

THE FRONTIER

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Lt. Com. Meals Writes of Boyhood Days

(Continued from page 1.)

kids. There were big hollow depressions in the prairie made, so my father told me, by bison wallowing about, and there were hundreds of gophers and quite a few jack rabbits. We kids used to catch these gophers for pets. I suppose you remember the procedure. You first located your gopher hole and the various connecting outlets. These outlets you stuffed up with paper or earth and then you set the younger kids to carrying water which you poured down the gopher hole. When the highly agitated gopher came out you grabbed him, if you were a brave lad with a reputation to sustain and there were girls present to be impressed with your bravery, with your bare hands and chucked him into a small box where he formed the nucleus of the menagerie of one of our innumerable circuses. Of course, if you were an out and out sissie you clapped a bucket or box over the gopher as he came out instead of grabbing him with your bare hands but this method was frowned upon in best gopher catching circles and regular "he-men" (aged 5 to 12) scorned such effeminacy. Well, Eddie, that prairie is built up now with houses surrounded by trees that look as if they had stood there a lifetime. It was hard for me to believe that it was here the O'Neill volunteers camped before leaving for Cuba in the Spanish-American war or that I had often seen in the early 90's covered wagons of settlers bound westward camped there for the night. And the wild flowers that grew there, and the soft cool feel of the grass the first barefoot day of spring. Those days will never come again except in memories.

"Sometimes, however, the prairie was tragic, especially when a Nebraska blizzard changed the whole world into a mass of swirling whiteness and cold. I remember along back in the 90's an old farmer who was caught in a blizzard on his way home north of O'Neill. He was the first dead man I had ever seen. He had got caught on foot and when the snow had blotted out all landmarks he had apparently reached the wire fence by the side of the road and had felt his way along trying to reach the gate or get back his sense of direction. They found him, when the blizzard cleared away, in a fence corner, in a sitting position, frozen solid. Bernie McCafferty's father was an undertaker and was given the body to prepare for burial. They had him (the corpse) in a tub of water for several hours thawing him out and had taken him out of the water and placed him on a table so as to straighten out his limbs. It was at this point that Bernie assembled a bunch of us kids and took us in to see the dead man, our first. The dead man's knees had thawed out but not so his hips and so when Bernie pressed down on the bended knees the rigid hips caused the dead man to sit up on the table with the most uncanny suddenness. I broke all world's records, past, present or future, in getting out of there and for weeks afterwards I caused my mother no small amount of astonishment by getting my chores done well in advance of darkness.

I was very sorry, too, that I didn't get to see "Sliver" Triggs, although I suppose he has long ago forgotten me and wouldn't know me from Adam's off ox even if I told him who I was. "Sliver" converted me to the republican party although my folks were staunch democrats. It came about in this way. William Jennings Bryan came to O'Neill in the late 90's. Whether he was then the accepted nominee for President or not I do not now recall. But at any rate he came to town and stopped with M. F. Harrington and

made a speech from an outdoor stand erected on an open lot across from the old pumping station. An enormous crowd gathered, they had out the band (what was the name of the blacksmith who played tuba? Emil something or other) and a barbecue after the talking was over. I remember it very distinctly. Gerald and I were there together. We were in somewhat of a quandry as to whether to remain close to the stand where we could hear Bryan and the band or get off on the outskirts of the crowd and close to the barbecue pits where need for tasting might arise and the chances of free eats were better. The band we could hear almost any practice night. Gerald had heard Bryan as his father's guest and didn't think he was so hot. So we decided to "take the cash and let the credit go" or, in other words, stick close to the barbecue pits and the free eats. From time to time there would come across the crowd to us the sonorous voice of William Jennings Bryan, full of references to "free silver" and "16 to 1". The constant repetition of the "free silver" finally impinged upon two brains previously filled with thoughts of barbecue. "What is the free silver he is talking about?" we said to "Sliver" Triggs. Now "Sliver" was a man we respected because he was the fellow who painted the cross on the old Catholic church and scaled the old standpipe and climbed to other lofty heights and, in our opinion there was no place in the world too high for "Sliver" to climb and paint, too, for that matter. So we trusted him. "Why, said he, haven't you kids heard? Right after the speaking Bryan is going to give away free silver, sixteen to one. So when you see the line form you had better be well up in front, for at the rate of sixteen to one I don't think it will last long."

Soon the speaking ended and the farmers and townspeople formed to shake the Great Commoner's hand, with Gerald and I well up in front. Soon we reached the platform where we were given a listless, floorwalker sort of handclasp by the great man. But no free silver. I assure you, absolutely no free silver. Same result with Gerald. So, back to Sliver Triggs, who professed inability to understand the situation. "Something is wrong, said he; get back in line again;" So once more we inched our way in line past Bryan, received another handclasp empty of "free silver" and on our way, our faith somewhat dampened. On the fourth time around Charley Davis, the then town marshal, spotted us, and inquired as to our enthusiasm in wanting to shake hands with Bryan and why one hearty handclasp did not suffice, and why we came back for more and additional handclaps. We explained about the "free silver." "Oh, said he, I have yours here, and he gave us each a dime." He has been dead a good many years but to me Charley Davis will always live. As to Bryan—well, right then and there I incurred a hearty dislike for the democratic party and I have always associated "free silver" with an empty handclasp and a loss of faith. I doubt if "Sliver" would remember this, it was all so long ago and we were so young, just kids to him. Still, it is one of my memories.

Well, Eddie, I will bring this letter to a close. It is, I suppose, somewhat of an imposition to infringe on your time with a long winded letter like this about things long past. I enjoyed meeting you fellows again and I am looking forward to that time when I can return to O'Neill and with you go back over the old times together. Gerald Harrington and I regularly hold a two-man reunion every week or so when I am in Oakland. Billy McNichols is also in California but I have not been able to do more than talk to him over the phone. Somewhere among my pictures I have a snapshot of you in black-face makeup for some Academy entertainment or other. I remember you used to be quite a coon shouter, one of your songs being "Just because she made those goo-goo eyes" which you used to render (render is right) on special occasions. It is strange how one remembers things like that. My daughter, having viewed our group picture, has made the suggestion that we old school mates ought to keep in touch with each other and I think it is a worth while suggestion. A postal card, or a letter, now and then would do the trick. I have often thought about it in the years gone by but in the business of making a living and bringing up a family one lets ride many things one would like to do. I would like to hear from you, Eddie, and also the others. Should any of you come out our way my family and I would be deeply disappointed if you failed to look us up."

Sincerely your old schoolmate, With kindest regards I am, Frank M. Meals.

Over the County

EMMET ITEMS

Mr. and Mrs. John Horn and sons, of Oregon, arrived here last week to spend a few weeks with friends and relatives.

Miss Margaret Butler, who has been visiting at the John Conard home the past week, returned to her home in Inman Sunday.

Rev. and Mrs. A. J. May, of O'Neill were dinner guests of Rev. and Mrs. D. S. Jay Monday.

Mrs. John Lowrey and Grandma Cole entertained at a tea for the benefit of the M. E. church.

Wallis Tweedale, who has been in the Lincoln hospital for some time, returned Saturday and is much improved.

Mrs. J. P. Mullen, who has been quite ill for some time, has improved some.

PLEASANT DALE

Sister M. Alba returned to her home in Chicago Monday. She had been visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Brau, of Stuart. Sister M. Alba is a sister of Mrs. Henry Schaaf, of Atkinson.

Mr. and Mrs. Horace Crawford and family, of Spencer, were visiting friends in O'Neill Saturday. The Crawford family lived in this vicinity last year.

Miss Aladene Kee spent last week visiting her sister, Mrs. Ralph Leidy in O'Neill.

Fred Beckwith enjoyed a visit from his son, Dean and two grandchildren, Fred and Eva Garvin, all of Scottsbluff.

A group of relatives congregated at the Joe Winkler home Sunday in honor of Sister M. Alba, of Chicago. The guests enjoyed a delicious picnic dinner and an afternoon of visiting. Those present were: Johanna Durmes, of Atkinson; Mr. and Mrs. George Pongratz and family; Mr. and Mrs. Joe Babl and family; Mr. and Mrs. Dan Troshynski and daughter, Margorie; Mrs. Henry Schaaf and family and Lawrence Brau.

Mr. and Mrs. Leon Beckwith and daughter accompanied Sewell Johnson to Norfolk Friday. They returned home that evening.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Weber and daughter, Shirley, of Long Pine, called at Joe Winkler's Thursday.

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Wayman are the parents of a baby boy, born August 3.

Mr. and Mrs. John Conard were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Leon Beckwith Sunday afternoon.

INMAN NEWS

Patty and Billy Watson left for Lincoln Saturday for a weeks' visit with relatives.

Mart Hawkins went to Sioux City Monday on business, returning Tuesday.

Mr. and Mrs. L. R. Tompkins are spending a few days in Norfolk visiting relatives.

Miss Darlene Thompson, who is employed in the O'Neill hospital, was home Sunday.

Mrs. I. L. Watson, Mrs. G. E. Moor and daughter, Miss Lois, visited at Wausa at the home of Rev. Mertie E. Clute and at Pierce at the home of Rev. and Mrs. R. Poe, the latter part of the week.

Superintendent and Mrs. Geo. Cornish, who have been in Lincoln the past two months, returned home this week.

Mrs. Mary Lawshe and son, Bobby, of Fremont, and daughter, Mrs. Leslie Summers, of Middlebranch were here Friday visiting among relatives and friends.

Mrs. J. J. Hancock and sons, Jack and Billy, Miss Kathryn Schmidt, Miss Blanche Duhotchek and Miss Ilene Duhotchek were here from Newman Grove Sunday evening visiting at the Mary M. Hancock home. They were enroute to Casper, Wyoming.

Miss Merle Leidy is at Wakefield operating a beauty parlor during the absence of the regular operator.

Mrs. Mary Hancock and daughter, Miss Gladys and Wayne Hancock spent Sunday at the W. E. Jones home near Chambers.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin Anderson and daughter, Joyce, of Torrington, Wyoming, Mrs. John Nelson and children and George Hurlless, of Ainsworth, were here Friday visiting at the home of their aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Out-house.

The members of the L. D. S. church held a fellowship dinner at O'Donnell's lake Sunday following the regular services at the church. A baptismal service was held in the afternoon.

Miss Ruth Jeanette Watson visited friends in Norfolk last week. Mrs. A. N. Butler visited relatives in Norfolk and Neligh last week.

MEEK AND VICINITY

Mr. and Mrs. Linn and son and Miss Linn, brother, sister and sister-in-law of Charles Linn, of Flint, Mich., spent several days the past week at the Charles Linn home. They say the farmers there are in much the same condition as they are here and in all the states they came through on their way here. But the factories are running on full time.

Mrs. George Weldon and son, Junior, of Alliance, were overnight guests at the Frank Griffith home on Thursday.

Threshing is over in this community and every one is busy putting up what hay there is.

The Ladies Aid enjoyed a picnic at the Roy Karr home Thursday afternoon. Ice cream and cake were served under the trees. Quite a few attended.

Frank Nelson received a message that his father had passed away at his home in Omaha last Friday. Mr. Nelson and daughter, Margaretha left on the train that night to attend the funeral.

Mrs. Ed Hubby and son, Dwight, and Miss Dickey, of Butte, called at the Eric Borg home on Wednesday.

Some from here attended the funeral of Mrs. Richter on Saturday. Mrs. Richter was a friendly and jolly woman and will be greatly missed by her friends and loved ones.

Mrs. Jennie Benton and son, Dick, and Mrs. Maude Finney and daughter, Lucile, came up from Fremont Saturday for a visit at the homes of Mrs. E. H. Rouse and the Orville Harrison home. Mrs. Rouse and Mrs. Harrison are sisters of Mrs. Benton.

Those who helped Opal Jean Griffith celebrate her twelfth birthday on Monday afternoon were: Lavene and Helen Borg, Betty Jayne Puckett, Mrs. C. E. Griffith, Mrs. Fay Puckett and Roxie were also at the Frank Griffith home. Ice cream and cake were served by Mrs. F. H. Griffith.

Threshing is over in this locality. The last job was at the Will Kaczor place on Monday and from there the Ross' moved their machine home.

Those who motored to Atkinson on Sunday and enjoyed a picnic dinner at the Mariedy Hubby home were, the Eric Borg family; A. L. Borg family; Virgil Hubby and Howard Rouse families and Mrs. Charles Griffith and daughter. They attended services at the Mission in the afternoon. Little Bonnie Hubby came back with them for a visit with her Grandma Borg.

Mrs. Roy Spindler, who has been visiting at Omaha and at Glenwood, Iowa, returned home Sunday evening.

Mrs. S. D. Jones, of San Antonio, Texas, and Darrell Griffith, of North Platte, arrived at the Griffith home on Tuesday evening for a visit. Mrs. Jones was formerly Miss Jennie Griffith and Darrel is the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Griffith.

SOUTHWEST BREEZES

By Romaine Saunders

D. L. Withers and Lloyd James took a load of cattle to Omaha Sunday.

Mike McCarthy and daughter, Margaret, are visiting members of the family at Moscow, Idaho.

The southwest will not have its customary loads of potatoes and tons of cabbage for the household menu this season, but there is the making of a lot of beefsteaks now browsing the ranges.

Representative Zioncheck was not the only mentally queer one in the last congress but the spectacular and tragic method he adopted of ending his career will doubtless be an isolated case of vacating a seat in congress.

Mr. and Mrs. M. S. Young and Mr. and Mrs. Elwood Walker, all of Dresden, Kansas, have been guests of the E. E. Young family. Mr. and Mrs. Walker were on their way to Wisconsin. Crops in the vicinity of Dresden were destroyed by grasshoppers.

An expert with figures has it that the federal, state, local, business and private indebtedness of the country amounts to a mortgage of \$280 per acre for the entire nation. Everyone in the southwest will sell at that figure.

Nebraska's junior senator is not the exponent and supporter of New Deal policies he was previous to the last election. His candidacy



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