

by Allen Osmundson

Not quite one half mile south, then 1 mile east, of the Ringsaker church and schoolhouse there is a round, conical hill with its highest elevation located in the very southwest corner of section 24, township 147, range 58 (Romness Twp., Griggs co., N.D.), having an elevation of 1400 feet above sea level, according to the topographical map I'm using.

The Sheyenne River makes a bend at that point that nearly touches the southwest base of that hill. The summit of this hill is very close to the corner that joins sections 23, 24, 25 and 26, as it appears on my map.

On the west base of this hill there were, at one time, three farms, the homes of three Olson families, all of them related. On the east slope of this hill lives Clifford Christopherson, also a relative of the Olsons. All the Olson farms are now unoccupied, tho a few buildings are still standing.

On very early maps of this region this hill is called "Horse Butte", but when I talked to Christopherson last week he said that the people who lived there had always called it Horse hill, so we will continue to call it that.

As is quite often the case it can be difficult, or almost impossible, to get all the facts pertaining to people of long ago, or about events that took place in the far distant past, but fortunately we have some info about Horse hill that was found for us, in this case Horse hill, by Major Dana Wright who lived at St. John, ND during his later years, and he then researched many areas of historic significance in ND, and ^{WHO} was here also. In his investigation of Horse hill he apparently ^{WHO} had conversed with Anton Olson, who lived at the base of the hill, and told Wright that the hill was named circa 1835, and that in about 1853 a group of people descended from French trapper fathers and Indian mothers, the children being called Metis. These Metis warriors had grazed a herd of horses near the hill, and then a group of full-blood Indians had tried to stampede and run off these horses, so a battle had ensued, and as a result 28 people of both groups were killed, and ^{ARE} buried on the sloping hillside, so graves were visable many years later, when the settlers came here in about 1880.

An Indian boy, who was about fifteen years old, was along herding these horse when the battle occured, and he was said to have related this event to Omund Nelson Opheim, the very first settler in Griggs county in 1879, I believe. Opheim had told of this event to Anton and Gilbert Olson, who then had told it to Major Wright.

I have learned more about Horse hill from my friend Louie Garcia of Tokio, ND. The French name for the hill is LA LOGE DE CHEVAUX, and the Sioux name being SUNKAWAKAN TIPI, which equals "horse dwelling". This butte is a Medicine butte, home of a giant spirit horse. He states also that the Metis/Indian battle took place there, and that there were 28 graves noted on the slope of the hill nearby. This info from WPA records collected in the 1930s and 40s by US government activity.

At this point this is all the info I have on Horse Butte.

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Another high elevation in Romness township is locally known as "Mt. Franklin". I do not yet know the origin of that name. It is located just west of Loretta Hogland's farmstead, on the line separating sections 28 and 29.

It is of interest to me that the Sheyenne river has cut a course thru an area of high elevations on both sides, according to the topographical maps. But let me add that the elevation marker on my land at the West Prairie "crossing" shows 1464 feet above sea level, so basically our area is quite flat.

There are other high elevations in Griggs county. For example what we could call "Butte Addie" just south of the Carl Zimprich farmstead. This high hill seems to be part of the string of ^{THE} "Binford Hills" in the Jessie Lake-Binford area, where the map shows elevations at, or near 1,500 feet above sea level.

Rosendal township also has hills at that elevation.

I can only marvel at the steady hand, and exceptional vision, it takes to draw the elevation lines on the topographical maps.

Incidentally, early in this century there was a schoolhouse located near the northwest base of "Butte Addie". Also there was a farmstead on the south slope of that hill. Most of the house was moved by my father to the present Vernon Peterson farm, and there my parents and three sisters lived for a number of years. It was demolished in 1998.