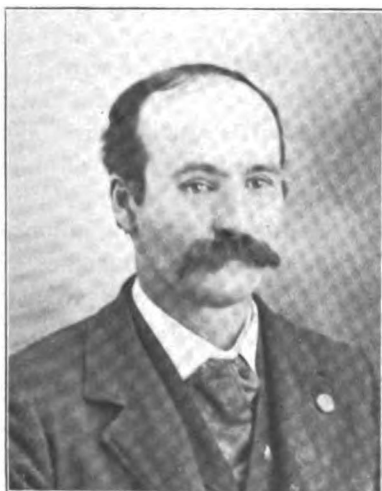


## Early Settlers West of Broken Bow.

The first settlers between the towns of Broken Bow, Merna and Callaway, were J. D. Ream, who settled about five miles northwest of Broken Bow, and C. H. Jeffords, who settled about five miles west of that city, in the spring of 1880. To show the innocence and inexperience of these two bachelors, who came into this country in a farm wagon which contained all of their pos-



E. JEFFORDS.



MRS. E. JEFFORDS.

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sessions, and which was drawn by a yoke of oxen, we will tell a little story at their expense. As they began to leave the settlements on their journey west into the wilderness, they thought it would be a fine thing to have fresh eggs during the summer, in their new home, and in order to be able to enjoy this luxury they struck a bargain with a thrifty housewife for a dozen fine young chickens, the flock being shortly afterwards increased by the addition of six hens which they got at an astonishing bargain from another housewife along the way. When they arrived near the present site of the city of Broken Bow they camped with Wilson Hewitt, and as that kind and accommodating pioneer invited the wayfarers to make their headquarters there until they got their claims located, they turned their chickens loose, inviting Mrs.

Hewitt out to inspect the flock. Mrs. Hewitt looked them over with the eye of an experienced housewife and then fell into such a fit of laughter that the boys thought she had gone crazy. When she recovered her composure she informed the young poultry fanciers that their flock consisted of eleven young roosters, one pullet and six old hens that had probably come over in Noah's ark and that had long since passed the period of their usefulness as layers of eggs. The boys were of course very much crestfallen as their visions of fresh eggs were thus suddenly dashed to the ground, and also very indignant at the unfair advantage that had been taken of their ignorance by the women who had sold them the chickens. They promptly made Mrs. Hewitt a present of the whole flock and did not again attempt to embark in the poultry business until after they were married.

The next settler to locate in the vicinity was H. C. Reyner with his wife and one child. He also imported two mules and one cow, and from the latter Mrs. Reyner supplied the whole settlement with butter during the following summer, churning it in a half-gallon crock. The baby, Paul, now a fine young man, served as a soldier in the First Nebraska regiment in the Philippine islands. These settlers celebrated the Fourth of July, 1880, in a canon south of the tableland which lies east of Merna, together with a number of others from the vicinity of Broken Bow, among whom were Wilson Hewitt, C. D. Pelham, Moses Lewis and others, with their families.

Mr. Jeffords located just east of what is known in Broken Bow as the West Table, in a section of country known at that time as South Muddy Flat. Among the next settlers in this vicinity were R. M. Longfellow and Sebastian Neth, the latter widely known for his energy and business capacity, having served the people ably several times as a member of the county board of supervisors. The neighborhood was also favored in the acquisition of a couple of school teachers from Ohio, named Mary E. and Agnes A. Price, but they soon ended their career as school teachers and formed partnerships with two bachelors, Jeffords and Brown, and the result of these partnerships is a number of young bug eaters who will probably figure in Custer county history long after their parents are forgotten.

