, and after receiving a solid business education in his native town, embarked in railroading—receiving charge of the Sanborn station in Barnes county in 1882. The strict requirements of the company, and the necessarily close attention to details fitted his turn of mind, and he gave perhaps the best satisfaction to the company and the people of any agent that has ever been stationed there. The bank of Sanborn needed a careful teller, and noting his accurate business methods, and whole souled devotion to the business he was engaged in, made him a flattering proposition, which he accepted. At the opening of the Bank of Cooperstown he was offered the cashiership, which he accepted. Ever since the bank opened he has managed it, and has always been on deck to accommodate his customers, and has given the best satisfaction to his employers.

By thrift in mercantile and livery business, in Cooperstown, he has accumulated some capital and has ample backing. He understands every detail of his business and has the fullest confidence of the people. He was married to his late wife in 1883, and has one child by her. Her early and tragic death, as reported in the columns of the COURIER some two weeks since, is the first serious trouble that he has ever experienced.

In addition to his banking business, Mr. Pickett has for over a year been a partner in the firm of Davis & Pickett, the livery and feed firm. This, in addition to his regular business, has been a severe tax on his energies, but he has succeeded in attending to labor that fell to his share, and has showed a marvelous capacity.

The firm own their own banking house which is in the best portion of town, and which is neat and commodious, without being showy or extravagant. They are supplied with abundant capital. Their correspondents are Barnes County Bank, Sanborn; National German American Bank, St. Paul; American Exchange National Bank, New York City.

The bank enjoys a No. 1 reputation among the bankers of the surrounding country; its deposits are large; it receives and pays out every cent used in the wheat trade in the Terminal Town, and

has the fullest confidence of the merchants and business men generally.

#### IVER JACOBSON

is the only attorney in Cooperstown devoting his attention to the business of his profession and the incidental land business connected with it. Mr. Jacobson was formerly sheriff at La Crosse, Wisconsin. He afterward prepared for the bar, and becoming well grounded in the law, was admitted to practice in Wisconsin. After practicing law in Wisconsin with success, he came to Dakota and became the junior partner in the law firm of Mills & Jacobson, at Valley City, a firm that for years occupied the highest position at the bar. Shortly after the founding of Cooperstown, divining its bright future, Mr. Jacobson severed his connection with the old firm, and removed to this point, where he hung out his shingle and dived into business. He was shortly afterward appointed county attorney, and after serving as such to the satisfaction of the bar and people, he has lately been elected to the honorable and responsible office of district attorney for the county. In connection with Ole Serungard, Mr. Jacobson has done, during his sojourn here, one of the finest and most lucrative land businesses in the Northwest. Wherever there is a wrong to right, and a nice point of law in land or general business to raise for the protection of a client, Mr. Jacobson is on deck. He is now alone in business and occupies an office on Burrell avenue. Mr. Jacobson is the possessor of several fine farms in the fertile county of Griggs, and demonstrates his faith in the country by holding them with a grip that never tires.

Mr. Jacobson's accomplished wife is a daughter of Judge Seth Mills, of Valley City, his late partner. By her he has one son.

#### WILLIAM GLASS

is one of the original settlers of Cooperstown, who came to this county direct from St. Clair, Mich., in 1881. After casting a deliberate glance around him he made up his mind that Griggs county was good enough for him, and preempted a claim, which is about two miles from town. He afterward entered a tree claim and a homestead immediately adjoining the town plat, which are now very valuable. Mr. Glass has farmed it continuously since coming to Dakota, and with good success. His property would find ready sale at \$20 per acre, and so far from costing him anything it has been a source of revenue to him from the beginning. In addition to his farming operations, Mr. Glass has been in the real estate business in Cooperstown for over a year. His business has been extensive in locating and perfecting the titles of settlers to their government claims, and in buying and selling railroad lands, and making loans on real property. His office is a model for a real estate office, situated on one of the principal business corners of the Terminal Town, adjacent to the postoffice, which is also on his property. He, although not much of a politician, enjoys the office of magistrate, and meets out substantial justice to all parties with a liberal hand. He is also a notary public. Like all Michiganders he looks back to Michigan with respect, as the land of his birth, but you couldn't get him to risk any good years in the vicinity of her swamps after enjoying the ozone breezes of Northern Dakota.

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#### Wheat Transportation.

The COURIER has been requested to define its position on the movement originating (this season) in Valley City in regard to the handling and shipment of grain.

We have got no "bumcombe" with which to catch the gudgeons at this or any other time, and will briefly review the situation from what we believe to be a disinterested standpoint.

This last agitation might have occurred at any time during the last five years. The statute passed in 1879 by the territorial legislature renders the position of the producer more secure, against the usurpation of power by the carrier than at any time prior in the history of the territory. The statute, section 28, chapter xvi, session laws of 1879, reads as follows:

All railroad corporations organized under the provisions of this act, and all persons or corporations operating a railroad in this territory, who shall receive or transport grain in bulk or otherwise, shall deliver the same to any consignee thereof, or any elevator or public warehouse to which it may be consigned, at any regular station on said road, and shall receive grain for shipment from any elevator or public warehouse situated upon or adjacent to any station or depot ground of such railroad: Provided, Such consignee, or the elevator or public warehouse can be conveniently reached by any track owned, leased or used by such corporation; and such corporations or persons shall permit connections to be made with their track so that such consignee, elevator or warehouse can be conveniently reached by the cars of such corporation or person: Provided, however, That such corporation or person shall not be required to pay the cost of making and maintaining such connection, or of the siding or switch track necessary to make the same.

The law relating to common carriers obtains, and always has, in Dakota as elsewhere where the common law is known, irrespective of this special enactment, although the general statute was doctored by the corporations in 1879,

and should be restored by this legislature.

The secret of this agitation at the present time, if secret it is, is not in new extortions by the railroad companies; but rather in the low price of wheat itself, the world over, weighed against gold.

The railroad companies are not to blame for the low price of wheat; they cannot very well make a pint measure hold a quart.

The amendments to this statute, proposed at the Valley City meeting, demonstrate that the only quarrel the movers have with the statute is because "in bulk" is not inserted in the instrument after "grain;" "sidetrack" is not mentioned, and the warehouse spoken of is "public." The carrier probably has some rights, such as declaring where its stations shall be, which the farmer can not seriously question. That every man's farm, or every portion of the right of way, should be, at the option of A., B. or C., a shipping point, would result in inexplorable confusion and inconvenience. Carrying out this idea to a logical sequence, it would be impossible to maintain and operate railroads safely, economically, and to afford that rapid transportation which the public demand. The carrier's own interests, is the best guide to the arrangement of its shipping points, and only in extreme cases should the carrier be interfered with in naming them.

The proposed amendment, "in bulk," is not necessary, if the repealed portion of the general statute in regard to common carriers is re-enacted as before 1879; without such re-enactment we believe the law is strong enough to obviate the necessity of such an amendment.

The real grievance, if grievance there be in the deficiencies of the special statute, lies in the term "public," as descriptive of warehouses, which our Valley City friends think should be omitted. That is, the law leaves wheat handling and shipping open to competition among public warehousemen, and our Valley City friends would extend the competitive privilege to everybody who would build a warehouse. This could not result disastrously to the farmer, even if it did not amount to much—some farmers would avail themselves of their privileges—the large majority would not. There would be a pressure on the elevators to grade fairly and pay fair prices for wheat. But the competition is open to public warehousemen, at this moment, if they will avail themselves of the law. Barnes & Magill have not the exclusive right to erect and operate elevators in this country. The Lenhams, when they concluded to go into the wheat business, demanded their rights, as opposed to Barnes & Magill, and the Northern Pacific could not refuse them. Again Cooper Bros. demanded their rights, as opposed to the Lenhams, at Cooperstown, and obtained them. The elevators of the Lenhams and Coopers cost cost—say \$7,500. There is no restriction on A., B. and C. erecting elevators or warehouses in Cooperstown or any other point to cost \$1,000. The refusal of Northern Pacific officials to permit elevators to be erected costing the same amount as those already in operation, is simply a piece of bulldozing which the company can be cured of in the courts.

In regard to "public" there is a serious question whether it is politic for the welfare of any country to compel the carrier to handle grain outside of elevators and warehouses, and public elevators or warehouses at that. The grain business is vast in Dakota, the company is not prosperous (if it is, its preferred stock can be bought for fifty cents on the dollar), and it should certainly be allowed some latitude as to how it shall handle the product of the country as regards economy and convenience, as well as rapidity. If the law allows no monopoly in public warehouses and elevators, (and it is not disputed that the present law does not), it would seem that the present agitation should be directed towards the courts, rather than the legislature, although the law relating to carriers will stand some medicine.

The COURIER enjoys a pass over the Northern Pacific, for which it pays perhaps full value in advertising; the editor has raised wheat for five years, and had two hundred acres of grain this season which did not pay expenses; but he will try to keep his coat on, and give the devil his due. If the law is enforced, the purchase and sale of wheat is free to everyone who will erect warehouses.

No license is required for hawking dry goods, groceries, boots and shoes upon our streets, yet nobody finds it profitable thus to buck into general merchandise against established houses; and it is doubtful if under any circumstances the small farmer could railroad his wheat profitably, or the curbstone buyer compete against the elevators.

The question of grades can no more be regulated by statute than the price of cord wood, or the smell of stale eggs. The remedy is by building warehouses, jointly or severally, at the established stations of the railroad company, and the conditions are not burdensome. If this is not permitted, enforce the law, rather than have additional statutes passed which shall likewise be dead letters, although the law relating to carriers will bear revision.