

Prairieland Talk . . .

Remember Keeley Institute?

By ROMAIN SAUNDERS, Retired, Former Frontier Editor

LOS ANGELES—Herley Jones proposes some high points in O'Neill community doings and disasters.

Here's another: Who recalls the Keeley Institute for the redemption of the old souls?

This is brought to mind by seeing an ad in an evening paper that lets Prairieland Talkers know that the Keeley cure for alcoholics has survived the wreck of time and such an institute functions in this great city where probably it is needed as badly as any place. O'Neill's Keeley Institute was pretty well patronized over 80 years ago and was located in the upper story of what is now known as the Gallagher building at Fourth and Everett streets.



Romain Saunders

Boys are flying kites and girls are bouncing rubber balls. There are lots of fish out in the Pacific, big ones, but we let them stay there.

Four young fellows standing in a row with heads bowed to sea level were pictured in the evening paper, one 17, two 18 and one 20 years of age. They have the social distinction of being known as some of the "rat pack" gang that keeps the cops busy. Each with a name that suggests a family background from below the border, they now face prison terms for beating up and robbing a legless Korean war veteran. Among the rat packs and other gangsters and evil men you seldom see a Yankee, Scotch or Irish name.

The sun went to bed in the Pacific ocean last evening leaving behind a flaming sky. This morning dawned bright and clear. California's 6,003,851 motor vehicles will be rolling the highways today.

The papers today tell of tornados sweeping across Dixie and dust storms and blizzards visiting prairieland. And today we went to a mountain retreat to linger for a time amid the scenes of nature and spread the picnic lunch under stately oaks, joining with others to whom nature's great outdoors calls to leave the haunts of men to spend the hours of a sun-drenched afternoon out where children laugh and play and fathers and mothers find success from life's cares for a time. The day has been warm and so it seemed inviting when we left the forest-shaded canyon to linger for a time by the limpid waters of a mountain lake, and then rolling along through dim aisles of mystery shut in for the moment by sacred walls from the clamor of the world and soon we are again among the abodes of men, then before the stars appear out of the depth of eternity the journey ends. I said it has been a warm day under bright skies, while storms raged across prairieland. But I am not afraid of snow and wind and ice and the miracle of frost decorated windows. Mush and milk three times a day would be comparable to the weather every day the same.

A Burbank woman stopped her car on a railroad track and a slow moving train bumped it out of the way. Her husband got a broken rib and she failed to come up to normal on a sobriety test.

I asked a second grader why she was not in school today, February 22, and was told it is Washington's birthday. Who was Washington? I asked, and received no reply. Evidently the child did not know. But the simplest child can understand when there is a holiday. Holidays that fall on Monday permit both teacher and pupil to forget school for three days. The memory of Washington lives. The barefoot soldier at Valley Forge has none to honor his memory with a holiday. Washington is the crowned hero of the Revolution but we should not forget those who bled and died at Bunker Hill and at Trenton. And why is the burning of the great Washington to avoid "foreign entanglements" now flouted? Is the observance of a birthday in honor of an individual a mere salute to the past or is it of deeper significance?

Editorial . . .

Do You Dare Rate Your Town?

The February issue of a national magazine includes a provocative questionnaire entitled: "Rate Your Town."

In the few days the questionnaire and accompanying article have been out they have stirred interest in towns in every state of the union.

We reprint the questionnaire below for what it's worth:

- Most high school graduates stay in town. Yes No
- Getting a loan on a sound business venture is easy. Yes No
- The local paper constantly pushes civic improvements. Yes No
- There's a Chamber of Commerce with a live-wire manager. Yes No
- Local speeders pay the same fines as out-of-towners. Yes No
- There's a place to swim within easy reach. Yes No
- Young couples have little trouble finding a place to live. Yes No
- The head of your government is a "get-things-done" man. Yes No
- Town entrances are free from junk, shacks and billboards. Yes No
- Teachers' salaries are better than the state average. Yes No
- There's at least one doctor per 800 people in your county. Yes No
- There's a library with a good collection of recent books. Yes No
- Newcomers quickly feel they're part of the town. Yes No
- Schools have plenty of room for students. Yes No
- Fire insurance rates are low for your type of town. Yes No
- Service, veterans' and women's clubs team up on projects. Yes No
- There is an active, well-organized Boy Scout troop. Yes No
- A modern hospital is within your trading area. Yes No
- All streets are paved and sidewalks are in good shape. Yes No
- Well-stocked stores keep shoppers in the town. Yes No
- There's a hotel or motel you'd enjoy if you were a visitor. Yes No
- It's easy to find parking space in the business section. Yes No
- At least one restaurant serves outstanding meals. Yes No

Following a deluge a week ago when Jupiter Pluvius spit out about three inches of rain in some sections of the vast community and flooded streets, the sun comes out of hiding this morning to greet President and Mrs. Eisenhower and party as they disembarked from their flight from Washington, D.C., at a winter playground in the desert. Officials of state and other nabobs greeted their arrival. The president is said to be out here to get away from it all. Could it be he has become a little disheartened over trying to arouse us to the need of a religious revival and maybe is not too sure that taxes can be reduced, social security payments enlarged, the wheels of industry kept moving, and we live at peace with the world while we go armed for war? Who wants Mr. Eisenhower's job?

My friend, Fred Watson, down in Wyoming precinct has had a birthday. One of the substantial citizens of Holt county, Fred has marched down the avenue of time for four score and six years and his many friends not only extend congratulations but wish him continued health during the days ahead. An old lady in the community in which I find myself for the moment was honored recently on her 103rd birthday anniversary. At the age of 11-months-old she came in a covered wagon from Missouri with her parents, who joined the trek to California in search of gold in the long ago.

New Mexico calls. A visit in the home of my own, a native of O'Neill, a look at the rock walls of a long since vanished race of cliff dwellers and other points of interest, then I shall turn by face homeward.

A republican member of congress from California has been disgraced. The greed for gain apparently got him. A rapid fire radio speiler on world and national affairs got off something to this effect—when a republican congress convicts a republican member of that body, that's news; when a Kansas City democrat convicts a Kansas City democrat, that's a miracle! There seems to be an honest effort in Washington to reestablish moral rectitude in which both democrats and republicans unite their efforts. The times call for patriotism, not partisan bigotry.

Out in the hills keeping silent vigil and looking grimly down on the follies of men is a Benedict canyon. For more than a quarter century there sat in a little office on North Fourth street in O'Neill a lawyer of little talent and less legal practice, but a kindly soul, by the name of Benedict. This awesome canyon out here may have derived its name from some simple-minded but warm-hearted prospector much like O'Neill's Benedict of a forgotten generation.

A great life was closed during the month of February when at the age of 87 Mrs. Anita McCormick Blaine was laid to rest. Mrs. Blaine set aside in her will more than 20 million dollars to go to deeds of charity. A daughter of Cyrus H. McCormick, she has done for the needy of the country what her illustrious father did for farmers.

Palm Springs, 75 miles or more out in the desert, where you must have your duds lined with \$100 bills if you go there to loaf, entertained President and Mrs. Eisenhower and her mother for a few days in mid-February. A Los Angeles business man and personal friend of the president had them as guests at his ranch.

One guy proposes to have his coffee—he got into a wholesale house down town and made away with four tons of coffee and ignored a safe loaded with cash. And as President Eisenhower's plane landed at Palm Springs a light fingered gent entered one of the swank mansions and made away with \$33,100 in jewelry and cash.

Business interests of Burbank have under taken to raise \$1,600,000 to build a hotel. A municipal courthouse has recently been completed at a cost of \$600,000. Some 85,000 Californians make their home in Burbank, a city that has neither passenger train nor continental bus service.

The sewer extension program keeps pace with new housing. Yes No
It's easy to get volunteers for any worthwhile project. Yes No
Public toilets are provided for farm folk shopping in town. Yes No
Prompt, reasonably priced ambulance service is available. Yes No
Good zoning keeps factories away from residential areas. Yes No
There's an annual clean-up, paint-up, fix-up week. Yes No
Streets throughout the community are well lighted. Yes No
More than half the church congregations are younger than 40. Yes No
Shade trees line nearly all the streets. Yes No
There's an ample supply of good drinking water. Yes No
There's a recreation center where young people can dance. Yes No
The business section has a modern, prosperous look. Yes No
There's as much interest in local as national elections. Yes No
The tax rate is attractive to new industry. Yes No
There's a community council to guide town progress. Yes No
There's an active P-TA. Yes No
Firemen must take regular training courses. Yes No

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4 1/2 Million Trees Thriving in Holt

By SID BURTON
State Forestry Specialist for SCS

The planting of trees is not new to the people of Holt county. Over the years the number of trees planted in the county has mounted to many millions. In cooperation with the Forest Service Shelterbelt Project and later with the Holt County Soil Conservation District the farmers and ranchers of Holt county have planted over 4 1/2 million trees in shelterbelts and windbreaks since 1933, not to mention the many thousands of trees obtained through the Clarke-McNary act and from commercial nurseries.

Despite the fact that Holt county probably leads the state in tree planting activity there still remains much to be done. Many of the older plantings were poorly planned and improperly located to furnish the maximum benefits from such planting. Successful tree plantations result from careful advance planning. By planning ahead and observing older plantations many of the mistakes that have been made in the past may be avoided.

One of the most serious mistakes that has been made and one that is so evident to the highway traveler public every winter is the planting of shelterbelts too close to the north side of roads. The deciding factor in controlling the deposition of snow is the low, tight barrier that first stops the sweep of the wind. Such a barrier, consisting of closely spaced shrubs or redcedar, will normally drop the snow in an area of from 50 to 60 feet in the lee of the barrier. Unfortunately, the many miles of shelterbelts that have been planted along the north side of highways and roads, all have the shrubs and conifers on the south side of the planting. These shelterbelts, of from seven to ten rows in width, can be made effective in controlling snow drifting on the roads by the planting of shrubs and conifers along the north side.

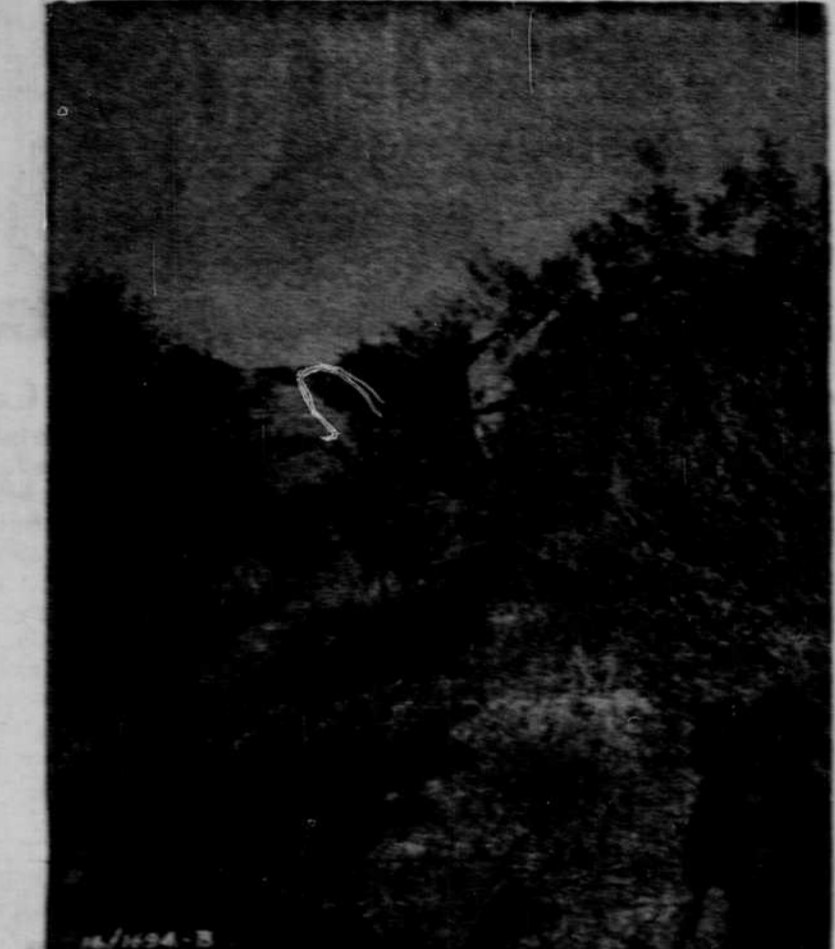
Overtopping
This is the logical solution to this snow drifting problem, and less costly than the complete removal of the shelterbelt. Complete removal of all trees along the highway would to a large extent correct this nuisance but would also destroy all of the many benefits to be derived from these plantations. By properly planting these roadside plantings, all of the benefits may be obtained with none of the disadvantages. In North Dakota, where long winters and much snow is the rule, all shelterbelts along roads are placed back from the roads a distance of seven to 10 rods. This leaves a large enough area to be economically utilized either for annual crops or alfalfa and grass, and insures against snow drifting on the roads.

A similar situation is often found in the location of windbreaks planted for the protection of the farmstead. Too often these windbreaks have been planted so close to the buildings and lots that heavy drifting of snow in the yards occurs every winter. Here, again, advance planning can result in a properly located and constructed barrier that will efficiently do the job intended. The tight barrier of closely spaced, low shrubs and redcedar should be placed on the southside of the windbreak on the north and west sides, and far enough from the main buildings and yards to allow space for the drifted snow. A 10-row windbreak will normally hold all or most of the snow within the planting, and the resultant moisture will greatly add to the vigor, health and life of the trees.

Another phase of advance planning, and one that is as important as the location of the planting, is the determination of the kinds of trees to be used. Much can be learned by observing the results that have been



In 1947 there was a sea of sand on the Fred Lindberg farm north of O'Neill. A conservationist examines new growths of red cedar (above) and black locust (below) photographed during 1953.



obtained in the locality with various species of trees and shrubs. Windbreak and shelterbelt plantations should be made up of several species of trees with varying characteristics. To be effective, the protective barrier should have height, density, and long life. Of less importance, but often desirable, is rapid growth. To obtain all of these characteristics it is necessary to choose several species of trees and shrubs that are adapted to local conditions of climate and soil.

Snow Drifting
For the outside north and west row such shrubs as Tatarian honeysuckle, lilac, cotton-aster, and American plum can be used. The second row should be planted to evergreens, preferably red cedar. The red cedar will maintain its lower branches and remain dense to the ground for many years. The Ponderosa pine is less valuable for this row because of its tendency to shed its lower branches quite early in life and will not present a satisfactory barrier to surface winds. It can be used in the third row adjacent to the redcedar. Because the pine requires light and cannot withstand overtopping by other trees. Broad-leaf trees which are used adjacent to it should be slower growing and should not have a wide-spreading habit of growth. For this position in the planting green ash, honey locust, or

trees in the interior of the planting. This can be obtained satisfactorily with Russian olive or with the evergreen.
Of utmost importance is the success of any plantations is: (1) adequate ground preparation, (2) thorough cultivation until the trees shade the ground, and (3) protection of the trees from livestock. Without careful attention to these items, the cost and effort of planting trees is wasted.
Assistance in planning all types of tree plantations is readily available through the county agricultural agent or the technicians of the soil conservation service. Don't hesitate to call on them.

O'Neill News

Mr. and Mrs. Weston D. Whitner and son spent Sunday in Tilden visiting Mrs. Whitner's parents, Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Larson.
Visiting at the homes of Mr. and Mrs. Adolph Wetzler and Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Buel in Gregory Sunday were Mr. and Mrs. Roy A. Worth and family, Mr. and

Mrs. Ben Wetzler, Mrs. Mary Wetzler and Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Worth.
Guests of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Franklin Saturday were Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Peck and Mr. and Mrs. Grafton Franklin, all of Verdell.
Mr. and Mrs. Howard D. Manson were dinner guests Sunday of Mrs. Manson's mother, Mrs. Sidney E. Anderson, west of Elgin.
Weekend guests at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Schmit of Nenzel were their son and his family, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Schmit and Mrs. Ed Jankowski.
P-TA food sale. Rally IGA store, 1 p.m. Saturday, March 3.
Lunch guests Saturday of Mrs. Martha Ross were Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Miller, Bruce and Curtis. Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Ross, Rommie and Mary called on her Saturday evening.
Saturday Mrs. John Harrington, Marlene and Jimmy, Mr. and Mrs. A. F. Stanton and Mrs. Thomas Donlin visited Mrs. James Ryan in Bonesteel, S.D., and Mr. and Mrs. John Murray in Spencer.

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