

O'Neill Today

First, the sod building that took within its sheltering walls the dozen venturesome men who built it. Then a trading post for the settlers and outlying booted and belted cattlemen. Another step in the fast moving drama on the great prairie stage was the coming cultural benefits of the schools and newspapers, the subduing influence of courts and churches and, transcending it all came the civilizing force of the transition from dreary bachelor abodes to home and family life.

The onward sweep of the year — since that day in 1874 when a human foot first crushed a prairie rose on the unspoiled sod, where today stretches the gray concrete of wide, paved streets of the O'Neill of this generation—have marked periods of growth, un-sung bitterness of political turmoil, and hard-bitten seasons of threatened famine.

Out of the tears and laughter of the years, the planning and toil of men and women inspired with faith in a vision, here lies a city four square, more than a mile each way, cottages and beautiful homes in a setting of lush verdure, shade and ornamental trees; more than a mile of stores and business places lining both sides of the streets where you can buy anything from a needle to the latest model car, a home produced egg or the wonders from the tropic, a nail or the latest thing in home appliances, a fence post or a house, a cowboy saddle or a marvel in harvesting machines.

Here are markets for live-stock, poultry, dairy products, grain, hay or the fruits of the garden patch. Six churches, schools and three or four thousand people — from the high-g geared go-getter to the placid street loafer, from the highly technical trained professional to the strong man with the shovel, from the efficient housemaid to the retired lady of leisure, from the hard-bitten gent and sophisticated amazon to the sweet little golden haired youngsters.

The valuation for tax assessment made on property in O'Neill in 1948 was \$1,709,094, are a third less than sale values, and in many instances are even much less.

Assets of the two O'Neill banks are listed at \$6,166,000 and cash on deposit \$5,775,000.

Ten years ago the Tri-State poultry packing plant dressed 1,000 chickens a day and had 60 employees. At present, during the poultry packing season, from three to four thousand chickens a day are prepared for packing and shipping. The annual output of poultry for shipment amounts to 40 cars of chickens and 30 cars of turkeys, 30,000 pounds of each to the carload. There is being raised this year on the company's farm Southwest of town 30,000 turkeys. In addition to these, large numbers of turkeys and all of the chickens processed in the O'Neill plant are bought from the poultry producers of this territory. The

poultry raisers of this territory also supply this concern with 100 carloads of eggs, annually, 600 cases of eggs to the carload, 30 dozen to the case, eggs to the carload. Six hundred carloads make 21,600,000 making 18,000 dozen or 210,000 eggs from the O'Neill territory shipped out by one concern, alone.

The Harding Creamery Co. organization this year completed a large building at the North Western railroad tracks and operates an extensive butter factory, maintaining three cream stations up town which buy annually about 100,000 pounds of butterfat from the owners of dairy cows in this community. The factory converts this into pound packages of butter and last year shipped 1,500,000 pounds of butter from the O'Neill plant.

The Corkle industries of O'Neill probably produced more chicks and baby turks than any like institution in the state. The annual hatch of baby chicks is 300,000 and turkey poulters approximately 30,000. James M. Corkle, the owner, brings 13,000 turkeys to maturity annually on his two ranches. The turkeys attain an average weight of 20 pounds each. Time also is found at this busy institution on the East edge of the city, housed in commodious buildings to ship out 200 cases of graded eggs per week.

R. G. Shelhamer, of the Shelhamer Produce, reports that his firm, which includes a chain of outlaying receiving stations, last year shipped the equivalent of 100 carloads of eggs, bought upwards of a half-million pounds of butterfat, and upwards of a million pounds of poultry. The Shelhamer firm is equipped to sharp-freeze eggs that are purchased on the grade and the freezer can handle several carloads of eggs at one time.

In addition, virtually all grocery and food stores in the city buy eggs from their rural patrons and most of these eggs are rushed to the terminal markets by truck.

J. B. Ryan annually ships 400 car loads of hay and hauls to nearby markets about the same tonnage by truck. Hundreds of truck loads of baled hay produced in the O'Neill territory are marketed by indilvidual ranchers.

The Frederickson Livestock Commission Co., a new enterprise in O'Neill, in 1948 sold 20,747 head of cattle, 18,577 hogs, 319 sheep and 199 horses.

The O'Neill Grain Co. elevators last year shipped 112 cars of grain to the market. James W. Rooney, secretary of the O'Neill Chamber of Commerce, has a list of 194 names of business and professional firms carrying on business in the city.

The first Wall Street financial article printed in a newspaper appeared in 1835 in the New York Herald.

The recipe for the liquor benedictine was discovered by a learned monk in 1510.



EARLY OFFICIALS . . . These individuals (above) constituted the Holt county courthouse staff in 1886. In the photo (left-to-right) are; bottom row—Gene Cress, woman unidentified,

John A. Golden, M. D. Long, N. Martin, Edgar Adams, James Sullivan; top row—Sam Bohaw, John Harmon, John Kelly and Will Haley.



SOD HOUSE AND HAYBURNER . . . The hayburner and sod house were institutions of the prairie. In photo (above) are R. D. Parsons and Allen T. White (with team).

The Little Old Sod Shanty

The following is the poem written by the homesteader, Joseph Raymond, and published in the Inman Index. It now appears without the author's name in a volume of poems collected by Carl Sandburg, the Songbag:

I am looking rather seedy now while holding down my claim,
And my victuals are not always of the best;
And the mice, play shyly round me as I nestle down to rest,
In my little old sod shanty in the West.
Yet I rather like the novelty of living in this way,
Though my bill of fare is always rather tame,
But I'm happy as a clam on the land of Uncle Sam,
In my little old sod shanty on my claim.

Refrain:

The hinges are of leather and the winows have no glass,
While the board roof lets the howling blizzards in,
And I hear the hungry kiyote as he slinks up through the grass,
Round my little old sod shanty on my claim.

O, when I left my eastern home, a bachelor so gay,
To try and win my way to wealth and fame,
I little thought that I'd come down to burning twisted hay
In the little old sod shanty on my claim.
My clothes are plastered o'er with dough, I'm looking like a fright,
And everything is scattered round the room,
But I wouldn't give the freedom that I have out in the West
For the table of the Eastern man's old home.

Refrain:

Still I wish that some kind-hearted girl would pity on me take,
And relieve me from the mess that I am in;
The angel, how I'd bless her if this her home she'd make
In the little old sod shanty on my claim.
And we would make our fortunes on the prairies of the West,
Just as happy as two lovers we'd remain;
We'd forget the trials and troubles we endured at the first,
In the little old sod shanty on our claim.

And if kindly fate should bless us with now and then an heir,
To cheer our hearts with honest pride of fame,
O, then we'd be contented for the toil that we had spent
In the little old sod shanty on our claim.
When time enough had lapsed and all of those little brats
To noble men-and-womanhood had grown,
It wouldn't seem half so lonely as around us we should look,
And see the little old sod shanty on our claim.

A Tribute From Mayor Coyne

As we are about to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the City of O'Neill, I am happy to know that it is my privilege to pay a tribute to those honest, sturdy men and women — our wonderful pioneers.

They left their established homes in other states, and came West to seek greater opportunities and happiness in a new and unbroken land.

By their faith in God, love for their neighbors, their ambition and industry, they endured the greatest hardships and turned the new land into prosperous farms, and built the little city we all love.

They inspired their children with courage and initiative and also saw to it that their sons and daughters were better equipped to face the trials of life. From our community many have gone forth into the world to seek greater achievements and I believe I voice the sentiment of this whole community when I say they are among the foremost and outstanding men and women of the Nation.

As mayor of this city, I make this tribute in behalf of the citizens of O'Neill.

H. E. COYNE.

Between 1601 and 1609, 2,000 Frenchmen of noble birth fell in duels, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica.

A new spectrometer tells simultaneously how much of 16 different elements are in a metallic sample.

Corn planting is well advanced, acreage normal. We are not informed of any replanting at this date, but later will determine the replanting, if any. Rains are needed and some farmers are inclined to think that some fields of corn will not germinate until it rains.

The five days old son of Mr. and Mrs. John E. McKee died at their home eight miles Northwest of this city this morning.

10 YEARS AGO
June 8, 1939

Miss Mary Ann Meer, of Valentine, fell from a horse last Saturday afternoon and sustained a fractured skull. Latest reports received by O'Neill relatives are to the effect that she is getting along nicely, which will be gratifying news to her many friends in this city. When the horse returned home without her a search found her lying at the side of the road about a block from her home. She was unconscious for several hours and her aunt, Miss Mame Meer, of this city, drove to Valentine early Monday morning to assist in her care.

Phillip Yarnell, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Yarnell of this city, and a junior in the O'Neill high school, has been chosen as the representative of the American Legion post of this city to be their delegate to the annual Boys State, and will leave for there Friday.

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