

William Gumb, Wife Reached Willow Lake on St. Patrick's Day

Oddly enough, some of the best lands in Holt county were the last to be homesteaded. This was due partly to distance from town and partly to a preference on the part of early day settlers on land with timber adjacent to streams. So the lush grasslands of the Southwest became the heritage of the men and women of the second migration.

Among these were William and Ullah Gumb, natives of Callington, Cornwall, England, who on St. Patrick's day in 1890 settled on land near Willow Lake, 45 miles Southwest of O'Neill. The first home of the Gumb's, a sod house, is shown on this page (at right) and also their home of later years. Mrs. Lizzie Gumb-Dexter was born in that sod house and now a mother and grandmother in her own right lives in the Willow Lake community.

Mrs. Dexter says of her parents that they were true pioneers and persistent planters, trees and other landmarks today remaining as monuments to their efforts.

Mrs. Dexter was one of five children of the family, four daughters and one son, C. Wm. Gumb, of Burwell. One of the daughters, Mrs. Emily Thomas, also resides at Burwell. Mrs. Hettie Ballagh and Mrs. Ula Rouse are two of the daughters, who with Mrs. Dexter, have remained in Southern Holt county. Mrs. Gumb died in 1941 and Mr. Gumb in 1947.

Recalling the homestead days, Mrs. Dexter says:

"We used the hay burner for heat and cooking, flour sacks for window curtains and clothing, and many other uses. One room had flour sack ceiling instead of wall paper.

"We cut hay late in the Fall and run up a stack near the house which we called 'fire hay'. Younger sister, brother and I would take the three hay burners to this pile of hay, fill them and have one or two in reserve in case of rain. One evening we had left one of the hay burners on top of the hay stack. Next morning we heard a yipping and going to the hay pile found our Shepherd dog, Silver, had a family of six puppies."

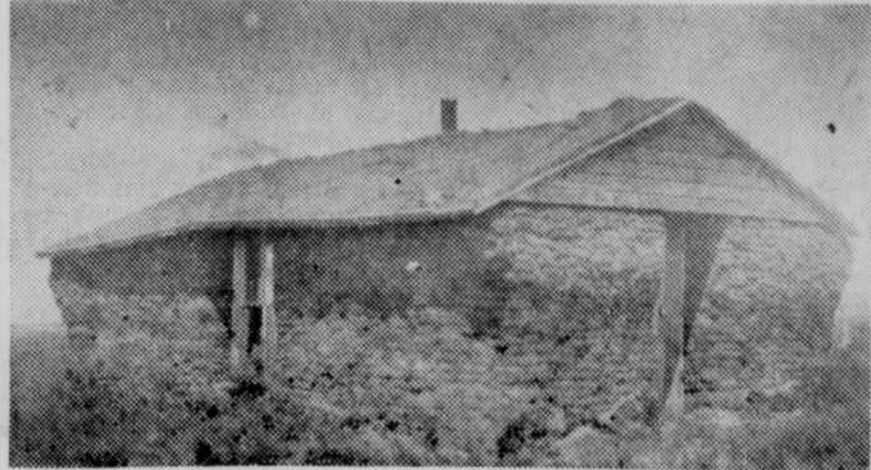
When Mr. and Mrs. Gumb retired in later life they made their home in Chambers.

Ten Dollars Builds Railroad

With a 10-dollar bill and all the nerve in the world Donald McLean brought a railroad into O'Neill. The shadows of sunset were gathering over the nineteenth century, but railroad building had not yet hung the harp on a willow tree. With \$10 for the "treats" and a mighty bluff, McLean worked a group of Eastern capitalists into putting up the money to build the railroad from Sioux City to O'Neill. It was known as the Oregon Short Line—Short Line for short, and during most of its history until the great Burlington system acquired the road there was shortage of revenue. The driving of the last spike in the last tie at the end of Center precinct was the occasion for O'Neill's greatest blowout. The town went wild—we had another railroad.



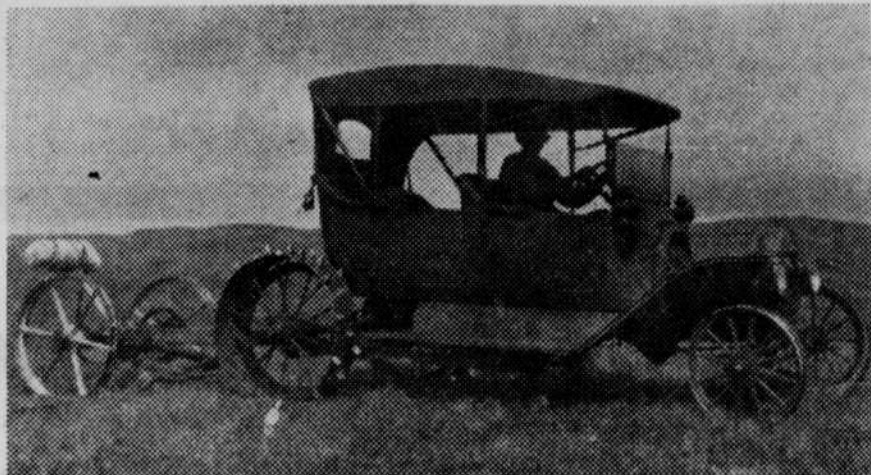
Mr. and Mrs. William Gumb and daughters Emily, Hattie, Lissie and Ula and son, William, Jr.



The Gumb's homestead home—a sodhouse.



With the advent of the automobile the Gumb home was the scene of many family gatherings. This photograph was taken on an Easter Sunday.



The Gumbs brought to Holt county the first power mower—the model T Ford used for power.

O'Neill's First Big Fire Loss

The Evans hotel, later known as the Potter House, then again the Evans, built originally and owned by Ed Evans, caught fire a windy day in the late 1880's and the town witnessed its most destructive fire. It was a three-story frame building on lower Fourth street on the corner opposite the city hall. That corner has been unoccupied since.

Veritable Model of Excellence

Back in 1902 the National Printer-Journalist, published in Chicago, had this to say of The Frontier: "A veritable model of editorial excellence and typographical neatness is embodied in this weekly. . . Especially deserving of mention is the ad of O. F. Biglin. . . In the main the make-up of this sheet is faultless."

Hagerty Tossed From a Mule

The moon shone full from a clear sky on an April night. Pat Hagerty, 250 pounds of a good Irish frame, was aroused from sleep when word got to the Hagerty home up on the hill West of the cemetery that there was a fire down town which threatened the Elkhorn Valley bank on the North side of Douglas street between Fourth and Fifth, as streets are now named and numbered. Hagerty got out of bed, dressed and led a mule from the barn which he mounted and headed for the scene of the fire about as fast as that mule could travel. When half way down town the mule stopped suddenly at sight of a hole by the road and Hagerty's 250 pounds went on over the mule's head. He got up unhurt mounted again and made it to the fire. The bank building and another were destroyed.

Depot Becomes Banquet Hall—The depot at Inman was turned into a banquet hall October 19, 1883, when the Presbyterian church group put on a mush and milk social, the funds thus acquired going to aid in the building of a church.



SOLID CITIZENS . . . These men (above) were prominent early day O'Neillites posing for a camera in the late 1880s. Left-to-right are: standing—H. C. McEvony, James Kernan, Frank Campbell, Rev. M. F. Cassidy, Frank Toohill, Thomas Simonson, O. F. Biglin, Barney McCreedy, S. M. Wagers; seated—Dave Wisegarber and an unidentified man.

FATHER CASSIDY BELOVED BY FLOCK

Brings Relief to Destitute During Crucial Period in Town's History

By MARY E. CULLEN, Omaha.

To the loved friends and companions of yesteryear, and to the present residents of O'Neill who may be interested:

The staff of The Frontier honored me by asking me to contribute toward the publication of the Diamond Jubilee issue of The Frontier, from my own view point, and while at first I was hesitantly reluctant, it then occurred to me it was a nice way to contact the friends of other days through the medium of a letter in the 75th anniversary edition of this paper, thereby renewing old and loved associations and memories, and by paying a small tribute to the noble pioneers of O'Neill, Prairie-land (so befittingly named by Mr. Saunders of The Frontier staff), as it encompasses O'Neill, is dear to all who were born there, and to others of us who were reared there, and this is the impression of a proud association of friendships which reach out across the miles.

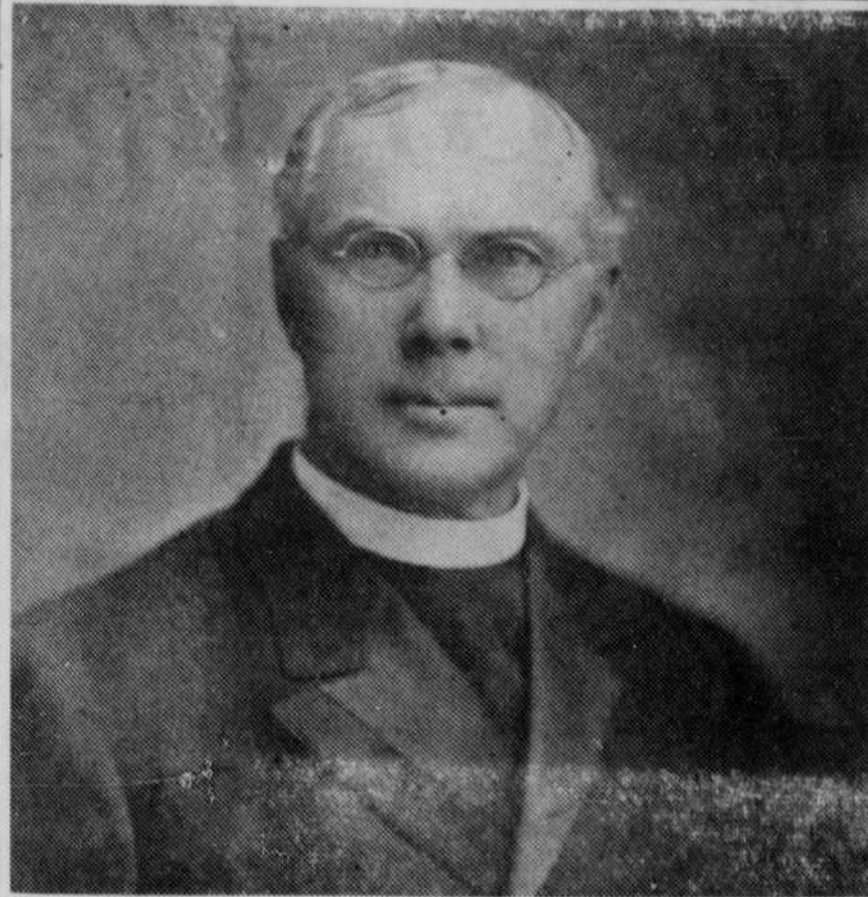
Looking down through the vista of the years, the history of O'Neill is the story of the individuals who left their homes in the East to seek a broader, newer life in the Midwest, under the guidance of the renowned General John O'Neill. They came to live close to nature, to build homes and rear families and cultivate the soil, which then produced only the tall, wild prairie grass. The courage, the personal sacrifices, the disappointments and sorrows, the loneliness, the heroic endurance and the unflinching hope of the founders of O'Neill, moulded characters so strong in faith and perseverance that the story of their lives compiles "like a saga of the North," a legend of the Midwest—a vital, living page in history.

To what can be attributed their remarkable characteristics? The only answer—their unwavering loyalty, trust and confidence in God. We, who knew and loved many of them for their sterling qualities and intense humanity, bow today in reverence to their memory, because this Diamond Jubilee means the successful efforts of their unremitting toil, their brave persistence and their farsighted vision of a permanent future on Nature's prairie-land.

This is not a record of a great industrial city—it is the tale of a colony of individuals facing life's problems with a real purpose, a determination to succeed, an invincible will to wrest a living from the soil, and on the broad expanse of God's acres, to conquer by persistent diligence the almost insurmountable obstacles that lay in their path. The history of O'Neill is a chronicle of men of far vision, who made up the original colony, and of their successors who followed, either through choice or in the line of duty. We who reminisce during the days of the 75th anniversary of the founding of this little city, like to think of those in particular who had so large a part in the development of the colony, and with whom we were so closely associated. At that time, the experiences of early days were oft recounted to us, and it is to be regretted that they were not recorded in black and white, instead of just in mind and memory.

As you all know, my most unforgettable character was my beloved uncle, the late Monsignor Cassidy, or as he preferred to be known, Father Cassidy. It is an inspiring remembrance that he had such an important part and such an intense interest in the early development of O'Neill and its people, particularly in their moral and religious training. I like to think of the loyalty, reverence and cooperation shown to him by the people of O'Neill whom he so sincerely loved, and who so devotedly reciprocated that love in word and action.

Father Cassidy's early history was the life of a child born in Ireland and bereft of his mother while still an infant. That dying mother's prayer was that her only boy might be a priest. That prayer was reechoed through the years until it found its culmination in Father Cassidy's ordination as a priest of God on October 8, 1878, by Bishop O'Connor of Omaha.



Rev. M. F. Cassidy . . . pastor of St. Patrick's parish for 37 years . . . as he appeared at height of his career.

He was appointed as assistant to the late Father Ryan, of Columbus, and remained there seven months. He was then transferred as pastor to Rawlins, Wyo., and at that time there were only three priests in all Wyoming. After seven years of work in a parish and its missions which extended 400 miles, (transportation by either stage coach or horseback), he was transferred to O'Neill where he labored for 47 years, up to the time of his death on December 1, 1933. His life was inured to hardship in all its early stages of the priesthood, but acceptance of the sacrifices imposed on him by his divine vocation rendered him unflinching and unwavering in the line of duty and in the path of right. My happiest remembrance of him is that he was a true priest of God, and was always happy in the accomplishment of all that pertained to God's service.

His life and work in O'Neill you all know. Through many years the lives of Father Cassidy and his assistants in his priestly labors were dedicated to missionary work, as the confines of the parish extended through Emmet on the West, Spencer and Lynch on the North and Clearwater on the East.

St. Mary's Academy and its Sisters were ever the outstanding pride and joy of his pastorate, for within the walls of St. Mary's, the Sisters devoted their lives to the spiritual, moral and material education of the children of the parish, and many others who came from afar.

The impressions grounded on youthful minds during their formative years by those responsible for their training are the guide posts to their future destiny, and it is especially gratifying to think that my uncle's advice to those entrusted to his care, was largely responsible for the outstanding success of the young men and women who went out from O'Neill seeking further education by their physical and mental efforts, and succeeding beyond all expectation. O'Neill has always been justly proud of them, and my uncle was always happy in the success of those whom he fondly called his boys and girls. His great spirit of broad tolerance made him beloved by non-Catholic as well as Catholic. His great heart of charity knew no distinction in creed, and he was ever on the alert to seek and find those in need.

His three predecessors in the spiritual growth of O'Neill—a priest from Frenchtown (now Ewing), the late Father Cullen, of York, and the late Father Smith, nurtured the seed of religious fervor already implanted in the hearts and souls of the pioneers, and Father Cassidy further promoted it in the waters of devotion and self sacrifice.

Time has passed on and so have those who suffered the hardships and struggles of the early days, but the immortal spirits of those intrepid souls still live in the hearts and minds of their descendants, and out of the wilderness of the tall, wild prairie grass has risen a town of culture, progress, enterprise and beauty.

While memory cherishes the fond associations of the past, our lives are interwoven with those who are following so closely in their footsteps, carrying on the great work begun in 1874. Father Cassidy and his co-laborers who were the stalwart men and women of other days, are lying side by side in God's acre, but they have left a heritage of courage to succeeding generations that has bolstered their will to nurture the seed of progress so valiantly implanted in the days of yesteryear. O'Neill of today is the result and we proudly call it home. May the great souls of those who have gone on before, ever guide us until we too pass through the eternal portals.

IN MEMORIAM

Dedicated to the memory of the late Rt. Rev. Msgr. M. F. Cassidy, pioneer priest of O'Neill, Nebr. Thou art resting, Priest of God 'Neath the shadow of the Crucified;

The Master's arms outstretched, encompass thee, As if to draw thee to His side.

"I am ready," "I am satisfied," Was thy answer to the Master's call, "Thou canst't be steward no longer."

Re-echoed through the voiceless hall.

In thy loved acre, tenderly they laid thee

Until the final judgment day, And thy requiem is daily chanted

In the softly whispered cadence of the breeze's lay.

Down in Mother Nature's bosom, O Beloved, Peace and rest with thee abound;

Whist sun and fleeting shadows through the cedars, Loving caress thy earthly mound.

Rest on, O Priest of God, Our prayers, a tryst with thee do keep;

God's angels hover ever near thee,

Mary, Mother, guard thy sleep.

Faithful shepherd, noble Father, Sleeping midst the children of thy care,

At the clarion call of Christ's trumpet,

Lead us, keep us, in thy care.

Day of Judgment, Day triumphant!

When the Master smiles and says "Well done,"

The tomb will no more know thee,

The tomb will no more know thee,

Thou'lt be with Christ in His Kingdom Come.

"Voice of The Frontier"

WJAG . . . 780 on your dial

Greetings

to the
OLD TIMERS AND FRIENDS

★
Your business has been appreciated and we will be happy to serve your needs in

- Good Real Estate Values
- Insurance on Farms, Dwellings and Automobiles . . . also Life, Health and Accident Insurance
- Immediate Delivery on Bonds

INSURE and BE SURE
with . . .

R. H. ("Ray") SHRINER
Real Estate and Insurance

O'Neill Phone 106

Congratulations O'Neill



AGAIN . . . this old line product, manufactured at Burlington, Wisc., and familiar to most of you, is available in O'Neill.

BOOKING ORDERS

We are now booking future orders on
41% RANGE CUBES
to be delivered in October or after!
By booking your order now, you will be protected in event of a price increase. In event of a price decrease you will benefit. You can't lose.
Inquire Now for Details!

O'Neill Grain Co.

Phone 57

O'Neill