

## Wrecked Plant Didn't Stop Doc

The Frontier became a going concern in 1880. A year later would have seen its finish had a less determined gent than Doc Mathews been at the helm. The little plant was in rented quarters under a sub-lease from Hugh O'Neill. When The Frontier entered the arena the journalistic fur began to fly. Smith & Hill, publishers of the Knox County News, were already in the O'Neill territory with the Holt County Record and Mr. President would feel himself a piker if he read the brimstone and fire that passed between the rivals.

Out of this exchange of courtesies, combined with the growing influence of Mathews as well as the fact the Record was owned by a Niobrara setup, came a plan to ruin Mathews. The building in which The Frontier was printed was owned or at least controlled by Niobrara interest. Mathews had paid the rent on the building but these interests sent men here to move the printing equipment from the building.

On a May night in 1881 The Frontier was broken into and the work of wrecking begun. Word was sent to Mathews early in the morning and he hastened to the office to demand what was going on and why. One of the intruders threatened him with a hammer while another drew a gun on him. Doc saw that he was "licked" so far as retaining possession of the building.

But he at once set about getting teams and men to go to Niobrara for lumber and then put up his own building where the building now stands from which The Frontier is issued. Friends came to his assistance and somehow the paper did not miss an issue.

In the issue of May 12, 1881, it was stated that some of the printing material was in McCaf-



EZRA SAUNDERS . . . O'Neill's first journeyman printer. (See story on page 6-c.)

ferty's residence, one press in O'Neill & Williams' law office, a press and most of the type in Hall's liquor store, the imposing stone in Cleveland & Uttley's law office and some material in the Commercial hotel. This building still stands on lower Fourth street.

The plucky editor of The Frontier said in that issue that he had come to O'Neill to stay and his paper would continue to be published. The new community was aroused over this attempt to wreck the printing plant by outside interests and from then on The Frontier became firmly established, and is still going into the hands of thousands of readers, while the Holt County Record and its promoters long ago faded out of the picture.

That was a period when might was considered right and it took the courage of pioneers to survive and put down the lawlessness.

## Out of the Past . . .

From the files of The Frontier of 1881-'82 these items are taken:

The Frontier editor is trebly honored. Monday evening we received the commission which makes us postmaster, Wednesday evening drew a handsome lamp at the Catholic fair, and at noon today was made the father of a nine-pound baby girl.

God help the taxpayers of Holt county if the murderer Reed has to lay in Cumings county jail many months. — Wayne Review. Well, Holt county will have to stand it this time. Perhaps in the near future this county will have a jail of its own. (It did, a little two by twice on the alley back of the present Saunto store.—Editor.)

The trial of Crow Dog for the murder of Spotted Tail took place at Deadwood last week and contrary to the expectations of those familiar with the affair was convicted. An effort will be made to secure a new trial. Old C. D. stands a good chance of making a sudden trip to the happy hunting ground about the same time the more brutal savage Giteau takes his departure to a warmer if not more congenial climate. For Crow Dog we have some sympathy because we think he killed old Spot to save his own life.

At a meeting of enterprising citizens the following were chosen as a committee to promote a butter factory: John J. McCafferty, Frank Tohill, Patrick McCoy, John McCann, Rhody Hayes, James Enright, Michael O'Laughlin, John Wynn, William Cronin, M. D. Long, Neil Brennan, William Fallen, James Sullivan, M. P. Kinkaid, W. D. Mathews and M. B. Gearon.

The new Catholic church at

this place will be completed some time in July and will be one of the finest buildings in North Nebraska. The estimated cost is something over \$6,000, which will all be raised upon completion of the building. The main part of the edifice will be 40x80 feet and an added room 14x20 feet.

The treasurer received this morning the state apportionment, amounting to \$1,813.05, which will be apportioned to the various school districts next week, in addition to about \$500 liquor license fund already on hand.

The district court docket for February, 1882, Judges Barnes presiding, showed 33 civil cases and five criminal, these involving the Dutchers, Hileman and a murder case or two.

Crow Dog has been sentenced to be hung on May 4, The Frontier editor said, adding: This will be too awfully utter to Crow Dog, as he informed The Frontier last Summer that he had just as soon die as not if he was to be shot, but to be hung he considered a disgrace to any brave Indian.

The total distance of the Great Lakes waterways system, from Duluth to the outlet of Lake Ontario, is 1,160 miles, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

The absentee ballot was first used during the Civil War, when 11 Unions states permitted men absent on army duty to vote, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

"Camel's hair" brushes are made from the fur of a species of squirrel, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Considerable ivory is obtained from vast stores of mastodon and mammoth tusks found in Siberia and elsewhere.

## HOLT BOYS WERE PIONEER AIRMEN

### 7 Savidge Brothers Were Building Plane Along with Wright Brothers

When the Wright brothers took to the air for the first time in human history since Elijah went up in a chariot of fire, seven brothers in Holt county were building an airplane. The brothers were George, John, Joe, Dave, Matt, Phillip and Louis Savidge, sons of Mr. and Mrs. Martin P. Savidge, who operated a ranch down in Deloit.

Mrs. Phyllis Bartak, whose address is Ewing star route, a sister, The Frontier understands, of the seven brothers, favors us with the story of these remarkable Holt county boys who won national fame for their contribution to early airplane building.

The Savidge home was not only a social center in the early years of the Twentieth century but at this popular ranch there was a daily enlarging collection of wonders of invention. But the boys' crowning work were airplanes that would navigate among the clouds.

Mrs. Bartak says that the boys were not only inventors of strange new things but were all musically gifted and Sunday evenings at the commodious Savidge home were devoted to social affairs enlivened by song.

From experimenting with a glider made in the barn haymow and launched from the roof of the barn to sail out over the countryside, a success Darius Green with his flying machine failed to realize, the boys then built their first airplane.

Mrs. Bartak thus describes it: "The structure of the plane was made from basswood poles. It had no cockpit. The pilot sat on a mower seat which was bolted to the frame. The wings were made of shellacked muslin and strengthened by ribs of wood. This was all braced together with wire and hollow steel tubes."

Continuing the story of the pioneers of aviation in Nebraska Mrs. Bartak says:

"The first flights were made on a meadow of the home place, near which was a grove of trees. They flew over the trees in practice flights, landing on the other side."

Three of the boys rode the plane, pilot on the m o w e r seat in front of the engine and one on each side to balance the craft. Stories got around that the Savidge boys were flying their machine but were given little credence until they published a notice in newspapers inviting the public to come to the Savidge ranch on a certain Sunday to witness an exhibition of aerial flight. Crowds came. The flights were successful. Shortly after the boys ventured forth on flights all over the country and became known as the High Fliers.

That first exhibition at the Savidge place was on May 7, 1911. It was delayed that Sunday until evening when the wind, that had raged throughout the day, subsided.

So far as records disclose, Mrs. Bartak says, Matt Savidge, who took the plane up in the first flight, was Nebraska's first air pilot and his plane the first to penetrate the Nebraska heavens. After he had landed John Savidge took the plane up on a second flight, and the crowd again cheered.

Thus airplanes and aviation were introduced to Nebraska by seven energetic Holt county boys. Matt Savidge also introduced the trick of sky writing.

Matt mapped out on paper a detailed flight that would write his name in the sky, recalls Mrs. Bartak. He tied smoke candles to the frame of the plane, went aloft and wrote his name with smoke. A new thing in writing was introduced to the world.

Would that the story might end here. In June of the fifth year of successful flights, the boys returned to Ewing with their equipment. Completing the work on a plane late Saturday afternoon everything was not functioning as John knew it should. Under the protest of the other boys, Matt took to the air with the plane. It was his last flight. In coming in to land, when still a hundred feet aloft, the plane plunged to earth. Matt was killed. The tragedy so disheartened the brothers that they abandoned aviation as careers.

Tragedy often marks and mars the pioneer efforts in the development of great things and aviation has taken its toll of broken bodies.

### News Notes in 1879-'82 . . . 2 New Stock Ranches Started

John P. O'Donnell is remodeling his house and enlarging it. Daly & Parcell are also enlarging their store.

The postoffice embroglio still continues with a new and deserving aspirant in the person of Mrs. O'Neill.

Doc Middleton and two of his men paid us a friendly visit last Thursday.

Dr. Daggett is about to start a sheep ranch south of the Elkhorn river. Wade in, Doctor, there's millions in it.

Two new stock ranches have been started in the last 10 days down the river, one by John Mayburg and the other by Gallagher & O'Donnell from Iowa.

So gentle readers, for another week your good natured Leo rests his quills with a low bow and graceful au-re-voir!

A new paper comes from O'Neill City called the Record. T. J. Smith and B. C. Hill are its editors and proprietors. They are the same who have charge of the Knox County News, the new paper at Niobrara, and is printed from the same type.—Sioux City Journal, quoted in the Record of June 16, 1879.

A Rare Chance for a Live

Man of Some Means. The undersigned will sell his interest in the O'Neill hardware store, cheap for cash, or will trade for horned stock or sheep. Address or call on J. J. McCafferty for the next 30 days. (If 30 days was made the limit, that offer expired on July 16, 1882.)

### Reflections by Graves of Pioneers —

" . . . the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth. . . ."

Go up on the hill and spend an hour in meditation among the graves of the pioneers.

Amidst the tombs of the dead the meaning of life is borne in upon the living. Here reduced to dust are the remains of the fathers and mothers who ventured forth in the bloom of youth to redeem a wilderness and lay the cornerstone for the spiritual, cultural and industrial life of a community that is now the heritage of children and grandchildren. The pioneers, well nigh to the last courageous man and woman, are dead. Here upon this hill those who shared the common sacrifices of the harsh frontier are at rest, unmindful alike of sunshine or storm. A few short years ago they lived, loved and hated; toiled and planned with brain and muscle, heart

pregnant with the impulse of great deeds.

Here lie the hands that to humble toil were devoted; there other mounds mark the abode of the dead of greater souls, souls whose aspirations reached beyond the little and the sordid boundaries of life and wrought upon the anvil of their times deeds that challenge the best there is in this generation.

We walk away, conscious that time is fleeting and that our hearts though stout and brave "still like muffled drums are beating funeral marches to the grave." Conscious, too, that the hour approaches when "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth."

# The ROYAL Theatre

## for 30 Years O'Neill's entertainment center!

LET'S STROLL BACK THRU MEMORY LANE . . .

### IN 1909 . . .

These were the days before the motion picture; naturally before the ROYAL THEATRE too. The old O'Neill Opera-house attracted the usual run of road shows, home talent plays and minstrels. Seats were collapsible.

### IN 1919 . . .

Motion pictures had been the thing for several years, but by 1919 the quality of the movies had made big advances. The boys were home from the war and squired their girls to such shows as Charlie Chaplin in "Police"; Harry Carey in "Bare Fists"; Theda Bara in "Cleopatra", and others. Mrs. Viola N. Brown was proprietor of the ROYAL then located in a building North of the Golden Hotel corner. Some of the earliest movies were put on in the K. C. hall. There were free peanuts on Saturday. A new ROYAL THEATRE was about to be built on the present site. Mrs. Brown died about a year later and the ROYAL was purchased from the Brown heirs by Mellor and McMullan, who in 1921, sold the ROYAL to the present owner.

### IN 1929 . . .

Miracle of miracles! The talking picture is here! O'Neillites gaped in amazement as they saw and heard Al Jolson in "The Singing Fool" and Richard Barthelmess in "Weary River". And who'll ever forget the first 100 percent all-talking picture, "The Broadway Melody"?

### IN 1949 . . .

The Royal Theatre only recently completed renovating and installing a high fidelity RCA sound system. The Royal was the first theatre to install sound West of Norfolk. To maintain this leadership tradition, the Royal's new sound system is second-to-none in the region. Seating capacity is now over 400. Latest films are shown nightly with matinees on Saturdays and Sundays.

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We Too, Then, Have Memories As We

## Congratulate

O'NEILL ON ITS 75th ANNIVERSARY!!

# The ROYAL THEATRE.. O'Neill

MRS. GEORGIA RASLEY, Prop.

1874 — 1949

75 years ago brave men and courageous women came to Holt county to make homes for their families . . . Today on this Diamond Jubilee we are happy to now honor their memory.

★

J. ED HANCOCK