

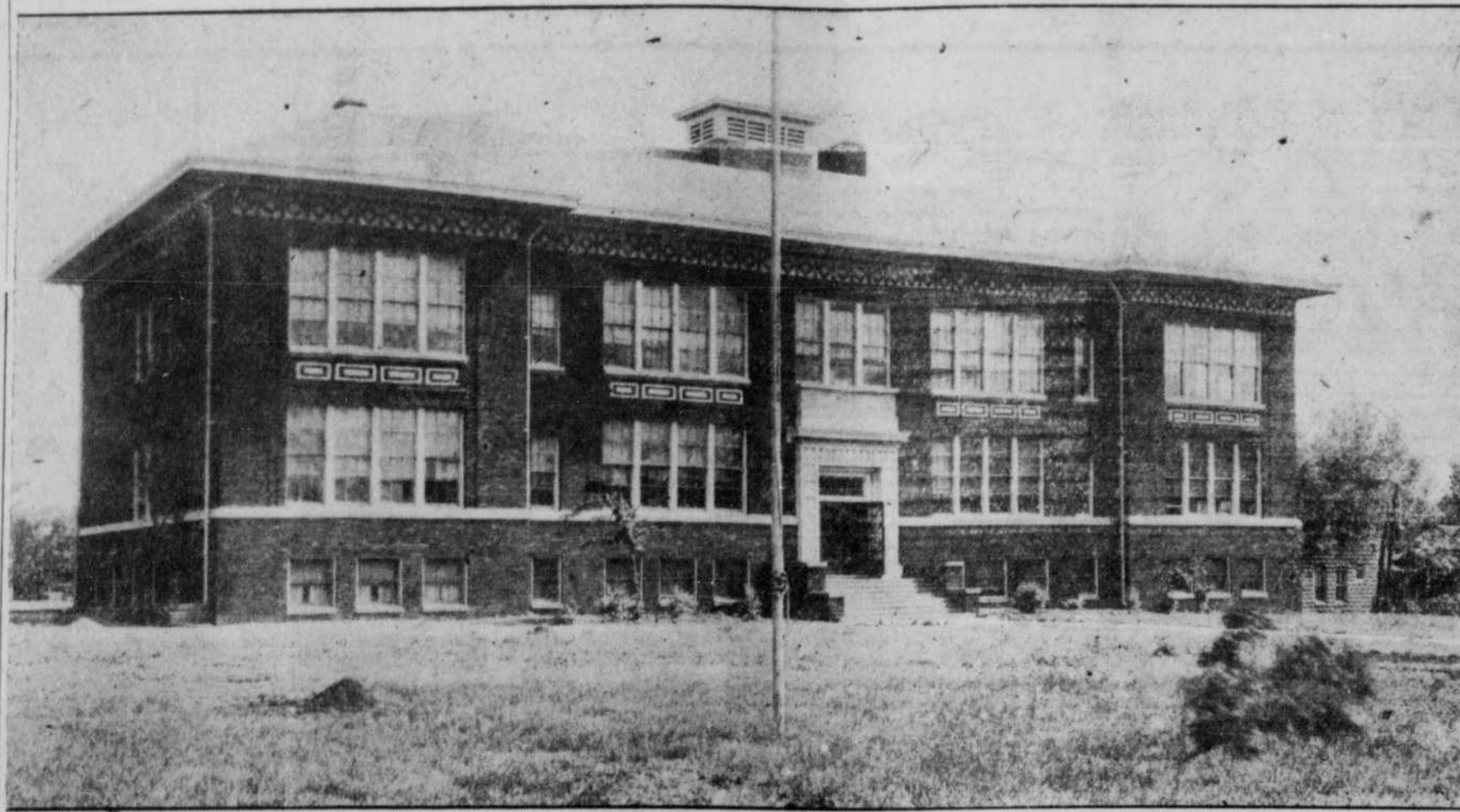
## M'EVONY COLONY AHEAD OF O'NEILL

(Continued from page 1-G.)

grasshopper invasion lasted for three years—'76 the worst. Mayberry decided a few hours of this homestead life would satisfy him for a long time, and he became discouraged, let his claim go by default as he did not care for it anymore, disposed of his modern farming equipment, gathered up some carpenter tools, went to straightening up logs, helped Mr. Grady build his log house and many others, built the first Catholic church in this community, which was not so large a structure at that time; later, went to Neligh and as we understand, was where he last resided.

The McEvony settlement for some time had been planning a village site, the procedure was slow and difficult, being so far from railroad and mail service.

Gen. John O'Neill was also planning a town site where his first colony was locating immediately. West of the McEvony settlers. As the story of this is remembered the McEvony settlers would have the first right to a town site in this community, other settlers would have to start their site several miles away. The General O'Neill promoters and the earlier settlers were in dispute and the matter was not settled for some time. The General's promoters made several visits to the McEvony home to arbitrate the matter, setting forth their reasons for having a townsite. They told about more colonies the General was organizing to locate here. Business places would be start-



Main building in O'Neill public school plant . . . auditorium not shown.

ed immediately, the town and community would take a rapid growth. These conditions going on would, undoubtedly, encourage the railroad to start West sooner than if just a small village. This being considered and knowing the task of getting a village started, the McEvony settlers decided not to interfere with the General O'Neill Townsite, and the matter was agreed on in a friendly manner.

From then on the O'Neill

Townsite took shape, more colonies arrived and the country around began to get dotted with log and sod buildings.

In the years of 1875 and '76, homesteaders were getting in shape to turn over sod and raise some grain. Then the grasshoppers began moving in. In the Summer of 1876 the hopper flight was so thick and heavy in the air it sounded like thunder showers. When they landed on the ground they would be from



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## 500 Pupils Enrolled in Public School; Student Council Functions Smoothly

By SUPT. IRA GEORGE  
O'Neill Public School

At the present time, there are approximately 500 students enrolled in the O'Neill public schools. Of these, approximately 300 are enrolled in the grades and 200 in the high school. The entire school has a complement of 22 instructors, as follows:

Ira George, superintendent, band and orientation; Lloyd W. Sexton, principal, basketball, biology and geography; Marvin Miller, football, track, American history and general science; Esther Kinnier, commercial and vocal accompanist; Viola Haynes, physics, chemistry, world history and bookkeeping; Alice French, mathematics and librarian; Neta Bellinger, home economics; Claire Tomjack, normal training and English.  
George R. Nickolas, English,

two to six inches thick, all vegetation in their path was eaten in a few minutes' time. This condition lasted several days and their several paths were two to three miles in width.

Many homesteaders got discouraged and left, especially the later settlers, but the earlier settlers, many of them Civil War veterans and coal miners who understood the pick and shovel decided they could withstand any attack by the grasshoppers.

The Irish colonists were now getting established according to their means. A priest, Father Bedard, was contacted, living at Frenchtown in Antelope county. Arranging for some one with a good driving team to go for the priest, McEvony was contacted, and he willingly made the trip. As remembered, Father Bedard was of French descent, and he enjoyed himself very much staying at the McEvony home the evening they returned, for Mrs. McEvony could speak French fluently, her mother being educated in French.

Father Bedard invited the McEvony family to come where services would be conducted the next day. As told by members of the Thomas Connolly family, services were conducted at the Thomas Kane home on a claim adjoining the Connolly claim on the West. Tom Connolly's homestead is the quarter which lies across the intersection just Northwest of the O'Neill cemetery.

Mrs. McEvony and her daughter, Julia, walked across country from their home, two and a half miles Northwest, to the Connolly claim, to see if they could be helpful in some way to the women who were preparing a dinner for a large gathering.

At the Thomas Connolly home some women were busy preparing a dinner, others were baking bread, not baking in a gas or electric range, but baking in a sod stove made from prairie sod and those magnificent tasty loaves coming from the oven were of the standard weight and fineness; the most skilled baker of today would feel very prejudiced and shameful at such comparison and would question himself whether to discard his present modern gas or electric oven and install a sod model with its more efficient and simplified controls.

Think of a teen age housewife of today, leaving a movie with two-tone fingernails and eye-brows fashionably trimmed, going home to her sod bungalow and trying a whirl at mixing dough and baking bread in a sod stove. Now and then a wild tlesnake or some other wild creature would stick its head up through holes in the floor chopped from logs, thanking the young bride in advance if she would put another warm loaf of bread nearby.

In homestead days, snakes or no snakes, the bread was bread and if such ceremonies were too annoying, a kettle of hot water would soon start the rattling visitors on the go.

speech and dramatics; Beryl L. Gerdes, vocational agriculture; Margaret Goldsmith, vocal music; Mrs. Grace Petersen, kindergarten; Mrs. Catherine Fritton, first grade; Loretta Enright, second grade; Hilda Gallagher, third grade; LuVerne Schultz, fourth grade; Mrs. Eunice Sexton, fifth grade; Mrs. Helen Donohoe, sixth grade; Mrs. Alice Fritton, seventh grade; Mrs. Winnie Mullen, eighth grade; Mrs. Florence Schultz, special room; and Mrs. James Murphy, helper.

The kindergarten class is divided, one half attending in the morning and the other in the afternoon. One of the unique divisions of our school is the special room, for exceptional children. There is also a teacher's helper, who assists in the rooms with larger enrollments. She aids in such tasks as checking papers, mimeographing materials and in playground supervision.

The O'Neill high school has one of the most varied curriculums of any high school of its size in the state of Nebraska. The following high school courses are offered: College preparatory, 50 students; teachers training, 25 students; vocational agriculture, 40 students; commercial, including two years typing, two years shorthand, and one year bookkeeping, 70 students; and a general course, for students undecided as to what line of work they will follow after graduation.

Students have the following subjects from which to select: four years of mathematics, one year of chemistry, one year of physics, four years of dramatics, four years of English, two years of home economics, one year of senior review, and one year of professional teachers' training, four years of vocational agriculture; one year of biology; one year general science; one year of geography; four years of social science.

The O'Neill schools maintain a strong music department. The vocal instructor goes to each grade room every day for 20 minutes. The instrumental music has sectional rehearsals, marching or concert band every day, and beginners' band three times per week. The O'Neill high school band has won superior for the past 11 years in the district music contest. The high school vocal department consists of girls' glee club, boys' glee club and mixed chorus. One hundred twenty-five students in the O'Neill high school avail themselves of the opportunity to study vocal music, instrumental music, or both.

The high school has two coaches, one for football and track, and one for basketball. Approximately 60 boys in high school are interested in one or more sports.

During the past school year, the O'Neill schools were asked to conduct four basketball tournaments, which were attended by more than nine thousand spectators. The school was also selected to conduct one of the district divisions of the state music contest. More than 1,500 contestants appeared at this event.

A high degree of cooperation exists between the O'Neill public school and St. Mary's Academy. This writer, the superintendent and band master of the public school, also conducts the band for St. Mary's Academy. These two organizations are combined to form a municipal band for Summer concerts and for all occasions where a municipal band is required.

Two buildings make up the plant for the O'Neill public schools, the older, in which is housed all the grade school and all high school classes except home economics, mathematics, commercial and science, was erected in 1918. The new building, which includes a combination auditorium and gymnasium, was built in 1938. The auditorium has a seating capacity of

approximately 1,100, for basketball games, and approximately 1,600 as an auditorium.

An active P-TA was organized during the present school year. One of its first projects will be planned Summer recreation for O'Neill children.

The philosophy of the O'Neill schools is to make the operation of the school as democratic as circumstances will permit. The student is encouraged to study the curriculum carefully and is given a wide choice of subjects from which to select those which he thinks will be of special benefit to him, both at the present time, such as typing, and in his future work, such as advanced algebra for the career of engineering. It is the policy of the

school to do everything possible to recognize individual differences as long as consistent to the benefit of all students.

A student council operates for the purpose of arranging for school parties, dances, initiation, and other events of this nature.

The board of education consists of: Dr. L. A. Burgess, president; Ira Moss, secretary, Anna O'Donnell, George Shoemaker, F. N. Cronin and Dr. H. L. Bennett.

The Kids (King & Cronin) of The Frontier have been immortalized in song by Kautzman of the Independent, who imagines that the mantle of Mother Goose has fallen upon him.—Graphic, Aug. 3, 1893.

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# O'Neill

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