

MAYNARD CRANE

From material furnished by himself.

Maynard Crane born Dec. 25, 1856 at Caldwell New Jersey at the home of maternal grandfather E. F. Maynard, town physician, adjoining that of Grover Cleveland's father, the village minister.

Newark N. J., 1862-1869-- Civil War period, memories of father's participation; Lincoln's tragic death.

A Crane ancestor was one of three Connecticut Puritans who founded Newark no doubt gyping "Delaware" Indians out of the future city site. The Maynards, tho historically unknown, appear in a better light.

Mandarin Fla.---1869-1883--at St. Johns River-- Beauty spot.

Milder climate for a frail mother motivated this change. The locality in 1867 became of note as winter residence of Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin". Many Florida visitors still seek a glimpse of the "Stowe House".

Dakota Territory--March 1st, 1883

Came alone by railroad to Sanborn, to establish lumberyard on acreage platted by R. C. Cooper, 40 miles north, designated "Cooperstown",. Bob sleigh Route from Sanborn, but such snow as N. D. has not seen since had fallen the previous four months: a R. R. in-the-building was still 20 miles south: Bald Hill creek, midway, in April was an impassable river--the anticipated influx of hundreds to the "Booming New Town" and country of "Coopers" never came to pass. The Boom was over and Cooperstown left rather flat.

1885--Politics. Appointed by County Commissioners first Auditor of Griggs subject to later election. The electorate proved wiser, my elected successor serving the county for 36 years. He died Feb. 4, 1938. A real man was P. A. Melgard, known as the Dean of N. D. County Auditors.

1886--Married to Elizabeth S. Fitch-- a real pioneer! albeit from 42nd St. N. Y. City. She had what it took to be content with prairie life in the raw. Two children--1887--1889--girls. The older still living, Kathen Crane LaDue--New York 2 children -boy and girl.

1900--More politics-- Appointed trustee of N. D. A. C. In 1902, elected senator of 16th district (Griggs-Steele) by 2,300 majority.

1906 to 1910 -- Re-elected-majority-one- and that not in his home county--2,299 prohibitionists not approving opposition to "The Spotters Law" which they ultimately found to be dynamite and repealed.

1911- returned to Florida. Back to the "Old Home Town"-- only it is not. -- Twenty-eight "Formative" years are not to be forgotten and especially so if all active business interests remain. In the state-county-town the man has helped to build from the sod.

Without diaries or documents to check the average memory of what was what 10 to 55 years ago one must be over cautious to gain credence. My impression is of fairly prosperous years in Griggs 1882-1887, a devastating "Freeze" in August 1888.

Broadcasing of seed grains in those earlier years made farming more hazardous, as drying winds would at times send the sprouted shallow-rooted grain floating about like clouds of butterflies; but also in those experimental days, buffalo bones found in every prairie swale helped keep us going till we had learned to drill in our seed.

Sod homes, shanty homes, straw cattle sheds were common place protective units as late as 1890. On a hillside south, 3 miles south, of Cooperstown Christain Lee had a notably comfortable dug-out.; a major but less warm "improvement" was a boarded room in front

facing east. The interior of that home was, despite dust-laden winds, and mud-carrying rains, a model of neatness.

Well water-good ~~water~~ water - even poor water in sufficient quantity, was an early day problem-- a big one. Rain water? Shanties, shacks, small homes, could garner little of that-- moreover who could yet afford a cistern? Today also, many a farmer must augment his supply at times by hauling from a lake, river, or a more fortunate neighbor's well. Melting ice and snow for daily use in these illy equiped homes was a heartbreaking dread. Fifty years later I live in a region of artesian water, an endless flow of considerable pressure--Tonight I may leave a bit I have used lightly in my washbowl--for morning use. I have unconsciously gone back to an old habit--Is that humorous, or pathetic?

Winter clothing had to be heavy and it was cumbersome.

Fuel. Sometimes scarce--always costly--hard to get, be it down from wiver land timber or town--danger too often in its quest-- hardships sure-- Fatalities, now and then. Twisted hay occasionally had to keep the home fires burning--or else.:hay laboriously pulled from near at hand snow covered stacks by a hero who in a blizzard day attached rope string or wire to waist and shanty door to assure his return alive. Just once I so staggered less than 40 feet-- absolutely lost 10 feet from the home door

Because of winter travel dangers in the eighties, and later, it became a geognized custom for merchants to allow farmer debtors who were unable to pay current obligations in full, to retain funds for at least part of the winter's fuel needs, all the flour required,-- ~~then~~ thus it was that in most wagons going out of town from Oct.15th to the mid-November could be seen two to a dozen 100 lb.sacks of flour. (Just a homely little touch -but may be of interest.)

Many town folks operated farms in some way but none had overmuch liesure. As for the honest-to-gosh-real-dirt farmer, his work is never done, even now, but in those pioneering days of less efficient tools, poor housing, and low, snow-drifted sheds and barns, winter life for him was a five month's pain.

The experiences of the years subsequent to 1894, with their ups and downs, meaning moisture or lack, leave me unimpressed with "Dust bowl" stories of 1934-37, so far as they are related to our own state. True, it is the forceful winter winds which could pile snow key hole high within the home were brothers of spring breezes ripping newly spruted grain to bird-like flight: shovels, it must be conceded, were useful utensils in house cleaning occasionally. A bit of land here and there should never have been plowed--but on the whole, the damage in 55 years is slight --plenty of unharmed plowland in old Griggs County needs water only to still produce abundantly.

Recreations? Oh, yes! we had them in sufficient variety for that generation. church, and Ledge suppers-sewing circles-Ladies Aid-Base Ball-platform dances-barn dances when new and better barns were built- cur first circus, the first in 15 years for father and mother- the first ever for boys and girls up to 20 years of age--- What a day that was for young and old--no, not old, there were no old folks practically in the Dakotas of 1881 to 1895.

July 4th, 1884 found perhaps 150 visiting whites at Ft. Totten Indian Reservation at Devils Lake -to "celebrate". A tribal dance and pow wow the chief attraction on the military parade grounds-- a few soldiers lying around--tho alert-- hundreds of Indians doing a war dance, at least a hundred more mounted Bucks in full war regalia racing madly around outside the field. As at a signal this bunch ride a short distance south, turn and swoop down upon those hapless pale faces who had first robbed and then confined them. No doubt the stunt was staged. I am living--but still scared--the Buck who scared me most, if still alive, must be grinning yet.

Now a word about the "pioneer". Always, or most always, the pioneer is masculine.

In my opinion he is overstressed. He had fair tools to work with-- a warm, if crude barn and always got a better one, better tools-- while his women still worked with inadequate utensils in a shanty or sod roofed dusty home. His work was more diversified, more interesting; his world contacts fairly frequent. The woman's labors on a farm are confining, monotonous to a degree no man could endure. Here's to the pioneer--the little woman.

Of individual pioneers two may be mentioned in this narrative without fear of making "comparisons".

Rollin C. Cooper, who did most of all for Griggs County and Cooperstown--a physical, mental, intellectual giant--"Genial" should have been his middle name. Now well over 90 years of age he has been "R.C." to young and old-- literally to thousands of N.D. folks since 1881.

One more remarkable personality among early, the first, settlers must be named-- "Ole' Doc. Kerr"--- Theo. F. Kerr M.D. if you prefer-- Griggs County's pioneer physician. "Ole' Doc." was young in years when death over took him, "broke"--broken in health, too. Yet aside from a general and not well paid practice he had earned a million dollars of any man's money bringing into life babes of that potential value--taking the while more punishment than mortal man could stand. No blizzard, dust storm, personal illness or fatigue kept him back when the call came. On hands and knees he crawled through one in 1899 NW blizzard at 4 A.M. to a Cooperstown home which boasted the community fence-- the westernmost pickett of that chance enclosure saved his life-- a mother's-her child. Theo. F. Kerr's name should stand prominently in any history of Griggs Co.

From 1888 to 1893 my remembrances of none too prosperous years, still farm buildings improved in comfort and appearance. The little folk towns with scarce a sidewalk took shape. "Homey" trails from residences to store or neighbors homes were obliterated by streets, real sidewalks, gutters. Telephones, electric lighting, water and sewer systems, the radio, came in that order -- and so attractive centers were interestingly created. The creators must thrill a bit as they recall the absolute barrenness of their prairie towns or farms at the start.

Griggs and Steele Counties have sent their share of citizens into the lime light of public service--editors--jurists--statesmen--stock raisers.

A concluding memory is of Griggs-Steele North Dakota major disaster--The Farm Deflation period of 1919-21. No present or future "Relief Project" will repay the loss our central government caused our northwestern farmers when in war times it "pegged the price"-- induced us to buy more land at inflated values to raise more wheat, and still more wheat--then left us on the end of the limb when the bottom dropped out of the flour market. Prosperous farmers ruined by the thousands-- merchants in hundreds-- Yes, Uncle Sam, you should pay and pay and pay!

Maynard Crane.

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From the "Pioneer Data" questionnaire blank.

Mrs. Crane was Mrs Elizabeth Fitch Crane. She died in 1914.

Mr. Cranes present residence is Mandarin Fla.

He was born Dec. 25, 1856 at Caldwell N.J.

His occupation has always been with building materials.

He was married Jan. 16, 1886 at N.Y. New York by Rev. Dr. Hastings.

He never served in army or navy,

Mr. Crane had two children. Alice Maynard Crane, born 1889, and died 1902.

and Kathleen Seymore of New York City

Mr. Crane was living in Mandarin Fla. when he travelled by rail to Cooperstown, arriving there Mar. 1, 1883. He came alone, and without pioneer equipment.

His pioneer home was built in 1883. He called it a shanty., built it himself of common boards etc. It was 14 X 28, and had 4 windows and 2 doors. He used this home for 13 years. It was lighted by kerosene lamps. It was completely furnished in 1886 at a cost of \$167.00

The house was heated by an iron cook stove. Wood used came from the Sheyenne River valley. His provisions came from the local stores. No special place was used to keep food from spoiling as there was none extra from week to week.

His recreational activities were few, as church, lodges, base-ball.

The only celebrations were those of July 4th. He did little reading or visiting.
