

Transcription from the News-Journal, Nance County Nebraska. Thanks to Linda Berney for sending along the clipping while doing newspaper transcriptions.

Worland, Wyoming

April 2, 1906

Editor News-Journal:

As many of my friends requested me to write them concerning the Big Horn Basin country, and as it will be difficult for me to write to them all, I will write a letter describing conditions in a general way and ask you to be kind enough to publish it.

As I am now out of the land business, the lands under the Hanover Canal that I have been advertising and selling during the past year being practically all sold, the reader of this article need not think that I am writing a boom article but can accept my statements as facts according to the best of my judgement.

In a general way I would describe the basin as a vast desert. The only relief to the eye after gazing at the rocky bad lands or the sage brush or salt sage valleys is the fringe of Cottonwood timber along the Big Horn river and the lofty mountains in the distance.

At least nine-tenths of the land will never be used excepting for grazing purposes. Most of the balance of the land is very fertile and productive when irrigated.

I am stopping in Worland, a new town platted last December and now containing some forty or fifty buildings some of which are quite pretentious.

There are five saloons here already and talk of getting a brewery in soon. Most of the saloons harbor a nest of professional gamblers and thugs and it is altogether the toughest place I ever struck. It is expected that this will be a place of 2000 inhabitants within a year. Thousands will come here at time of registering for the drawing for Wind river reservation and so many are coming in now that it is difficult to get a bed. Lots are selling from \$250.00 to \$1000.00; the townsite company putting the price so high that as a speculation an investment in lots does not look attractive to me.

Land is selling at from \$30.00 per acre upward in this vicinity. It is fifty per cent higher in price than it was a year ago when I first became interested in it. I expect it to materially advance before fall as this country will be boomed greatly by the B. & M. R.R. Co.

The time for investing for speculation will soon be past in my judgement as the lowest price that deeded land can be bought at now is \$40.00 per acre for raw land.

It is very expensive to improve a farm now owing to difficulty in getting lumber and other building material. To a farmer willing to put up with the inconvenience of pioneer life and who is industrious I think that success would attend his efforts. I meet some homesick farmers but most of them are cheerful over the outlook for the country. One man about a mile from Worland who I would judge to be a man of intelligence and the best farmer here says his land is not for sale and he would not thank a man for an offer of \$100.00 per acre. A person buying land here should use care as the soil is not uniform though nearly all is fertile when properly farmed.

As to climate, from what I can see and hear I think it is a little colder in winter and hotter in summer than it is Nebraska. There is much less wind and fewer storms than we get and Nebraska people who have lived here several years speak well of the weather.

A fine supply of pure water is found at a depth of about 100 feet. Surface water is usually poor owing to alkali. Considerable of the soil contains alkali enough to make it necessary to handle the water with care when irrigating so as not to bring it up to the surface.

Labor is now in demand and wages are good. However board and everything else is so high that I would not advise laboring men to come here. Board now costs \$6.00 to \$8.00 per week. Hay \$20.00 per ton and oats \$1.00 per bushel makes it expensive for the farmers coming in to make a start.

I came here with the purpose of engaging in the land business but have come to the conclusion that this town is too swift for me. I cannot think of brining my family to such a town as this will be for the next few years.

To those who come to register for the land drawing I would advise that they bring their blankets along as few will be able to get beds. Better bring plenty of money as expenses will be heavy. I am told that there is considerable body of good land in the reservation.

My letter is already much too long so will tell you the rest after I get home, I will return soon, probably by the time this letter is published, (provided the editor does not throw it into the waste basket.)

Weather has been fine here since I arrived until today, about an inch of wet snow has fallen since last evening.

Yours truly,

Geo. W. Ellsworth