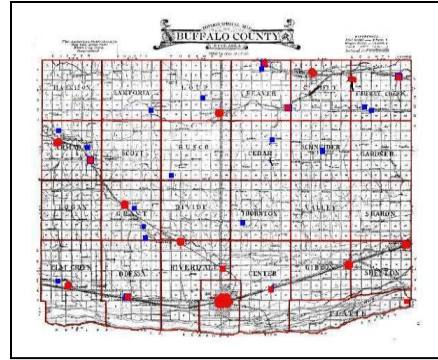


# Towns in Buffalo County

- \* Buffalo county has
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Class Cities )
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Cities ) Red
  - Villages ) on map
  - Unincorporated towns )
  - Towns once, now gone )
  - Communities ) Blue on map

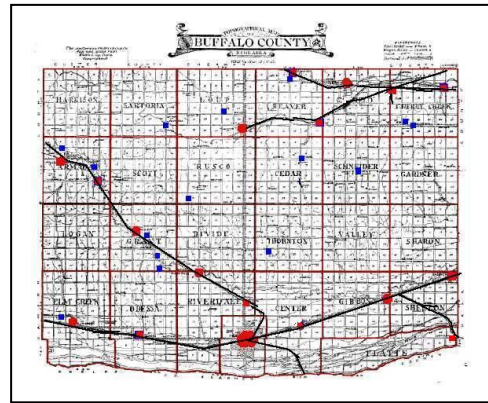


- \* Add railroads to that map and you see a pattern

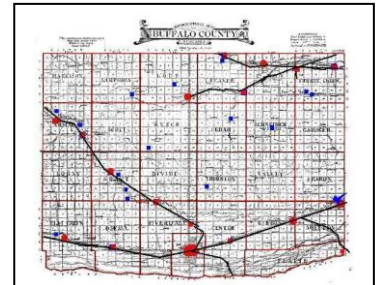
## Towns along Railroads

### Union Pacific

- 1866 – Put in Gibbon Siding
- Depots at Kearney Station & Elm Creek
- Other depots added as towns grew



- \* Shelton – started as Wood River Center along the Mormon Trail.
  - a road ranche
  - Perhaps established in 1848 when Ft. Kearny was opened
  - Joseph Johnson came in 1859 – 1861
  - School built on west side (Dist. 1)
  - Jan. 20, 1870 – County of Buffalo organized at Dist. 1
  - Wood River Center was county seat



- \* Patrick Walsh – father of Shelton
  - Irish, discharged at Ft. Kearny in 1865
  - Took over a squatter's claim on the Wood River
  - 1869 - he filed a Soldier's Homestead claim on a 1/4 section
  - Later gave some of it to be platted as a town
  - Oct. 1872 – Post Office established
  - Patrick Walsh was first post master



Confusion with neighboring town of Wood River  
Feb. 3, 1873 letter from Walsh to Postmaster General –

“Dear Sir:

You are hereby notified that the name of this post office has been changed from Wood River Center to Shelton and you will govern yourself accordingly.”

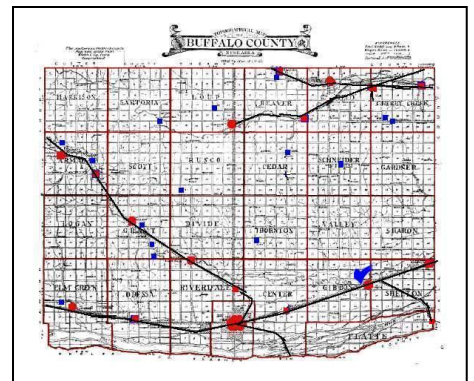
Named Shelton for N. Shelton, auditor for UP’s land development company

Village of Shelton incorporated under Nebraska law Jan. 6, 1882.

- \* Gibbon – Siding on the UP – Gibbon Switch  
Named for Gen. John Gibbon –  
Mexican War & Indian frontier uprisings in 1861
- \* Soldier’s Free Homestead Colony arrived April 7, 1871  
Building began immediately



Front Street



Gibbon is located in a railroad section –

Owned by Union Pacific - except for Wilson’s squatter’s claim  
Wilson squatted 1865 (before railroad)

Built house partially dugout, part logs

Went back to Dobytown for family – wife & children,

Ox team, covered wagon, mule

Crossed Platte in early June, bank full, current, quick sand holes

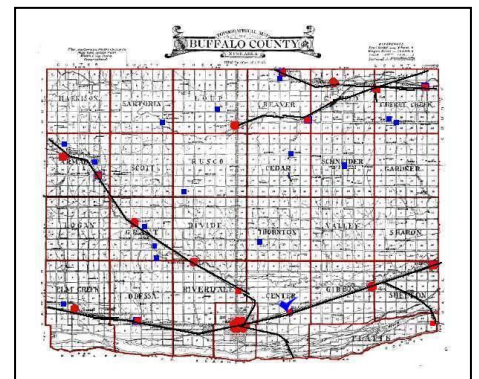
Boys drove wagon, father (drunk) on mule

Wagon hit hole, difficulty in getting out but they made it

Looked back – no Mr. Wilson –

mule hit quicksand hole, drowned, Wilson  
caught in current.

- \* Buda – First & for a while the only town within the county  
before Gibbon & Kearney were founded



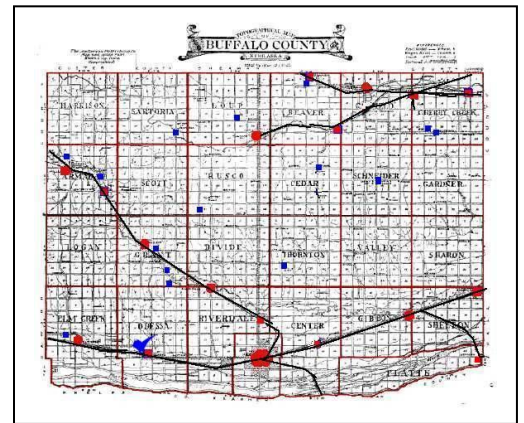
Railroad supply depot for Fort Kearny 4 miles south  
 Served briefly as county seat,  
     county business conducted here as well as at Wood River Center  
     before Gibbon was officially named the county seat  
 Called Kearney Station – then Shelby (1876) – then Buda (1878)  
 Possibly named for Budapest

\* D Wort's Elevator, gone now



\* Odessa – Originally Crowellton (1872 post office est. )  
 Name changed by 1876  
 – Stevenson Siding (Alfalfa Center) near there  
 Had a depot, a school & an elevator but never grew  
 never incorporated

[Attack on Odessa schoolgirl story](#)



Elm Creek – The other depot on the UP in 1866  
 No town laid out then  
 Town developed mile east  
 Depot moved in 1883

\* Elm Creek about 1906 before fire downtown



1923 Kearney Hub

A good time was enjoyed by all at the Fairview basket dinner Thursday evening. Each lady took her name in a walnut shell, the walnut shell being sold instead of the baskets. A set of scales were handy, each lady being weighed. Their partners paid one cent per pound. This was a new way of buying suppers and it aroused great excitement.

[I'll bet! Was each supper paid for twice... once for the name and again by the weight of the lady who prepared it?]

\* **Kearney & Black Hills Railroad**

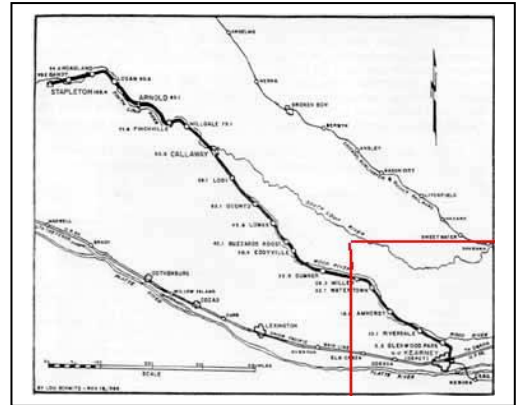
(square lower right is Buffalo County)

1886 – UP acquired land for a spur – nothing happened

1889 – Kearney gave up waiting, acquired UP rights,  
formed K & BH Railway Co.

1890 – Construction began, went to Calloway

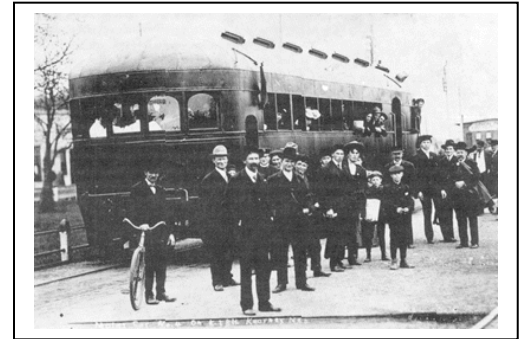
1898 – UP took ownership



\* 1905 – Launched the McKean gas-powered motor car  
Aka Bug, ‘Tater Bug

1912 – Extended from Calloway to Stapleton

1955 – Closed - Bug & Steam locomotive 481  
[Engine 481 now at Trails & Rails Museum]



\* Glenwood Park – P O in 1892

First depot out of Kearney on the K& BH RR

Blue Mills flour mill north of Kearney on the Wood.

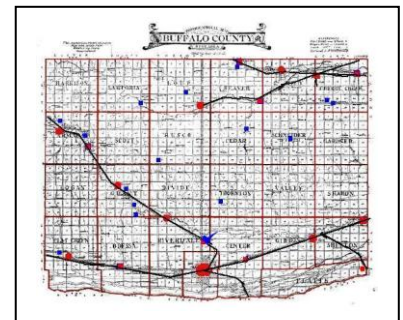
1893-1920 when it burned.

Earlier one burned in 1892 but was rebuilt with  
modern equipment

New owner in 1920, prices dropped, Halloween fire,  
owner convicted of arson

River widened above the dam, became a park for boating  
and picnics in 1880’s & 1890’s, even a baseball field.

Closed 1910 when land owner died

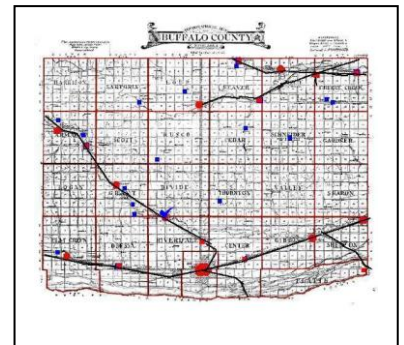


\* Riverdale – Riverdale school Dist. 15 organized in 1871

P O in 1883 – 1886

Then handled mail for the K & BH railroad

2 churches – Christian (Disciples of Christ) & Methodist



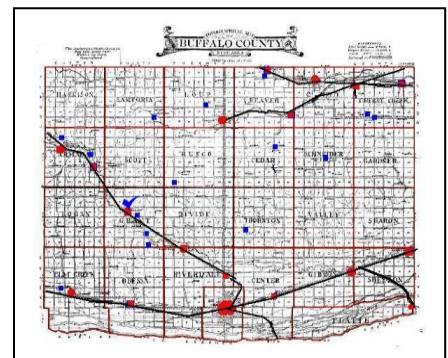
\* Amherst – Started as Stanley a 2 ½ miles east

Moved to railroad

Still Old Stanley Cemetery

**Bank robbery (BT July, 1982)**

**Saturday, March 17, 1928 – Amherst bank**



Minor crime wave –

Friday robbers had broken into Walker's hardware in Gibbon and stolen 3 shotguns and shells.

Friday night a Buick was stolen from in front of World Theater in Kearney.

Early Saturday morning someone entered Hill Bros. Store in Riverdale & took overalls, sweaters, other clothing, food, and \$6.30.

3 p.m. boys saw

- 1) a mud covered Buick parked by the school
- 2) a door open at the school
- 3) a window broken.

\* 3:30 p.m. fire alarm sounded

School was on fire.

Bank employees among the few who did not answer the call.

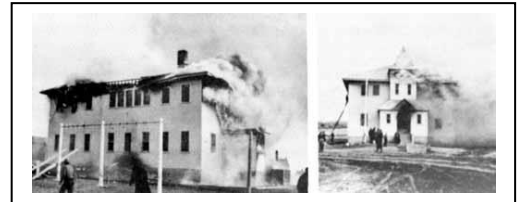
3:50 p.m. – Robbers entered bank

Got \$2,654.50.

Escaped but recognized as local.

3 of the 4 were arrested, tried and each sentenced to 22 years in the pen.

President of bank was Norma Ahrendt's father.

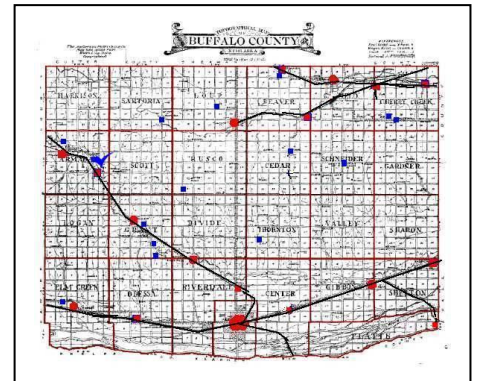


\* Watertown – Est. founded in 1890, depot and water tank for train

On site of a country store built by J. S. Veal

School 1 mile south

Country cemetery 2 miles north



\* Elevator, stockyards – bring grain & livestock to ship out

Post Office, cream testing station, general store, blacksmith, brickyard

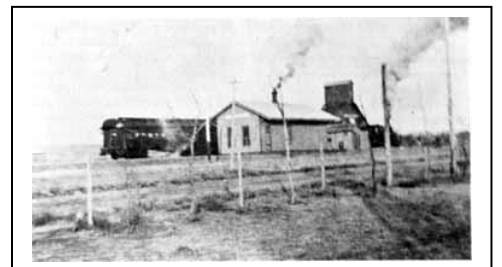
Flour mill on Wood River ran for a few years – closed 1915

Limestone quarry 1 ½ miles away

Ended about 1920 – store burned

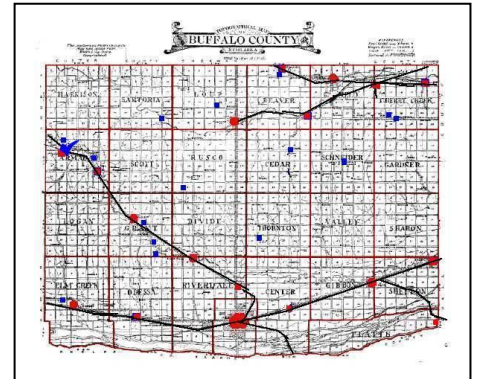
Everything gone by 1930

1967 population 3



- \* Miller – Started as Armada in 1870's  
 On Kearney & Black Hills stage route  
 Kearney & Black Hills Railroad platted one mile south  
 Bridge built over Wood River  
 Armada moved 1890  
 Miller first called Hancock

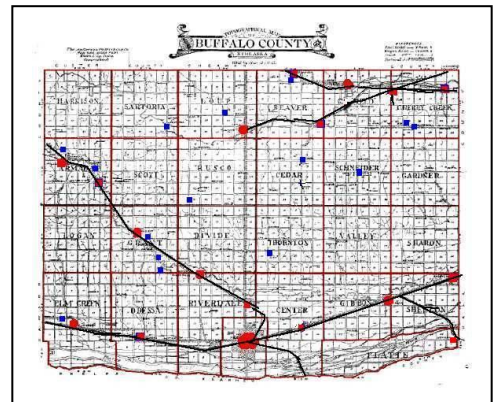
- \* Houston, newspaper editor,  
 Not going to move!  
*Armada Watchman* one week  
*Miller Forum* next week



## 1886 - Two Contests

- \* **1. Which town would be the division point for the Burlington – Nantasket or Beaver Creek?**

Erastus Smith, the promoter of Beaver Creek  
 (now called Ravenna),  
Dr. McKinney promoter of Nantasket

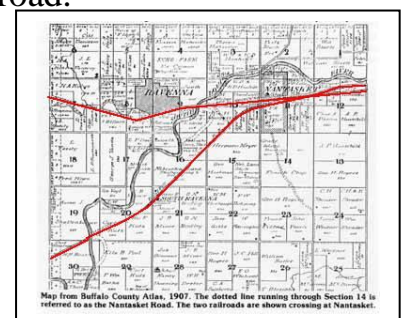


Began when railroad officials from the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad (C.B.&Q.) came in the early 1880's to decide where the division point of the railroad should be laid.

The story goes that Dr. McKinney was called away to Kearney on false pretenses, C.B.&Q. officials met with Erastus Smith  
 Decided to change Beaver Creek's name to Ravenna  
 Decided to make Ravenna the division point of the new railroad.

**Name chosen by pin in map**

- \* **2. The race Between Two Railroads –**  
 a. Grand Island and Wyoming Central – **Burlington** (1886)



From Grand Island to Broken Bow and on northwest

Entered Buffalo County near St. Michael.

Followed the South Loup River to Nantasket (on south side of river)

Crossed the river

Entered Ravenna. (Ravenna is on north side of river)

Followed Beaver Creek to Sweetwater and on into Sherman and Custer Counties to Broken Bow and on northwest.

b. Omaha & Republican Valley RR – Union Pacific (1886)

From Grand Island north to St. Paul.

One branch to Ord, other to Loup City via Boelus.

Branch from Boelus (Howard City) west into Buffalo County at St. Michel  
Through Nantasket and southwest along Loup

Cross the South Loup River to north side,  
through Poole to River View (Pleasanton).

**Two tracks would have to cross each other two miles east of Ravenna at Nantasket**

Apparently the rule was that the company that laid the track across the crossing first would get the right of way and would lay tracks on the ground, other on had to build an overpass

One bitterly cold night the Burlington won the race by:

"lining the stomachs of the guards posted by the Union Pacific line with an ample supply of liquor; so ample, in fact, that the guards were unwilling, or unable to do anything when the Burlington crews laid their track through and beyond the crossing, thus earning the right of way."

**Towns on the Burlington Route**

St Michael – P O 1887, never much of a town

Shipping point for livestock, alfalfa, & grain –

Kyne brothers, raised sheep, lived here

Michael Kyne agreed to sell part of his land for platting a town if it was named St. Michael



- \* Ravenna – Founded by Erastis Smith  
 Early settler – floor gave out in Kearney  
 Stayed at McGee Ranch at Sweetwater

- \* Sweetwater – First located on south bank of Beaver Creek  
 McGee’s ranch on Beaver Creek at crossing  
 Loup City wagon & stagecoach route  
 Named for sweet water in Beaver Creek  
 Now called Muddy Creek



Burlington & Wyoming RR went on north side  
 Sweetwater moved to north side, right on Sherman Co. line

Henry Beyer and his wife came to Sweetwater and took over the mercantile business. Beyer built a new store with living quarters on the second floor.

Some time later a friend and family stopped while passing through. A blanket was hung across the upstairs living quarters to provide privacy for each family. The next morning the two men drove to Kearney to get supplies for the store. It was late at night by the time they got back. They put up the horses and, exhausted, fell into bed. There followed a great commotion by wives and children. The men were in the wrong beds.

### **Towns on the Union Pacific spur**

Plan was to run it on up the South Loup through Sartoria, Pilot, Cumro, & Georgetown in Custer County to Callaway but that never happened.

### **Stopped at Pleasanton, operated until flood in 1947 washed out Loup River railroad bridge**

- \* Nantasket – Area originally settled by Czechs  
 Town first called Trocnov (pronounced Trots'-nof)  
 Platted in 1886 – 3 times larger than Ravenna  
 (UP wanted to make Nantasket big & important)  
 Named for a New York or Massachusetts town



Known as "Bottle Town" for its "unsavory reputation" it earned from the four or five saloons it boasted and through the "exuberance of the patrons" of a large dance hall and bar.

Official demise in 1959 – school sold last 12 lots for \$25 and then closed

\* Pool – Established in 1889 as Pool's Siding

Named for W. W. Pool who came in 1876 & started a ranch

He & others organized NE Land & Cattle Co.,

10,000 acres of land

3,500 cultivated acres, 6,500 range

Siding was put in for shipping their cattle

Town incorporated in 1892 as Pool's Siding

Later shortened to Poole



WW Pool (54) had financial reverses

March 21, 1898 - committed suicide on 2 children's graves

Wife, premature labor a week later, both died

1900 town sold – part of Pool's estate

Store owners moved buildings off their lots – they did not own their land.

Bank sold lots back to store owners so they moved their buildings back

Real town now, not spot on Pool's ranch

1920's high point – pop. 337

Presbyterian influence –

Banned Turkey Trot & Bunny Hop, no baseball on Sunday afternoons

Down hill in 1930's – bank moved to Ravenna, store owner died

Flood in 1947 closed railroad, ended town

1972 incorporation dissolved

\* Pleasanton – Started as bridge across Loup for traffic going north

Post Office on north side of river – Riverview

Railroad line planned, platted a town here 1890

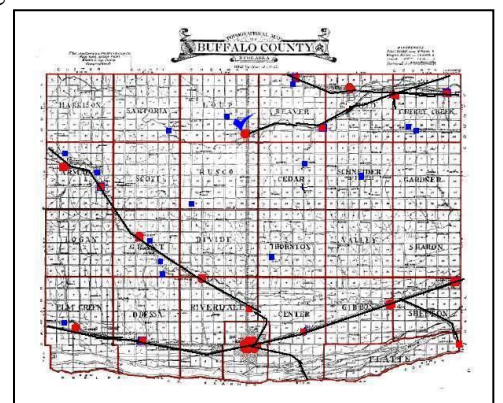
Man who had store & P O had previously had store in

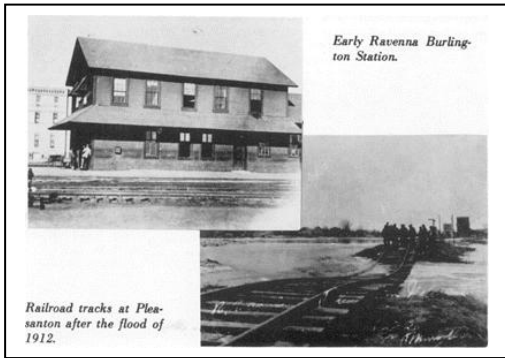
Pleasant Valley –

Possibly named Pleasanton after that.

\* Floods –

1912 (and Ravenna depot)





\* 1924 flood

1947 – End of railroad service

Flood did not mark end of Pleasanton because of highway

\* **Hastings & Northwestern Railroad (Gibbon Cutoff)**

Built about 1912

Denman – Southeast corner of county, on island in Platte  
Can walk in a couple of minutes into Hall, Adams or Kearney county

Platted May 1913

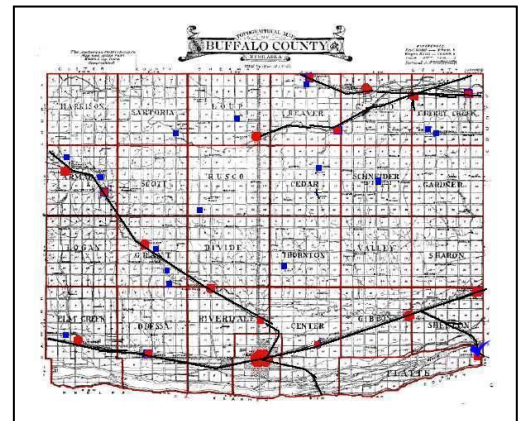
Named for Francis Denman who owned the land  
Last Post Office opened in county – July 1914

First depot was a box car with wheels removed.

Set up on -10° day

Section crews lived in Denman until early 1930's.

When they left, most of population left



\* **Communities**

Add Highways – Still connecting railroad towns

Many local communities –  
centered around church, school, post office  
Never developed into a town

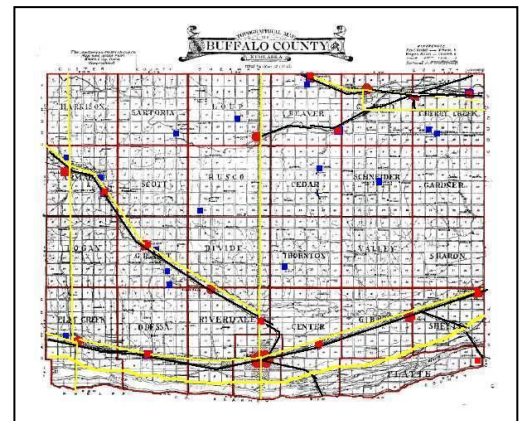
\* Sartoria – On north side of Loup River under a bluff

Horse races up on bluff

John Swenson – opened Post Office in Dec. 1879

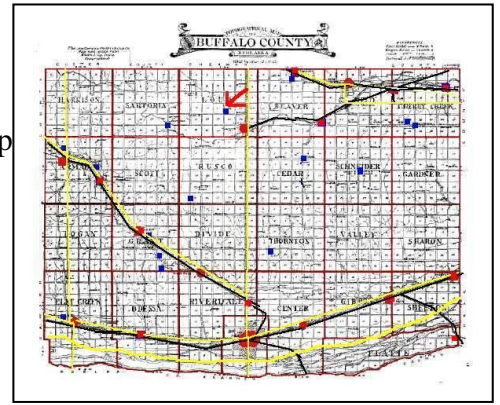
Peak population 40

Swenson died 1923, town dissolved

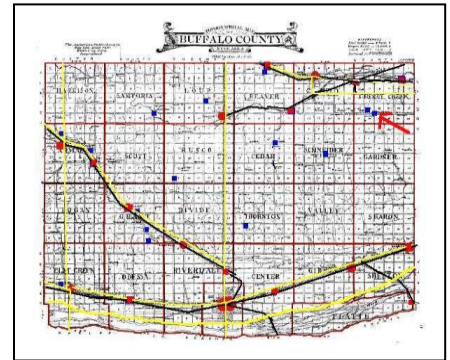


- \* Mahila – in Loup Township in Pleasant Valley
  - P O in 1882 – 1891
  - Railroad went through Pleasanton, Mahila did not develop

Wrightsville – P O one year, 1887, near Armada  
 On Loup where trail crossed  
 General store



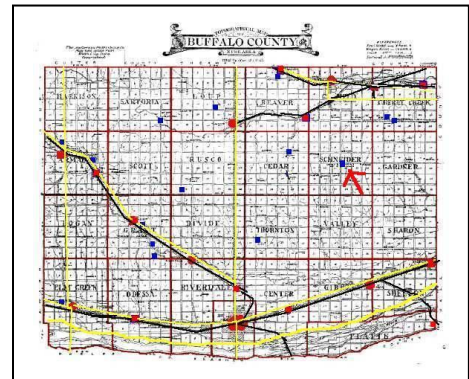
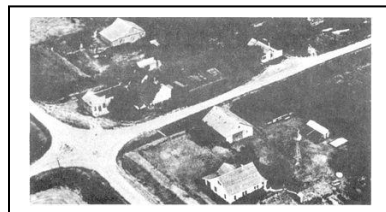
- \* Sodtown – 1905 Telephone co. organized
- \* Not all the buildings were made of sod



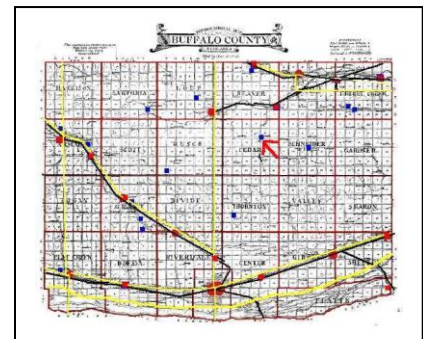
- \* Berg – Center of Schneider Township –  
 Saxon settlement - P O in 1873

Centennial – P O in 1876 – near Sweetwater, south

- \* Luce – near Sodtown



- \* Majors – P O in 1878  
 No name submitted  
 Name of Majors assigned,  
 Community around post office, no town developed



- \* Peake – P O in 1884, church, school  
Never developed into a town

Huntsville – 3 miles northwest of Riverdale  
Had a post office & school in 1873  
P O moved 2 miles west and became Stanley

Green Dale – a few miles northeast of Huntsville on the Wood

- \* Prairie Center – North of Kearney.  
Two churches –  
St. Mary’s Catholic  
Haven’s Chapel United Methodist by the cemetery  
Post Office from 1874 – 1902 – 2 miles north of cemetery

