

fathom

This Fathom is an attempt to illustrate the changing attitudes, ideas, and concerns of UNL students as reflected in the *Daily Nebraskan* from 1900 through the 1960s.

Each of the following pages features stories from *Daily Nebraskans* of that 70 year span. Page three begins with stories that appeared from 1901 to 1919, page four from 1920 to 1929, and so forth. The stories appear exactly as they did when first published with the exception of some condensing. The newspaper style of those years is reproduced as closely as possible, however, changes in equipment and production made authentic rendition impossible.

Some of the stories are humorous from today's perspective. Others, however, would be considered offensive if written today. Articles displaying racial prejudice, sexual discrimination and sheer thoughtless insensitivity to the rights of others are reprinted, not to offend anyone, but to illustrate the changes that have taken place over the years.

Illustrations and some pictures were also reproduced from original copies of the paper. Other photographs have been borrowed from the UNL Archives.

Through the years the *Daily Nebraskan* experienced several face lifts. The newspaper existed as a five column tabloid until the second semester of the 1949-50 school year when it changed to the larger seven column publication.

Frequency of publication too has changed. During the second semester of the 1952-53 school year the *Daily Nebraskan* changed from a five-day to a four-day publication.

Financial difficulties forced it to change to "The Nebraskan," and three day a week publication. Not until 1957 did it return to the *Daily Nebraskan*.

Although the *Daily Nebraskan* began its life in 1901, it was preceded by the *Hesperian Student* which was published by the Palladian Society, a literary society. It began in 1872—just three years after the university was founded.

The social lives of students centered on literary societies, according to information in a historical series written for the *Daily Nebraskan* by Franck Partsch, in 1964.

When the Greek Letter fraternities arrived in Nebraska in 1883, the literary societies criticized them for being undemocratic.

"The battle of the 'frats' and the 'barbs' raged on through the '90s. In spite of the natural inhibition which faced the fraternities in the form of proud class spirit, the Greek houses prevailed and grew," according to a 1969 *Daily Nebraskan* article.

Willia Cather was an editor of the *Hesperian* about this time. "She frequently wrote satirical and sharp criticisms of the sorority girls," said the article.

"She characterized them as jealous, conceited, character assassins interested in a girl only if membership in the sorority would enhance the reputation of the house."

The Greeks, upset with the *Hesperian* criticism, began to fight for control of the newspaper, according to Partsch. And in 1892 *The Nebraskan* was founded by the Greeks to oppose the *Hesperian*. In 1901 the two publications merged to

form the *Daily Nebraskan*.

The mystery as to why the *Daily Nebraskan* is called the "rag" was cleared up in 1917 when a letter to the editor appeared from "Range (Frank) Riley" a graduate of 1898. He said:

I think the honor (if it can be so called) belongs to Chancellor Canfield. One day some 23 years ago (1894) while in his office I referred to The Nebraskan as "The Rag." He paused in characteristic pose, his glasses half raised—but remained silent. The following Friday afternoon while a group of us were waiting, just before drill time, in front of the "Co-op" for the boy to bring up the first copies, the chancellor came half way down the east steps, leaned over the railing and shouted to me: "Well, Riley, is 'The Rag' out yet." Harry Oury, Charley Elliott, Joe Beardsley, Howard Pamel-ee, Tabor Teele, Elmer Pearson, Bill McKay and others let out a

shout. It did not take them long to spread the news. From that moment on was Rag Riley, and the Nebraskan was "the Rag." I did not know the name had stuck to the Nebraskan, but it has to me. The happiest thrill of my life comes when Eddie Morrison, Elmer Pearson and Orville Martin, classmates, now located in Kansas City, drop in with a "Hello, Rag!"



The first student newspaper of the University of Nebraska, The *Hesperian Student*, was formed in 1872.

The University opened its doors Sept. 7, 1871 with a student body of five freshmen, two sophomores, one junior, and twelve "irregulars." Since high schools were almost unheard of in the young state, 110 students were enrolled in the preparatory "Latin School."

Students paid a tuition of five dollars per semester, eight dollars for non-residents, according to Partsch. There were no dormitories until the 1940's and most students lived with local families.

In the University's early years almost all faculty members were ministers. The fact that the curriculum included a program of required chapel and Sunday worship created a problem as to which denomination would dominate. Religious quarrels were frequent and resulted in the resignations of the first two chancellors.

Other problems besetting the University during the early years were the

question as to what subjects should be taught and whether military training should be compulsory on campus. Neither of these questions were finally resolved in the school's first 20 years.

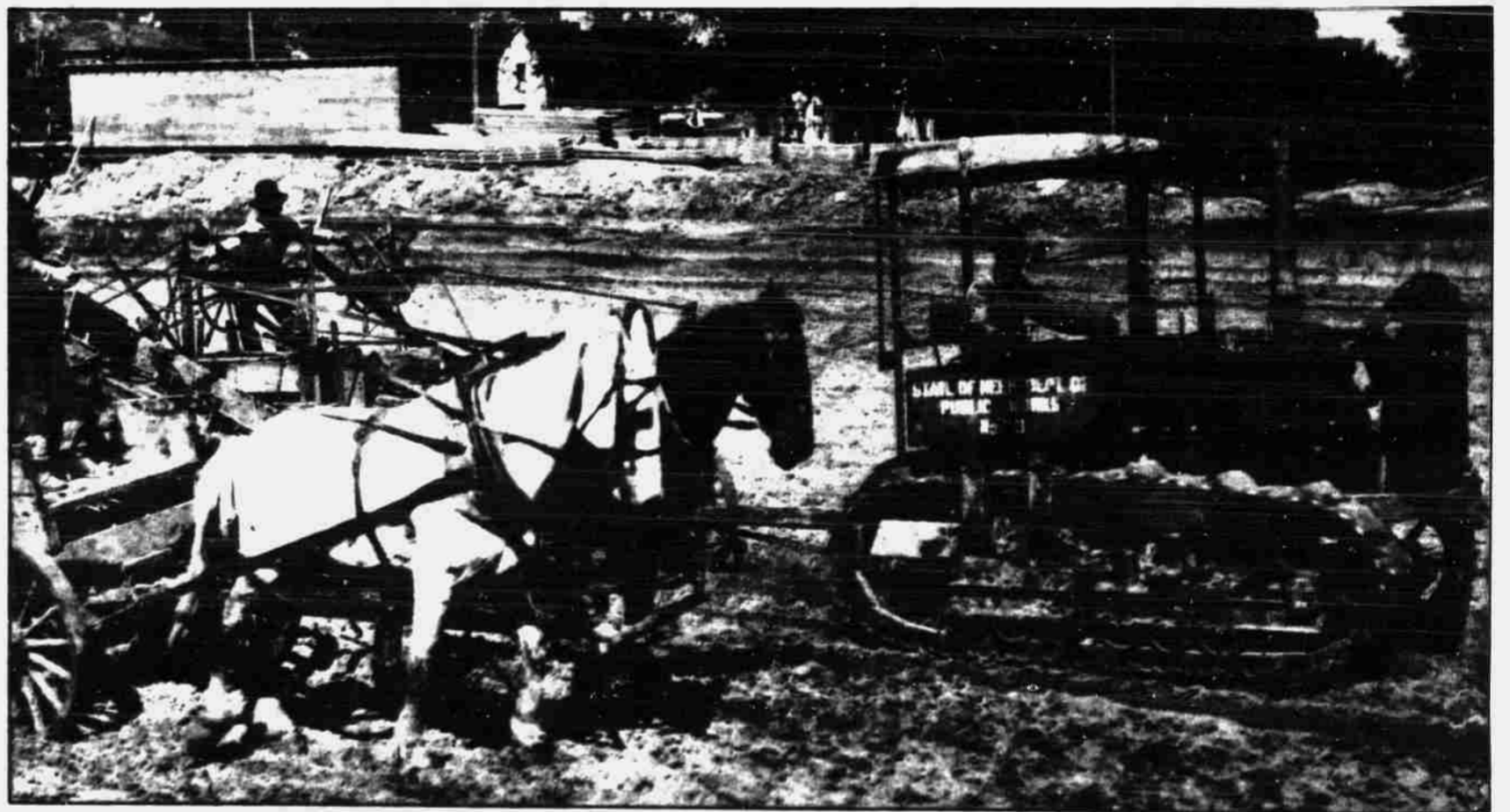
The chancellor's salary was first set at \$5,000 by the Board of Regents. However, the body soon reconsidered its "rash action" and lowered the salary to \$4,000. Professors were paid \$2,000, Partsch said.

In its 107-year history the University has grown from a four-block campus worth a few hundred thousand dollars to a three campus plant worth hundreds of millions according to University figures. The *Daily Nebraskan*, too, has grown from a literary sheet to a daily newspaper, reflecting the changing needs of its students.

amy lenzen, editor



The *Daily Nebraskan* office as it was in 1933.



Construction of Memorial Stadium began in 1896. The sight was selected to provide plenty of parking for horse and buggies and early roadsters.



The Electra chorus from 1895 University production of "Antigone."

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