

# STATE HIST. SOC. Property Values Down

| 1954                             | 1953    | 1954          | 1953    |               |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------------|---------|---------------|
| Cattle                           | 159,326 | \$ 12,815,510 | 151,710 | \$ 17,074,030 |
| Horses & Mules                   | 3,365   | 87,805        | 4,455   | 120,390       |
| Sheep                            | 2,841   | 28,550        | 2,662   | 37,435        |
| Hogs                             | 10,618  | 364,701       | 6,704   | 221,170       |
| Poultry (Doz.)                   | 9,504   | 95,292        | 8,118   | 88,020        |
| Corn (Bu.)                       | 630,742 | 819,857       | 247,191 | 321,270       |
| Wheat (Bu.)                      | 25,461  | 50,922        | 13,952  | 27,900        |
| Other Grains (Bu.)               | 109,439 | 81,469        | 40,253  | 29,535        |
| Tractors                         | 3,038   | 1,137,749     | 2,999   | 1,539,170     |
| Farm Mach.                       |         | 1,340,770     |         | 1,395,845     |
| Cars and Trucks                  |         | 4,972,392     |         | 4,455,400     |
| Household Goods                  |         | 883,232       |         | 804,385       |
| Business Property                |         | 2,641,325     |         | 2,964,275     |
| Farm Lands                       |         | 28,745,820    |         | 41,065,460    |
| Town Property                    |         | 9,181,800     |         | 11,477,250    |
| Intang. Class "A"                |         | 3,408,352     |         | 1,978,160     |
| Intang. Class "B"                |         | 590,054       |         | 1,376,601     |
| Bank Loan, Trust & Invest. Co's. |         | 972,646.99    |         | 943,576.00    |

Assessing expense amounted to \$2.26 for each schedule.

Total Assessed — 1954\* \$30,676,334  
Total Assessed — 1953 \$42,040,620

\*Does not include valuations of railroad property nor the franchise valuations of power, telephone, telegraph and gas companies.

Foregoing figures show total assessed valuation approximately 12-million-dollars under 1953. However, when rail and franchise valuations have been entered the gap will narrow to approximately 10-million-dollars. The estimated 10-million-dollar decline is accounted for in the 30 percent reduced valuation on Holt county farm land and 20 percent lower valuations on city and town property, determined by the county board, and approximately 3-million-dollars reduction on personal property valuations. The 3-million-dollar drop is attributed to lower cattle values.

## .23 of Inch Rain Falls; Need More

### Gordon, Rosebud Get Crop-Makers While Chambers Thrifts

The prolonged dry spell came to an end early Tuesday in the O'Neill region. A leisurely shower amounting to .23 of an inch in precipitation fell during the forenoon.

But the amount of moisture elsewhere varied. Gordon received 3.60 inches in a 30-minute period, sending the creek at the edge of town out of its banks. Chambers, on the other hand, could boast only a sprinkle.

## Nebraska Methodist Bishop Speaks Here

The district meeting of the northeast Nebraska conference of the Methodist church for both pastors and laymen was held in O'Neill Wednesday morning. "Emphasis on Stewardship of Property" was the topic of discussion.

Featured speakers were Bishop H. Bascom Watts of Lincoln; Mrs. Charles W. Mead of Omaha, jurisdictional officer of the Nebraska conference; and Rev. Richard E. Carlson of Scottsbluff. They appeared on the morning program.

## Two Men Leave for Army Induction

Two Holt county selective service registrants, Kenneth L. Moore of Inman departed late Tuesday for army induction at Omaha.

Hartigan is a volunteer. Holt county has been ordered to furnish two men in August for the draft.

## Nebraska's Seige of 100-plus temperatures, and lack of rain, have put the state's corn crop in jeopardy, government crop observers indicated Tuesday.

A good crop is still possible but rain and cooler weather are needed soon to stem the "considerable deterioration" reported last week.

Over the state in general, the number of "white caps" has increased, and heavy curling and some firing has developed in local areas, according to the state-federal division of agricultural statistics.

Growth has been stunted in drier localities and corn is becoming bushy, the weekly report noted.

## Dobson Equipment Going to Norfolk

Dobson Construction company paving equipment will be moved this weekend from O'Neill to Norfolk, the firm having completed 25 blocks of residential paving here this summer.

Some of the labor personnel, including O'Neill workmen, will make the move. Initially, storm sewer will be built in Norfolk, followed by paving.

## None of the 11 proposed improvement districts have been obstructed officially with 51 percent of the abutting real estate owners filing protests.

This was in error. A petition opposing paving in one of the proposed districts carried 60 percent of the eligible signatures, sufficient to prevent the council from creating a district. (See "Letter to Editor" on page 3.)

## Pongratz Brothers, Apart 60 Years, Are Reunited Here

Sebastian Pongratz, 62, brother of George Pongratz of Emmet, arrived last week to visit the Pongratz families in Holt county. It was the first reunion of Sebastian and George in 60 years.

Sebastian was 2-years-old when George, 11, came to the United States alone from Germany. Sebastian stayed behind and has resided continuously in Germany.

Two Pongratz sisters are in the U.S., Sister M. Gerona, who is at the St. Francis hospital in Grand Island, and Mrs. Michael Hausland of Plattsmouth, who has been in this county about 15 years.

## Fair Judges Have Been Selected

CHAMBERS—Judges for the 1954 Holt county fair were announced this week by the officers of the Holt County Agricultural society, sponsors of the annual fair.

Livestock — Jess Kavonda of Ord; 4-H club work—Mrs. D. E. Powell of Stromsburg; farm produce—H. A. Milken of Albion; needlework and pantry stores—Mrs. Eunice Mann of Burwell.

## Curley's Products Go Afar

By WILL H. SPINDLER

The residents of O'Neill—that progressive little city of north-central Nebraska sometimes laconically called "young Ireland"—are very proud of their "Curley" Washcheck and his "bedside lapidary" which he operates in a room of his home.

Until 14 years ago, Curley, who was born Carlyle Washcheck but won the nickname of Curley in his youth, was a large, strong, powerful young man with the stature and physique of a Johnny Weissmuller. Among other occupations, he worked as a truck driver for a number of years and his strength and endurance were remarkable.

Then in 1940 grave misfortune struck in the form of a rare bone disorder, which gradually began tearing him down and reducing him to greater and greater degrees of helplessness. Over this period of years he has contacted many doctors but, while they have eased his discomfort somewhat, they have been unable to cure him.

The strange malady seemed to attack his spine chiefly.

## Froelich Is Champ Long-Distance Commuter

(Editor's note: The following feature story concerning O'Neill's William J. Froelich appeared in the Sunday, July 18, issue of the Omaha World-Herald. A picture of Mr. Froelich with brief case in hand appeared in color on the magazine cover. The story, written by World-Herald Staff Writer Harold Cowan, is reproduced below by special permission.)

By HAROLD COWAN

The boys who once haunted the back room of the Saratoga billiards at Lincoln could hardly be expected to remember one of the university kids who racked balls back in 1919.

Even if they did, they would find it hard to associate yesterday's boy with today's man.

William J. ("Bill") Froelich is head of a Chicago, Ill., law firm specializing in corporation and income tax work. He holds directorships in many corporations. He won fame as a prosecutor in the government case which brought down gangster Al Capone. He owns a seven-thousand-acre Nebraska ranch and has other Nebraska holdings.

As a weekly traveler between home and job, Mr. Froelich (pronounced Fraylick) is a champion long-distance commuter.

It is approximately 650 miles from home to office. He drives 125 miles to Sioux City, travels the remaining distance on the Milwaukee railroad. He is a member of the line's board of directors, and of its executive committee and finance committee.

It was after he had the pool hall job that Bill Froelich rode a hog train east to enter law school.

Mr. Froelich lived in the Nebraska sandhills as a boy and chooses to live in O'Neill because he wants his family here. His wife is the former Irma Stout, daughter of a former O'Neill mayor and druggist. They have three sons and two daughters, two of them grown.

The commuting business has been going on since the mid '30's, when the Froelichs decided

against rearing their children in Chicago.

"We wanted them to grow up in a small town environment," Mr. Froelich said. "Besides, we have our relatives and friends here."

The Froelichs often have as guests friends and business associates or contacts.

One visitor couldn't understand why the attorney chose to live in a small Nebraska town so far from his job. After visiting the home at O'Neill he couldn't "understand why he ever leaves it."

The commuting schedule fits

into his busy schedule. In Chicago he lives weekdays at the Blackstone hotel.

Business permitting—and he sees to it that it usually does—he leaves Chicago late Friday, sleeps overnight on the train to Sioux City, arrives at O'Neill by car early Saturday. He has two days with his family, then makes an overnight journey to the big city.

(Continued on page 12)

"Voice of The Frontier"  
WJAG  
Mon. — Wed. — Sat.  
9:45 A.M. — 780 k.c.

# THE FRONTIER

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North-Central Nebraska's BIG Newspaper  
O'Neill, Nebraska, Thursday, July 22, 1954.

## Protivinsky Rites Set Here Friday

### Retired Grocer, Born in Austria, in Ill Health Three Years

John Peter Protivinsky, 73, retired O'Neill grocery merchant, died at 2:25 a.m., Wednesday, July 21, at his home in O'Neill. He had been in failing health about three years.

He suffered an apoplectic stroke late Sunday and failed to recover consciousness.

The late Mr. Protivinsky was born in Vienna, Austria, April 25, 1881, a son of John and Mary Rozveda Protivinsky.

He came to the O'Neill community May 18, 1919, from Tilden. On that same date at Tilden, he married the former Tessie Bauman.

The Protivinskys became the parents of five children.

Survivors include: Widow; son—John H. of Sioux Falls, S.D.; daughters—Mrs. John (Bernadine) Grutsch of O'Neill; Mrs. Bud (Eva) Thomas of North Platte; Mrs. Claude (Jeannette) Johnson of Sioux Falls, S.D.; sisters—Mrs. Tessie Crosby of Omaha; Mrs. Mary Sanders of West Point; Sister M. Athanasius of Oneida, Wisc.

One daughter died in infancy.

The Catholic Daughters of America will conduct a rosary rite at 4:30 p.m. today (Thursday) at the Protivinsky residence. The public rosary rite will be at 8 o'clock this evening, also at the Protivinsky residence, 730 East Benton street.

Funeral services will be conducted at 9 o'clock Friday morning, July 23, from St. Patrick's Catholic church with Rev. Thomas Hitch officiating. Burial will be in Calvary cemetery under the direction of Biglins.

Pallbearers chosen are Francis Murphy, Leonard Shoemaker, Melvin Ruzicka, Gleason Wade, Norbert Uhl and James Kelly.



## 'Honest Differences' with Ike Foreseen

### Curtis for Slashing Federal Taxes

Congressman Carl T. Curtis, 49, of Minden, republican representative from Nebraska's First district, Saturday spent a half-day greeting and visiting with Holt county voters here. Earlier in the day he had visited Bassett and Atkinson.

In a press statement issued here, Curtis pledged that he will represent all the people of Nebraska if nominated and elected to the United States senate.

"I believe in the sovereignty of the people," Mr. Curtis said, "and I respect their views on matters both foreign and domestic. For 16 years I have presented the Nebraska viewpoint of sound and sensible government in congress, and, if elected to the senate, I will continue to do so."

Mr. Curtis, a native of Minden, said that he will continue to cooperate with the Eisenhower administration "in a spirit of helpfulness and of mutual respect."

"I have successfully assisted the administration in some of the major parts of its program, including the very cornerstone of the administration's program, that of lowering federal taxes," Mr. Curtis said.

"On the other hand," Mr. Curtis added, "there occasionally will be honest differences of opinion. Then, as always, I will vote my convictions."

Mr. Curtis particularly mentioned global spending, which he has consistently fought to reduce, and the Bricker amendment, which he supports.

"The preservation of free government depends upon ample discussion and debate of these important issues," Mr. Curtis said, "and I expect to present the views of the people of Nebraska."

Curtis was escorted at O'Neill by Elgie Ray, manager of the Speltz-Ray Lumber company. Ray has been named Holt county clerk—July 29.

# 'Czech Freedom Tank' Builder Visits City



Seated background—Mrs. Vic Halva, Mr. and Mrs. Vaclav Uhlík, Mr. Halva; foreground—Eva and Vaclav, jr.—The Frontier Photo.

## Vaclav Uhlík, Wife, 2 Children Spend Day with Vic Halvas

By CAL STEWART

Editor, The Frontier

This is the story of a dark-haired, determined young man, now 33, who led his wife, two children and four companions in a widely-heralded escape from the Soviets just one year ago.

It's the story of Vaclav Uhlík, a former Czechoslovakian army ordnance captain, who secretly built a bogus "tank" behind the iron curtain and successfully made a run for freedom into Western Germany.

The reason the story of the now-famous "Czech freedom tank" is retold in these columns today is because Vaclav Uhlík, his young wife and their two small children were O'Neill visitors last Thursday. Traveling by bus, they arrived early, stayed late and spent the day with Mr. and Mrs. Victor Halva. It was primarily a social visit for the Uhlíks — although Halva was so impressed by Uhlík's ingenuity and courage, he wrote Uhlík upon his arrival in the U.S., and urged him to come to O'Neill. Halva suggested that perhaps an employment arrangement could be worked out in Halva's motor and generator repair shop here.

But let's retell the Uhlík story—the almost unbelievable saga of skill, bravery, guts and know-how that has gripped the hearts of folks throughout the free world.

A little past midnight July 25, 1953, a strange-looking vehicle groveled to life and wheeled into high gear in the Czechoslovakian hamlet of Lane, near Pilsen.

Camouflaged with leaves and branches, it resembled one of the armored cars used by the Czech border patrol in scouting expeditions to keep the oppressed people within bounds laid down by the Soviet tyrants.

Uhlík was the driver. With him were his wife, Marta; their two children, Vaclav, jr., 6, and Eva, 4; Joseph Pisarek, a mechanic; Mrs. Leonard Cloud, wife of a U.S. army veteran; Walter Hora and Vaclav Krejčík — two Czech soldiers who deserted to escape communist terror.

As the motley vehicle clanked along on its massive treads, Uhlík might well have thought of the three years he had spent building it. A mechanic, first-class, and a former labor transport driver, Uhlík used the war-torn hulk of a British gun carrier as a nucleus. He had not only built the bogus armored car, he had literally stolen it!

Every ounce of material in the weird machine was scrounged.

Three years of secret, desperate effort! Three years of securing practically non-existent scrap metal — a baffle-plate here, a sheet of rusty steel there, a length of wire, bits of rubber, a washer, a nut, a bolt.

Uhlík persevered, despite the many heartaches, disappointments and the frightening prospect of being caught.

He recounted with us some of those experiences for "Voice of the Frontier" listeners (Saturday, 9:35 a.m., WJAG in a tape-recorded interview. Mr. Halva was the interpreter.

For three harrowing years there hovered over Vaclav Uhlík the chance of being picked up by the security police — being turned in by the spies.

Now, in the darkness of that July night, the miles—70 of them—stretched endlessly ahead. Not far by American standards. Not far at all. But an infinite distance in a land strangled by the Soviets.

Ever since 1951, when the reds moved in and took over his machine shop, Vaclav Uhlík had dreamed about this journey. The armored car's treads were ponderous as the machine clanked down that one-way road. Much too loud, thought those brave persons huddled inside.

Tension mounted.

As the miles rolled under the machine, Czech secret police occasionally would come to the roadside and quietly speculate among themselves on the nature of the mission.

They thought members of their own force were proceeding under special orders that dark July night.

Uhlík was one of the best men. (Continued on page 8)

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gradually making it solid and stiff, until the day came when he could no longer sit up and had to take to his bed. For some years now he has been able to move only his head and arms as he lies flat upon his back.

His mother and sister and her husband live with him in the large, tidy, comfortable home in O'Neill and take care of him. It was while he was in Wheeler, Ore., for his health some years ago that the idea of his bedside lapidary was conceived. Rocks of many kinds are plentiful there, and a friend suggested grinding rocks for a hobby. Curley grasped at the suggestion, went at it with much enthusiasm, became a real "rock hound," and this art that started as a hobby soon became his life's work and a new career for him was launched.

From his past experience as a talented mechanic, he rigged up a large turntable over his bed which can be swung to one side when not in use. On this table he mounted a lapidary machine, a cut-off saw, and electric soldering machine, a stone polisher and other various accessories.

By the use of his faithful mirror Curley can reach his various machines and set them to work. Since he must use this mirror, he is forced to do all or most of his work in reverse. And when one considers that all of his work must be done from a prone position flat upon his back in bed, it is no wonder that all marvel at his amazing work and praise his fine efforts.

Through tireless effort and indomitable, sheer will he has

## Work which persons in normal health can perform with more or less ease is for patient, exacting Curley a tedious operation.

While those in good health can get out and scour the countryside for the materials of their occupation, Curley must rely upon others to secure them for him and often has to pay for them.

His mother and sister and her husband must serve as "legs" for him, run all of his errands, and they are very cheerful and lovable with him. He and his family are most remarkable persons and at once capture the love and respect of all who visit there and become acquainted with them.

In spite of his great handicap that holds him to his bed most of the time, he does take rides in the family car and get out into the bright sunshine and joy of the great outdoors he loves so much. To accomplish this, a long bridge constructed of boards has been placed from the front porch floor over the several concrete steps to the sidewalk. Down this

(Continued on page 10)

Editor's Note: Will H. Spindler of Wounded Knee, S.D., and Mrs. Spindler have been employed by the U.S. Indian service as teacher and housekeeper in Indian day schools on the Pine Ridge Indian reservation of South Dakota since 1929. At present they are located in the Wounded Knee day school near the historic site of the Wounded Knee battlefield and cemetery of December 29, 1890. He is the author of four Western books: "Comrades of the Lone Star," "Lure of the Hills," "Rim of the Sandhills" and "Badlands Trails." Of these books, only "Badlands Trails" is still in print, and copies of this book may be secured from the author, Will H. Spindler, Wounded Knee, S.D., at \$1.50 per copy postpaid. Will is a son of the late George H. Spindler and a brother of Floyd Spindler of Atkinson. He is a native of Holt county, having been born and raised in the Phoenix community northwest of O'Neill.—C.W.S.



The Froelichs . . . he is champion commuter with office in Chicago 650 miles from his home here.—O'Neill Photo Co.

Miss Jackie Nettleton of Des Moines, Ia., arrived Monday and will visit for several days with Mr. and Mrs. Bennie Hill.