

Schools were being built and students were being educated in greater numbers than ever before. Most youngsters ended their formal education at the end of the eighth grade. During the 1890s, high schools were being established primarily by town school districts. Lack of money and teachers meant that one year of high school would be added; then a few years later another would be added. It often took a decade before a full four-year high school was established.

By this time, even higher education was available in Sarpy County. In 1880, primarily at the instigation of H. T. Clarke, a college was established in Bellevue. Mr. Clarke donated the land and a large amount of money to establish this Presbyterian institution of higher learning. The college opened in 1883 and continued an ambitious building program through the 1890s and early 1900s. It served the educational needs of local residents as well as students from other areas. There were eventually four dormitories for the non-local students--one each for college boys and girls and high school boys and girls. The latter were students in the college's prep school, which served as Bellevue's high school for many years. The college eventually succumbed to financial problems and closed in 1919. The four former dormitories have been renovated into apartments and are still in use.

By the 1890s, some of the old timers decided that they had lived in Sarpy County long enough to celebrate their longevity. The Old Settlers' Association was reorganized and held annual picnics and other functions. This organization survived for many years and brought back many memories to many of those who had come in the very early days of our history.

Meanwhile, back at the Fort . . . in 1891 President Harrison signed the bill appropriating an additional \$300,000 for construction and directed the new fort to be named for General George Crook, who had died the previous year. General Crook, a famous Civil War hero and Indian fighter, had been stationed at Fort Omaha.

By mid 1896, construction of the major buildings at the Fort was completed. In June 1896, the first troops arrived to take over their brand-new fort. In September the first telephone was installed. In 1898, the 22nd Infantry departed for the Philippines as participants in the Spanish American War.