

Military 'Shindigs' Brightened Social Life on the Frontier

The presence of military personnel on the Nebraska frontier gave the settlers a sense of security and the military "shindigs" brightened their social life, according to James C. Olson, superintendent of the Nebraska State Historical Society, in his "Out of Old Nebraska" press release last week.

Of the military forts in the state, he said that one of the best preserved is old Ft. Hartsuff, on the North Loup river between Ord and Burwell. Nebraska's other forts have disappeared, but Hartsuff stands today about as it did in the late 70's, when it served as a barrier against the Indians for the settlers of the North Loup valley.

The post was established in 1874, after the settlers of the valley, who had been there for

about three years, petitioned the government for military protection against the Indians.

The early settlers had both the Pawnee and the Sioux to contend with. The Loup valley was an ancestral home of the Pawnee, and though they were established on an agency in Nance county, the young men of the tribe roamed the valley at will, and often plundered the homes and fields of the whites. The Sioux, who came into the valley from the north to harass the Pawnees and to hunt and trap, were not content with mere plunder, but often burned the settlers out. Twice—at Sioux creek in October, 1873, and at Pebble creek in January, 1874—there were armed encounters between the whites and the Sioux.

By the time the fort was built, the Indians had been fairly well pacified, and the soldiers stationed there were called upon for little fighting.

Then, too, the construction of the fort was the valley's salvation economically. The summers of '73 and '74 had been hard ones. What hadn't been dried out, flooded out, or burned out by prairie fires had been devoured by huge swarms of grasshoppers, with the result that there was no food and no money to buy food. Had they not been given jobs at good wages to help build the fort, many of the settlers undoubtedly would have given up the struggle and deserted the North

Loup valley. By 1881, all possible need for the post had passed, and the War Department ordered it abandoned. The land went to private ownership, and the buildings have had many years of service as headquarters for a ranch. Some of their former glory passed away. The commanding officer's residence, for example, was removed for use as a silo. Nevertheless, most of the buildings, with their sturdy grout walls and red cedar frames, have withstood the ravages of time fairly well, and ei-

ther are in a fairly good state of preservation, or could be made that way in short order. The residents of the North Loup valley are greatly interested in having the fort turned into an historical park for the use of the public, and a short time ago the Fort Hartsuff Park Association was organized for that purpose. They point out that not only do they have buildings of historic significance, but also a plot of ground which easily could be developed into an excellent recreational area.

PRAIRIELAND ... TALK

By ROMAIN SAUNDERS
Route 5
ATKINSON

The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.—Matt. 8:20.

A slip of a girl clung to the arm of her companion, a blond young fellow who bore himself with still a bit of orderly step of the military consciousness. Snow crunched under their feet as they moved along the windswept street with eyes fastened on the endless rows of houses on either side, hoping that there would be somewhere in a window an almost forgotten sign, "Rooms for Rent."

Nowhere to lay their heads, they were just a fragment of the new thing in America, a procession of house hunters. "O look," the girl exclaims as they come to a house with the curtains removed from windows. "I believe these people are moving; let's see." And with hopes revived knock at the door. But the curtains were down only to be laundered.

Still no place to lay weary heads they plod on. America, that has whipped most of the world and is now feeding it, must surely find a way to whip the house famine.

A strange group winds down the narrow Calilean road that runs south to the rugged hill where open the gates to the Holy City and some distance beyond. The figure of a woman, muffled in the garb of her Hebrew ancestors, sits upon a donkey and a man of middle age, staff in hand, leads the way. Caesar Augustus, from his gilded throne over in proud

Rome, had ordered that "all the world should be taxed." The strange group we have seen are on their way to Bethlehem to comply with this decree. The road leads on past the plain of Esdraclon, through Samaria, where centuries before Jeroboam had diverted the caravans of worshippers on their way to the temple at Jerusalem by setting up a pagan shrine to the worship of Baal, on thorough Sychem, and doubtless paused at Jacob's well for a rest and refreshing drink from its cool depths. Bethel, Jerusalem and ethany are left to the north. At last this strange group are at Bethlehem. The woman, a direct descendant of Hebrew royalty, had been highly favored of Jehovah. Her time is fulfilled.

"And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was NO ROOM IN THE INN."

To heart burdened house



NOTICE:

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for CHRISTMAS

YES!

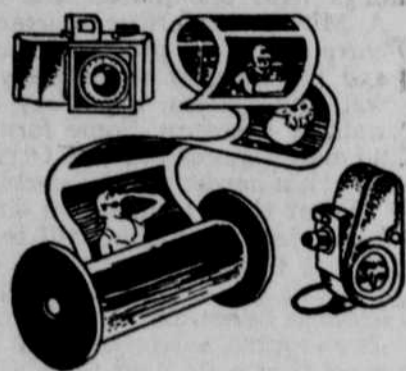
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hunters, to the smug and well fed, to all who have an ear to hear there sounds above the decrees of Caesar, above the refusal of some heartless landlords, the angelic message: "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

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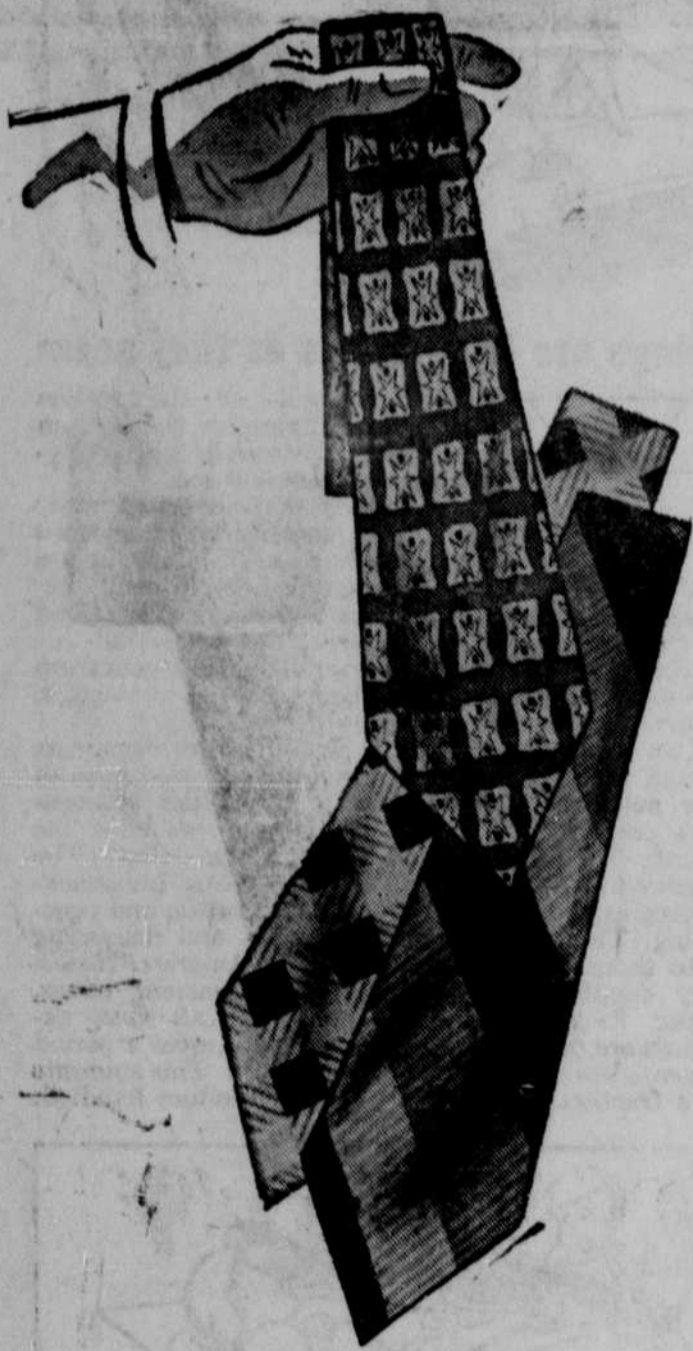
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