



The cottage pictured above has been the focal point in a 21-year legal battle fought by its owner, Mrs. Levina Campbell of Hordville (inset), to resist a lien sought by an Omaha attorney, William Ehlers. A district court decision handed down Monday by Judge E. G. Kroger of Grand Island held that the lien could not be applied in Mrs. Campbell's case because the Hordville residence is her homestead.

Aged Hordville Widow Wins 21-Year Battle in Courts To Keep Small Cottage She and Husband Built in 1912

A Hamilton county district court decision a few days ago brought triumph for an 88-year-old Hordville woman who has fought legal battles for 21 years to keep her little home.

The victor is Mrs. Levina Campbell, a resident of Nebraska for 83 years.

The loser is William A. Ehlers, an Omaha attorney, who began efforts in 1933 to dispossess the Hordville widow. The case was tried at Aurora on Feb. 2 before District Judge E. G. Kroger of Grand Island, sitting for Judge Harry D. Landis of Seward. Ehlers was given permission to file briefs in the case.

Judge Kroger's decision last Monday was that Ehlers' judgment did not constitute a lien upon Mrs. Campbell's home and the two lots on which it is situated. The court did find, however, that Ehlers' judgment originally for \$97 and now \$344 constituted a lien upon an adjacent vacant lot. A Hordville banker testified the value of the vacant lot was about \$10.

The legal battle began after Eh-

lers purchased remaining assets of the bankrupt Hordville Lumber Company for the total sum of \$29. Among the remaining assets was a claim for \$82.55 against Mrs. Campbell for coal she had purchased.

Ironically, Mrs. Campbell was a heavy loser when the Hordville Lumber Company, with many claims outstanding in the lean 30's went bankrupt. She was a stockholder in the defunct company and had practically no other source of income.

Ehlers tried to collect the claim against Mrs. Campbell and in 1933 he secured a judgment for \$97. His next step was an attempt to secure a lien upon Mrs. Campbell's home.

Mrs. Campbell and her husband, the late Henry M. Campbell, bought the lots and in 1912 built the home on two of the lots. She has occupied the home for the intervening 42 years and claimed a homestead right.

Mr. Campbell's will left his widow a life estate in the property.

Mrs. Campbell conveyed her in-

terest in the home in 1946 to Ida B. Rallins, Lela Wright and Arza M. Millsap, and the court held that the conveyance was not in fraud of creditors or of Ehlers because the homestead was exempt from Ehlers' judgment.

In his legal skirmishing Ehlers at one time secured an order for sale and did sell Mrs. Campbell's property to satisfy the judgment. The case was taken to district court and Ehlers lost. He appealed to the state Supreme Court. He lost there, too.

If Ehlers appeals from Judge Kroger's decision, he must file the appeal within 30 days, Mrs. Campbell's attorney said.

Mrs. Campbell was born in Indiana in 1866. She came to Nebraska with her parents in 1871, when she was five years old. She has lived in the Hordville community for the past 70 years.

As a resident of Hamilton county she has seen the country develop from the bare prairie land to its present productive farms. And she has seen the establishment of every town within the county.