

November 20, 1842-March 24, 1924

JOHN McFARLANE, PLATTE TRAIL BLAZER DIES MONDAY

With the death of John McFarlane at his home in Wheatland early Monday morning, Platte county lost a man who was in all probability the ranking pioneer of this section. While he was always the simple unassuming gentleman, and would have been the last to claim any public attention for a recital of the stirring events of his long and varied life, it is well worth while to relate them for the interest and educational value they might have for the younger generations, who have but little idea of the experiences encountered by those who broke the brails and cleared the land in preparation for them.

In 1866, Mr. McFarlane went to Nebraska City to hire out as an ox team driver to Ft. Laramie. He secured a contract with a man there who owned a train and was sending them thru under another man. While on the road, there was a division between a number of the drivers and the wagon master, who attempted to turn them adrift in the desert, young McFarlane among them. They insisted on their contract with the owner of the train, however, and staid by their teams until they reached Ft. Laramie.

There the wagon master refused to pay them their wages, but the commanding officer at the fort refused to pay for the transportation of the government supplies until he paid all wage claims in full.

McFarlane arrived in Laramie on August 11, 1886. There he became associated with Dick Dickerson, a son of a U.S. minister to one of the Central American Republics, who was engaged in contracting work for the government. The government was then building the adobe structures which yet remain at ft. Laramie, Dickerson had a contract for making 300,000 of the bricks, and was employing Mexicans who were hired and paid on the basis of 200 bricks for a day's work. McFarlane and a partner contracted to make them at the rate of \$325 per thousand and were able to make double that quota apiece per day. The bricks were made on the bank of the Laramie river about 150 yards from the Fort, and were a foot square by 15 or 16 inches long.

While McFarlane was at Ft. Laramie, there occurred the famous council with all Indian tribes then inhabiting this section, including tribes of the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Crows. There were gathered at the old fort the largest assemblage of redskins ever seen in the west. An army officer estimated that there were present 10,000 Indian warriors, in addition the women, children, and other dependents.

With the money saved McFarlane bought ox teams and engaged in hauling supplies from the Union Pacific R.R., which had then just reached Cheyenne, to Fort Laramie. He was among the first to make the trip with Charles Clay, who sold them the buildings. Together they carried on a livestock business there for several years.

On one occasion the Indians ran off all their horses and engaged in a fight with McUlvane and David McFarlane, a brother of John McFarlane, killing both their horses and shooting David through the shoulder. One of the Indians and several of their ponies were left dead on the ground, and the Indians later reported that several of their number had died of wounds.

John McFarlane was away on a freighting trip at the time, but a rancher by the