

Prairie Talk

His Passing Leaves Void

By ROMAINE SAUNDERS, Retired, Former Frontier Editor

LINCOLN—And now the drumbeat of eternity has come to Frank Biglin. Writing of the death of Sumner Downey recently, I asked who would respond next among the native sons to man's last summons. So soon the answer comes that Frank Biglin is wanted by the messenger of death. It is appointed unto us once to die. The sting of death marches down the centuries, leaving desolated homes and grieving friends. And Frank had many of these out and beyond the circle bound by family ties. His passing leaves a void, but within the circle there will be cherished the heritage of memories of a devoted husband and father.



Romaine Saunders

Associates and employees connected with the large business of Biglin Brothers will cherish the memory of a wise directing hand, a warmhearted and considerate friend, and the many who knew him intimately or casually regret the loss of a substantial citizen of the community that had been the home of Frank Biglin since the day of his birth, except a short time that he was at Columbus.

Maybe this hot time of year it's alright to mention blizzards.

Several notable snow storms have swept prairie since 1873. It is generally believed that the blizzard of January 12, 1883, was the knpgin of them all.

A blizzard hit a day in October, 1881, that broke a number of ranchmen, among them Colonel Inman, from whom the village of Inman derived its name. The colonel's herds were being moved west when the storm struck them in the vicinity of Inman and most of them were lost in the storm. McClure and Gardener lost many cattle but were able to resume operations at their holdings in the South Fork valley.

Severe blizzards visited prairie December 18, 1878; November 16, 1886; February 11, 1905; March 14, 1913, and the blizzards of 1948-49.

At the republican supervisor district convention embracing O'Neill and Grattan, at which D. H. Cronin presided as chairman and J. H. Meredith served as secretary, R. J. Marsh was nominated by acclamation. Mr. Marsh selected Sam Detrick district chairman and E. W. Stansberry secretary, with R. T. Williams in the First ward, J. C. Oleson in the Second, and James Triggs in the Third. Marsh was elected.

There are 16 baseball teams making up the American and National leagues. During the baseball season these teams use 156,000 balls. How is a baseball made? These are said to be the steps taken in bringing to completion a ball: Starting at the center with a piece of cork, around which are wrapped two layers of rubber. Around this are wound 220 yards of yarn and 150 yards of white cotton cord. The ball is then checked for weight after which it is dipped into a bath of rubber cement. The covering is of leather made from horse hide and it requires the hides from 3,500 horses to cover a year's supply of balls for the big leagues.

Editorial

'Best-Loved and Most-Kindly'

With the recent death of Frank J. Biglin, veteran funeral director, furniture dealer, and member of a prominent pioneer family, O'Neill has lost certainly one of its best-known and beloved citizens.

The Biglin family story closely parallels the development and growth of the city. And now, within a span of 3 1/2 years, death has taken the two partners who developed the Biglin Brothers firm into one of the foremost institutions of its type in the state.

Owen F. Biglin, the father of William J. and Frank J., was from Scranton, Pa., and emigrated westward to Nebraska with a handful of other Scrantonians under the banner of Gen. John O'Neill. In this frontier town he saw the need for a mortuary and established a rather primitive one. In subsequent years the business grew and furniture and farm implements were added.

The two sons, William and Frank, joined their father as they became old enough to move out into the world.

While the town had its growing pains, sometimes characterized by violence and typical western drama, the Biglin firm developed a quiet, virtuous and consistent dignity in the finest tradition of the funeral profession.

The founder of the firm died October 1, 1918. William, better-known as "Bill," and Frank carried on in partnership. The firm continued to grow and year-by-year extended its expert services to new families and into other communities. A large, new building was completed in December, 1926, and a few years later the Biglins began to devote full time to funeral directing and furniture selling. "Bill" and Frank Biglin became intimate confidants of hundreds of families. In fact, few families in this rather large community at some time or another, failed to know the benefit of the Biglin kindness and deep consideration in time of grief.

"Bill" died February 5, 1950, after a considerable illness. Frank carried on but suffered a series of strokes—the last of which proved fatal.

Both "Bill" and Frank were exceptionally fine, God-fearing citizens, they reared fine families and were keenly missed.

In a brief eulogy at Friday's funeral rite in St. Patrick's Catholic church, Rev. Kenneth Carl said this:

"Mr Biglin was a kind man. If he didn't have time to counsel and listen to his friends he made time. . . . He was a charitable man and his charity was known only to God. . . . O'Neill has lost one of its best-loved and most-kindly citizens."

Persons from every strata of society paid respects to the body of the late Frank Biglin as it lay in state—a singular tribute to a man who had lived a very useful, constructive life and a man who had known considerable hardship. Frank Biglin was never known to become distraught or discouraged even though his personal burdens and those burdens he bore for others sometimes were very oppressive.

The firm "Bill" and Frank have left behind will carry on in its fine tradition. Its destinies are in good, capable hands.

Food to East Germany

The Soviet high commissioner will make few friends for his government's policy in Germany by inveighing against the American offer of food to the virtual prison camp of East Germany. Thus states the Christian Science Monitor in a recent editorial. Few East Germans need to be convinced that the Russians are their oppressors, but if events cool the ardor of even a few fringe supporters of communist rule east of the Elbe, the food offer will have been worth while.

The crucial question now, of course, is how actually to get the food through the iron curtain to the East Germans who need it—and to defeat

In the corner of a full-page ad under the heading "Drug Specials," were listed these items: Coffee, dish cloths, iced tea spoons, cutter board. . . . In this evening's paper appeared the picture of a gent ordered deported to Russia. He stares at you with evil eyes, pupils contracted so the white eyeball is about all you see. When cinching up the saddle on a little brown bronc in the long ago and the white of that left eye was showing too much we took warning. . . . Lincoln has a happy matron who has ridden out life's storms for a full century and the capital city has been her home for 54 years. Her name is Mrs. A. E. Bailey. She has many friends and says "I have awful good neighbors." . . . The Democratic Digest is a new one at magazine stands, a publication sponsored by disgruntled democrats hovering in the shadows along Pennsylvania avenue in Washington. . . . Up in Montana a draft board quits, Complaint; Rich man's sons go on the farms, while poor man's boys go into the army.

The federal park service is understood to be considering developing another national park in Nebraska by taking over the site of the old fort known to the 70's and 80's as Hartuff, located at a point midway between Burwell and Ord. The property is owned by Dr. G. D. Auble of Ord. In southwest Holt county there are places where the old military train still shows crossing the hills in Swan precinct. This was a road worn in the sand by wagon trains and soldiers passing to and from Hartuff to Fort Randall when the military movements kept to the hills where possible to have a view of the country, always on the alert for possible bands of hostile Indians. None living in Swan precinct in those early days recall a touch-off between the soldiers and Spotted Tail's bands.

The sun rides high over prairieand. White clouds are motionless in the distant southwest heavens. The unknown depths of eternity spread a canopy of blue above. The orb of day burns in the measureless void of space. Blue above, green of earth thirsting for a drink, glow in the light of midday. The yellow and blue and red of summer floral bloom greet the eye here and there and the lure of the open country gives a poetic touch to nature's great outdoors. But listen! Rain drops the size of half-dollars hit the roof. And then the downpour.

A friend writes from a point in Massachusetts that on his trip there from Nebraska he fell in with one of our state senators from out near the western border. "He professed not to believe in God, was loud and rather uncivil in his remarks," says my friend. A four-flusher hangover from the Buffalo Bill days to which the title of state senator apparently has gone to his head. Thank heaven prairieand does not have many such as he.

The newspaper fraternity will gather in O'Neill August 1. Just what it's all about we are not informed. There was a time you were a big shot if connected with a newspaper, had a railroad pass, free tickets to the circus, the shows, the fair and the seat of honor at a church social. Now the best the guys can do is to find themselves the guests of that group that made Milwaukee famous.

such communist dodges as the counterfeiting of food coupons.

Fortunately, there is a corridor to Berlin, a boundary between West and East Berlin which the Russians have not ventured to close, and a border between East Berlin and the east zone of Germany which it would be difficult to seal off.

Through that door the West German government, with American support, is preparing to make food parcels available at a rate of one a month to all East Germans who can come into West Berlin for them. Doubtless many of these can find ways also to transmit such parcels to relatives and friends among the 18 million persons in the Soviet - controlled zone which surrounds Berlin.

It is just possible that some further methods could be effectively used. For example, the communist rulers of Czechoslovakia have shown themselves greatly perturbed because the organization, crusade for freedom, released 3,000 balloons from the American zone of Germany to float over Czechoslovakia carrying news leaflets about the recent East German uprisings. Does it not follow that food parcels attached to balloons and released in an eastward wind would be welcomed by the finders in Thuringia, Saxony and Brandenburg?

Whether the method would be wise — or whether it might provoke the communist police to harsher reprisals on defenseless people—must be judged by those in close contact with the situation, particularly West German officials. But clearly Americans owe it to the East Germans to make every possible effort to really deliver the food that has been offered.

That much-heralded 'copter is running true to tradition as a curiosity piece. It's a weird-looking machine that quietly will do its role in the air force wind test. Some of its cousins have been doing a terrific specialized war job.

Chicago News to Vyacheslav Molotov, Soviet Foreign Minister, Kremlin, Moscow. Dear Vy: Next?

Mr. Eisenhower hasn't set the world on fire as a reformer.

Who says it can't rain in Nebraska?



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State Capitol News

Reaction to State Equalization Board's Decisions Awaited with Interest

By MELVIN PAUL

The Frontier's Statehouse Correspondent

LINCOLN—The state board of Equalization this week finished up its work on equalizing tax assessments in Nebraska and members said they would await the state's reaction with interest. Their action promised to be the greatest development in the Nebraska tax picture in 33 years. From those who knew the change in thinking which went into the great equalization action there could be only admiration for the officials involved. "It is all very well to prate about equalizing taxes," commented a statehouse observer. "But it's quite another thing to vote to raise valuations in a county, knowing it might cost you needed votes in the next election."

Members of the state board are Gov. Robert Crosby, State Auditor Ray Johnson, Secretary of State Frank Marsh, State Treasurer Frank Heintze, and State Tax Commissioner Norris Anderson.

These officials counted on these things to soften the impact of valuation raises for many counties. That the total increase in valuations would allow mill levies to drop enough to ease the individual's tax load. That Nebraskans would see the fairness of equalizing taxes so everyone would pay his fair share.

Also, there was the comforting thought that there will be another assessment season and another chance for the state board to operate before the next primary elections in August, 1954.

Evolution—What is the inside story on this effort?

The Nebraska supreme court decision in January in the Johnson county farm lands assessments case—ordering obedience to assessments laws—is well known. The confusion and struggles within the legislature to meet the unexpected mandate of the high court and which culminated in the 50 percent law have all been related.

But the soul-searching that it brought among men wise in the ways of politics is another story. Governor Crosby, new in his job, failed to take early action. As much as anyone, Tax Commissioner Anderson carried the ball in the early weeks. Taking over the position after being an economics professor at the University of Nebraska college of agriculture, Anderson didn't look at it from the political viewpoint. To him there were two considerations—the high court had ordered equalizations, and equalization was the fair thing.

It was Anderson who ordered his field men to urge the county assessors to do their jobs. And it was the work of these men—Art Johnson of Bridgeport, Roy McCulley of Mullen, Lew Holston of Trenton, Hollis Gustafson of Lyons, and Ernest Woodard of Hebron—which slowly through the months brought results.

Late in March, Governor Crosby went before the legislature and asked it to repeal the 53 percent law. The legislature refused. Somehow that brought a change in Crosby's thinking. He later told reporters that he decided to quit trying to pass the buck. Unwilling as he has been to take the nettlesome task of equalization, he decided he was stuck with it. He said he knew it might bring political unpopularity but he was convinced it was a job which needed to be done even if it cost him the governorship the next election.

From then on his whole approach to the problem was changed. So much that Anderson said after the board hearings ended, "We could never have done it if Crosby hadn't aggressively led the way."

But there were still the other three members of the board. Young Frank Marsh, still new to the ways of politics although he had watched his father in the same post for years. And veterans Johnson and Heintze, who had sat

on the state board in the past. For months—even while confident statements were going out from the governor's office—the question lay with these three. Without one of their votes, there would be no majority. But when the chips were down the group came through. The board was united.

Unchanged—An announcement by Governor Crosby concerning possible extensions to the state highway system brought a flurry of misunderstanding. The governor was quoted as saying that at least seven extensions had been promised by previous governors. He said some delegations had come in to ask about fulfilling the promise. A reporter then asked if this meant he was welcoming road delegation visits. Crosby said he didn't believe in closing the door to them.

Publication of this statement led to speculation in some towns that Crosby planned to go back to the old system of making decisions on the basis of interest expressed by a given area. Finally, the governor had to put out another statement. In this one he said that while he didn't believe in barring road delegation visits that he planned to continue to tell them what he had told delegations all year—that road building the next two years will be according to the state highway department's "sufficiency rating" system of priority.

As to possible highway extensions, State Engineer L. N. Ress explained that three of the cases mentioned probably would lead to nowhere. There is no use laying out roads which don't connect towns, the engineer explained. And even the extensions will have to be financed partially from the pockets of local people or subdivisions of government. The only extension planned this year is a project from Hyannis to Arthur. Ress said that with so much going wrong with the present highway system, the department thought it wiser to spend highway revenues for maintaining and rebuilding present roads.

Ice Cream SOCIAL. Dorsey Presbyterian Church. Friday, July 31. WE WANT all who have ice cream freezers to come and bring the ice cream ready to freeze. All those who don't have freezers bring cake and 15¢ for ice cream and cake. We need money for our books. WESTMINSTER FELLOWSHIP GROUP

Personals

Miss Thelma Young and Mrs. Guy Young returned Friday after spending a week in Kansas City, Mo., visiting Mr. and Mrs. Walter Huston.

Mrs. Dorrance Crabb and daughters returned Sunday night from Pocatello, Okla. For the past month they have been with Mrs. Crabb's mother, Mrs. F. F. Cron, who is convalescing following a major surgery.

Mr. and Mrs. D. E. Nelson and family returned Saturday from Boulder, Colo., where Mr. Nelson attended school at the University. On their return they visited friends at Culbertson.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Smith and daughter, Marlene, and Mrs. Clifford Smith and children were Sunday guests of Mrs. Ira Hopkins.

Mr. and Mrs. George Peterson were Sunday dinner guests of Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Bowen.

Mr. and Mrs. George Scher of Papillion and Mr. and Mrs. John Scher of Omaha were Wednesday evening guests of Mr. and Mrs. E. F. Peterson.

Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Sweigard of Winslow were Saturday night Tuesday visitors at the home of Mr. and Mrs. H. S. Moses. Mrs. Sweigard is a sister of Mrs. Moses.

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Peters, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Peters, Mrs. Dora Shaw and children, Bill and Leila, were Sunday dinner guests of Mr. and Mrs. Glyn Prokop.

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Bahl and daughter, Diana, and Mrs. Vanne Newman were weekend guests of Mr. and Mrs. Ruben Magstadt at Parkson, S. D. Miss Myra Magstadt, who has spent the past three weeks at the Bahl and Newman homes accompanied them to her home in Parkson.

Mrs. V. L. Bradley and daughter, Marjorie, of Menno, S. D., were weekend guests of Mr. and Mrs. Mike Thiel. Mrs. Bradley is a sister of Mrs. Thiel.

Dr. Fisher, Dentist. In the Bishop Block—Nortfolk. Office Phone: 610. Res. Phone: 2842.

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