

Prairie Talk . . .

# Arbuckle's Coffee and 5-cent Salt

By ROMAIN SAUNDERS, Retired, Former Frontier Editor

LINCOLN—The pioneer out on a grassgrown homestead moved the grass with a five-foot Buckeye mower, raked it into bunches, hauled the bunches to a stack in a wagon rack. Before daylight on a frosty morning he would hitch a team to a load of hay that had been loaded the day before and pull out for town 20 miles away. Arriving in town he pulled up at the DeYarman livery and feed barn and sold the hay which he forked into the mow by hand with a pitchfork.



Romain Saunders

What did he get for all this? About what a guy today would charge for unloading the hay—\$.50. He could buy a bar of soap for the wife at home, a five cent bag of salt, a package of Arbuckle's coffee, two bits worth of sugar, a 65 cent bag of flour and a plug of J.T. After feeding his team, eating a dime lunch of crackers and cheese he pulled out for home late in the afternoon, and got in about midnight. An early day homesteader said at one time he had to make a trip to town that would require him being away from home over-night. That night his wife gave birth to a baby unattended except what the children could help. And baby and mother made it alright.

No one wants conditions today such as these that have been mentioned, but maybe we need to recapture the courage and self-reliance that made it possible for the pioneers to lay the foundation of the empire of Holt that this generation enjoys as a heritage.

Out of sunshine and shadow, out of storm and calm, from the freedom and inspiration of open prairie land and the guiding hand of the Infante, Holt county has a citizen it may well pause for a moment and honor. Now at 102, living in quiet security at Stuart, this old lady is marching down the second century. You had the story from The Frontier's vivid writer and we're carried back to the flush of active life when there was a town in the northwest corner of the county that supported a newspaper, the Dustin Dispatch, a journalistic venture of a brother of Prairie Talker. The town was named for the family by the name of Dustin, and out of the inspiration and enthusiasm of Mrs. Dustin there were activities that mellowed the vicissitudes of pioneer life and promoted community welfare. Mrs. Dustin's name survives in picturesque Dustin precinct.

Mrs. Axtell, now in the serene period of life's approaching sunset, doubtless cherishes memories of the long ago from which The Frontier's writer at Stuart can draw some fascinating pictures. And down at Amelia in the Barnett home is another aged lady whose life's highway approaches a full century. Others in the county have trod the pathway for more than four score and 10 years.

Of the 10,291 persons who visited the State Historical society's new building the first month it was opened to the public, it remained for a country school kid to say the cheering word and pay the supreme compliment to those responsible for it all. A group of school children from an outstate country district was brought to Lincoln by the group's teacher and taken to see the society's building and the large collection of relics of the past of historical interest. The teacher explained to their guide they could not stay long as the children were hungry and she would have to take them to lunch. A little boy, fascinated with the wonders of the Indian gallery and the period rooms, exclaimed, "I'd rather look at this than eat lunch!"

Candidates for the legislature have stepped into the picture as of the date of writing in two sandhills districts, the 35th district composed of Custer, Loup and Garfield counties, and the 40th district, composed of Sheridan, Cherry and Brown. R. E. Blixt of Arnold, an attorney, will seek the nomination in the 35th, and Don Ravenscroft of Merriman tries for the nomination in the 40th.

Editorial . . .

## 'Yes, Virginia . . .'

New York, N.Y.  
September 8, 1897

Editor, The New York Sun  
Dear Editor:

I am 8-years-old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in the Sun it's so." Please tell me the truth—is there a Santa Claus?

Yours truly,  
VIRGINIA O'HANLON

(Editor's note: It was only September, and 1897's Christmas was three months in the future. But Virginia O'Hanlon's concern was with an important problem, that to her, knew no season. That was why she wrote her letter to the New York Sun.

(The answer to Virginia's question, written in a moment of deep spiritual insight by Francis B. Church, stands even today as a testament expressing two thousand years of faith. It has been reprinted once again by The Frontier because we believe it always will deserve to be read again.)

"Yes, indeed!  
"Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age—they do not believe except what they see—they think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds.

All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little.

"In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole truth and knowledge.

"Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus.  
"He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

"Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies!

"You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no

You can never tell what a kid in knee pants will do when he gets into long breeches. Still wearing knee pants, he sat with me in a boat on a lake in Cherry county as we hauled in ring perch as fast as we could bait the hooks. Today that lad grown, Lee Rankin, stood before the highest court of the land and made judges and lawyers sit up and listen. Mr. Rankin, now assistant attorney general, represents the government in a dispute over separate schools for Negroes and whites. The justice department contends that excluding anyone from a public school on account of race or color is unconstitutional and in violation of the 14th amendment. The southern states have the problem of Negro and white children together in schools. Maybe they should be allowed to settle it. They probably will eventually. Lee has asked no advice from his old fisherman friend who favors separate schools where conditions make such arrangements advisable.

The old man was receiving no little attention on the anniversary of the day he was born into a troubled world, but the big thrill came when his 6-year-old granddaughter came to him and said, "Grandpa, can I give you a birthday kiss?"

Making out on an income of the 1930's with the outgo of the '50's involves some close calculations. . . Pestered by an unwelcome guest? Eat a raw onion. . . Plan the thing, make a beginning, keep at it, here a little, there a little, go at it again—done! . . . If you know of a neglected little child to whom you can give something, two will have a merry Christmas. . . Yesterday TV exhibited the "outstanding" guys of the year. No Salvation Army lass or welfare worker, nor the busy little housewife who finds time to run in and give a burdened neighbor a lift appeared on the screen. . . A Wisconsin editor has it figured out this way: You know a man is successful when newspapers start quoting him on subjects he knows nothing about. . . Alcohol preserves some things but not your good name. . . Women have entered every field of human endeavor, sacred or secular, but have not yet served as pallbearers.

Has it come to that, imported "experts" sent in to tell Holt county patriots what their earthly accumulations are worth! Fortunate for these gentlemen that there has been a turn over in the population picture or they would be high-tailing out of the country to escape the wrath of Colonel Doyle and some others. It's a pretty kettle of fish when communities can no longer determine property values. Should a special session of the legislature materialize, State Sen. Frank Nelson would immortalize his legislative career by putting through a measure somehow hooked up with the road program providing that his colleagues responsible for the idea be required to pay the bills of the experts. Or still better—ditch the whole works and return to the old way of reaping the tax harvest.

I don't know what State Sen. Frank Nelson may think about this talk of an extra session of the legislature, but no doubt most of the members of the legislature thought they had enough during the regular session. The lawmakers of the long ago were regulating the railroads; now it is just roads.

Joseph Olemeir of Stubble, Ia., came to Holt county in 1901 and in December that year bought a ranch a 1,100 acres in Holt Creek precinct, A. B. Newell of O'Neill being the selling agent. Mr. Newell reported his land sales for that year totaled 20,000 acres. The 11 hundred acres in Holt Creek brought \$10,500. A young man by the name of Snell while driving up from Chambers a December day that year had one foot so badly frozen that Doctor Gilligan found it necessary to amputate, taking off the foot at the ankle. The Frontier had a suggestion that year to the effect that if you did not want to patronize the Standard Oil company you could use elbow grease.

sign that there is no Santa Claus—the most real things in the world are those neither children nor men can see.

"Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that is no proof that they are not there—nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders that are unseen and unseeable in the world.

"You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, or even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside the curtain and view and picture the supernatural beauty and glory beyond.

"It is real—ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else as real and abiding.

"No Santa Claus! Thank God!—he lives, and he lives forever—a thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood."

Any speaker can make his case sound pretty good if his audience doesn't know the facts involved, or does not ask the right questions, or any questions.

In the talk about farm subsidies, do not overlook the fact that the federal government spends more each year subsidizing business than it does subsidizing farmers.

Give The Frontier for Christmas!



CARROLL W. STEWART, Editor and Publisher  
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### Miller's Haste Avoids Flight on Ill-Fated Plane

Nebraska's Fourth district congressman, A. L. Miller of Kim-

ball, probably owes his life to a desire to hurry back to Washington to see his wife installed as worthy matron of her Eastern Star chapter. Mr. Miller was in Madrid recently with a ticket in his pocket for an airplane flight to Lisbon

two days hence, in a Spanish airlines transport plane. But Mr. Miller knew that if he waited for it, he probably would not get back in time for Mrs. Miller's installation. He caught an earlier plane. Two days later the Spanish

plane on which he originally intended to travel crashed into a mountain peak with heavy loss of life. Mr. Miller still has his cancelled ticket, a grim souvenir of the trip he did not take.

Visitors Here—  
Mr. and Mrs. Beryl Damkroger of Wilber were Thursday and Friday visitors in the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. L. McCarville, jr. The Damkrogers are former residents here.

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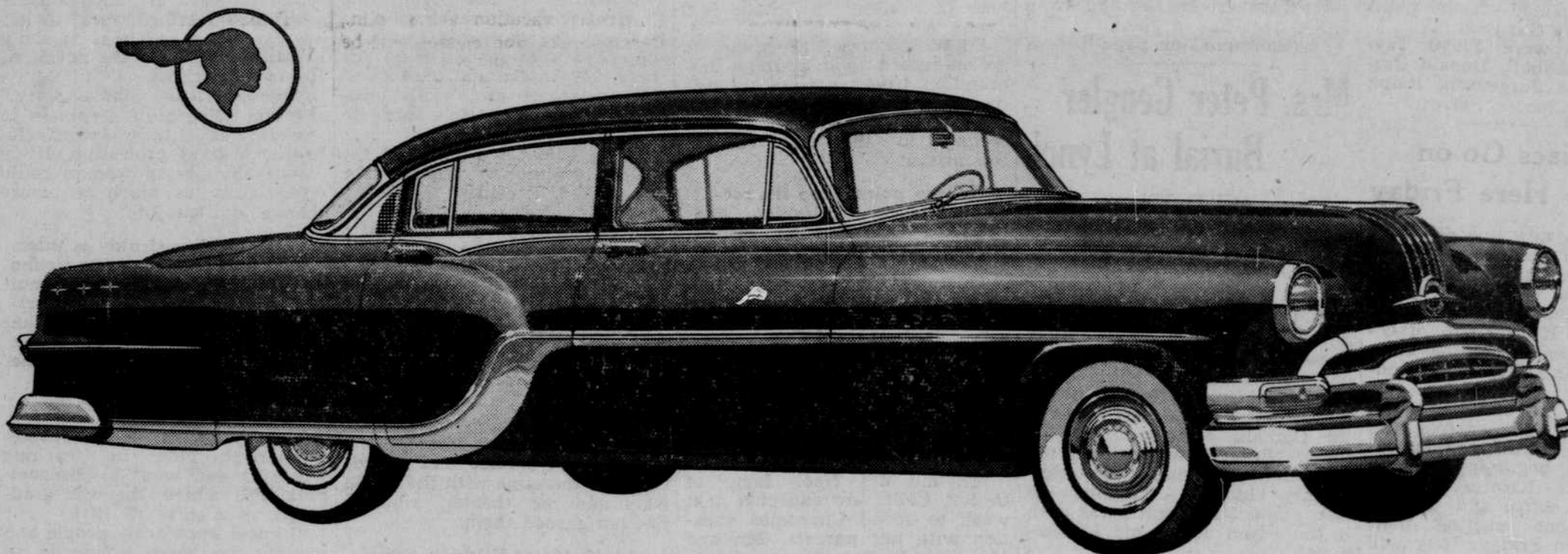
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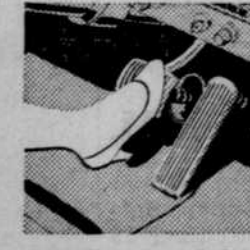
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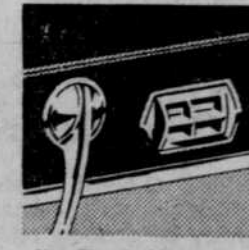
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