

Prairieland Talk

Fine Old Home Still Beautiful

By ROMAINE SAUNDERS, Retired, Former Editor The Frontier

LINCOLN—There are many beautiful, well kept homes in O'Neill, mostly those built in recent years. Yet none surpasses in either architectural design or front yard approach of one of the oldest resident properties in the city, now the home of Mr. and Mrs. James Ryan on First street, the house that John Smoot built and called home in the long ago, when it and the J. H. Meredith home were the only two houses in that block and but one in the block to the east, the Andy Baldwin cottage which still stands facing what now is Everett street.



Romaine Saunders

In those early days streets, mere cow trails, were not dignified by giving them names. Smoot was O'Neill's first resident barber with a shop, shaving mug rack on the wall, Police Gazette with racy pictures and stories for loafers and customers to look at, and the barber chair was a box on a stool, with chairs installed later. That barbershop is now the sanctuary of a religious group. The mistress of the former Smoot home is a daughter of the pioneer Elsworth Mack who was the son of a pioneer member of the Methodist church that Rev. Bartley Blain founded, and I as a youthful church-goer recall the the Senior Mack passing the collection plate as he urged the worshipper to "give liberally." But they had little to give in those pioneer times.

Whether the "mistress of the mansion" or her Jim is primarily responsible, the first residence property on the village of O'Neill's west side is now one of the city's finest.

What goes on down in old Egypt does not concern prairieland citizens other than a mild interest in what others of the earth bound creatures are up to. The canal problem is at a standstill now the Egyptian government comes up with a law requiring all business places to close on Friday, the Sabbath of the 400,000,000 Moslems, fines and imprisonment for all who disregard their countries "customs and traditions."

A block or two from where my typewriter is parked a friend with the Irish love of the music of words along with a bit of Yankee inventive ability has solved the dead leaf situation on the blue grass lawn he mows. Attaching a "grinder" to his lawn mower the leaves are ground up and left as powder to fertilize the lawn. The dead leaf and dry grass is nature's way of enriching the soil.

All postoffices are getting ball point pens, which reminds us that as soon as all the banks switch over, a person with a fountain pen won't have a downtown station to fill it.

One of the inherent dangers in big government is that the bigger government gets, the smaller are the people who are willing to run it.

Money is said to talk, but it never gives itself away.

Lesson from Romans

While we're thinking about improvements in communication which, slowly but surely, are bringing the world closer together, let us not forget one heritage from those extraordinary engineers of ancient Rome.

The highways they built throughout the empire endured through many centuries following. Buried stretches of them are always being dug up here and there. And by accident or design, the "tread" of so many Roman chariots and carts measured the same that the ruts worn in these wonderful roads established a sort of "gauge" which mediaeval wagon-makers, perforce, had to follow.

This wheel tread was 4-ft. 8 1/2-in. wide. And, the theory goes, when early railroad builders put flanges on stage coaches and "wains", the rails they laid had to be 4-ft. 8 1/2-in. apart. Enough of such trackage has been laid during the ensuing years so that when a move toward standardization got under way it swept toward a dimension set, perhaps, in some unknown ancient wheelwright's shop. Today, says the magazine Railway Progress, five-eighths of the world's 800,000 miles of railroads are "standard gauge."

During the visit last week of J. Henry Scudamore, an English farmer, who stopped at the Clarence Ernst home near here, the topic of Roman-built roads crept into the conversation.

Roman roads and routes still are very much in use in England. They're not as smooth as the tarmac (asphalt) but far more serviceable.

Scudamore aved a group of Ernst's friends with his description of the durability of the ancient Roman roads, when the empire extended into the British Isles.

From such little fountains do large streams flow.

Terrific Loyalty

Guest editorial from the Nebraska (Geneva)Signal

At this point in the Cornhusker football season it seems safe to say the miracle many of us hoped for didn't materialize.

We refer to our hopes for this year as expecting a miracle because all of us knew the new coaching staff was facing some tremendous problems. Lack of experienced men in several positions, loss of several good prospects and unfortunate injuries to others were not concealed from us. Furthermore, we knew Nebraska lacked depth, an absolute necessity if we are to stay in big time football.

In spite of these facts, many of us hoped something would happen to make the picture pleasing to Nebraskans. We knew Pete Elliott was no magician but still we hoped he could do something dramatic that would bring us to the top again, without doing what we secretly knew had to be done. The "miracle" may come to pass even yet, as Nebraska has several opportunities to do the unexpected but we believe most of us now have our feet on the ground and our heads out of the clouds.

Now that we are forced to face reality we might as well do so with patience. We believe most Nebraskans still have faith in the new coaching staff. We still believe our prayers can be as good as those at other schools. We still have a terrific amount of Cornhusker loyalty. That is where we stand at present.

Mixed Blessing

Red, white and blue mail boxes may be said to be a mixed blessing.

They simplify life for the man who wants to mail a letter, but at the expense of the man who is looking for a barber shop.

Items out of the past may be of interest to some Frontier readers follow: A cow in the Art Doolittle herd gave birth to a calf with two heads. . . H. L. James bought a Belgian stallion for service on the ranch. . . Raymond Bly family visited Mrs. Bly's parents to the south of the lake. . . E. E. Young family were Sunday guests of Mrs. Riley and Mr. and Mrs. Baker. . . J. Roblyer, formerly of Swan precinct but at the time living near Atkinson, found two of his sheep had been stolen during the night. . . W. R. Shaw, John Kennedy and H. L. James as judges and Art Doolittle and Romaine Saunders as clerks served on the Swan precinct election board. (Art Doolittle the only one of the group still is in Swan precinct). . . Mr. and Mrs. Tom Baker and John Brewer made a business trip to Omaha and Lincoln. . . Melvin and Marvin Meals of the George Meals family south of Atkinson were headed for the barnyard with a load of hay drawn by a span of gray horses favorites of many years on the ranch when one of the horses dropped dead.

Some firsts: The first child born in O'Neill was a son of Mr. and Mrs. James Ryan, born in March, 1875. The first wedding united two couples, Neil McHavie and Ellen Thompson; Samuel Wolf and Sarah Thompson. The first death in O'Neill took a daughter of the Michael McGrath household in February, 1875. . . Odd Fellow lodge organized November, 30, 1876.

October passed out amid crashing thunder, rain and raging winds. Bright sun-drenched days and calm nights of early autumn touched prairieland as if to weep over departing days of sunshine the heavens poured out rain and we step across into November to greet again the melancholy days of the passing fall season. The rain has been a blessing and who can deny it was in answer to prayers of many of a church group who had appointed a day to pray for rain.

Out of the weeks and months that are gone. Memories come as we journey on To brighten the lengthening pathway That leads to the close of earth's little day.

He could whistle like a Yankee, smile like a prairieland kid but spoke broken English. I made out that he was from old Mexico, up here attending college taking a course in agriculture, among other studies, a young man interested to the point of devotion to learn the modern American methods of farming. Within him stirs the milk of human breasts the world over, and he extended a hand to help an aged fellow being across a busy street when the venerable patriarch came his way. The college he is here to attend turns out preachers, teachers, office secretaries, business executives, furniture makers, farmers, printers and editors and Phd's.

Memorial services, flags at halfmast, at the Lincoln Air Base for the men from that flying field that went to watery graves when their ship of the air apparently exploded and wreckage and men fell into the sea in a flight over the Atlantic. There were 57 aboard the plane who have joined the countless number to sink into the ocean's depth "with bubbling groan, without a grave, unconfirmed and unknown."

Think You're a Bore?

If you think you're a bore, the chances are you're not, writes I.A.R. Wylie in the November issue of the Reader's Digest. The outstanding characteristic of the bore is that he never knows it. Miss Wylie says that the bore is "too self-satisfied, too insensitive, or too busy entertaining himself to be concerned with his effect on others." There is a cure for him, however, if he can only be made to realize his sad condition.

There are a vast number and variety of bores, the writer says. One of the worst examples is the "narrator who starts a story with his grandmother, explores every branch of his family tree and ends up with remote descendants."

Then there is the "jokester bore" and the "hypochondriac bore" and the "snob bore." The varieties are endless, all characterized by intense absorption in oneself.

Miss Wylie regards boredom as a serious, infectious, spiritual sickness. It can be cured if caught before it becomes chronic. The cure: to "stay alive and interested not only in our own affairs of the world around us. The man who is never bored himself, never bores others."

The writer advises all bores and potential bores to heed the prayer of the old Scot: "O Lord keep me alive while I am still living."

Crisis-to-Crisis

Now that the election is over, we can settle down to our workdays tasks.

Worldwide, however, we seem to be living from one crisis to the next.

Or is there no more or no less strife in the world? Is it the instantaneous communications and the dramatics that go with it that haunt us from crisis-to-crisis?

The current issue of U. S. News & World Report makes a sobering observation that makes us wonder where we've been these last few years. The excellent news magazine points up that Uncle Sam is committed militarily, through pacts, alliances and organizations, in at least 60 countries in the event "little wars" break out.

Meanwhile, all of our defense spending has been strategically pointed toward a "big war."

Beneficial moistures during these past two weeks have helped to brighten the countryside, despite the season, and bolster the spirit of the people—not to mention conditioning the soil for next spring.

THE FRONTIER

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When You and I Were Young . . .

Cattle-at-Large to Be Stopped

Poundmaster Will Evoke Law

50 Years Ago
B. A. Johring, city poundmaster, says it is his intention to put a stop to cattle running at large and warns all having livestock of any description running loose to take the same up or he will impound it. . . Earl Zimmerman surprised his parents by arriving unawares for a few weeks' stay from the naval hospital corps with the battleship Virginia. . . For sale: A carload of apples at J. U. Yantzi's store, one door east of Bentley's grocery store—J. D. Troyer. . . Dr. Aitken, Josiah Coombs, E. I. Parker and Howard Ware of Spencer drove to O'Neill and took a train for Wood Lake for a week's hunting.

20 Years Ago
Judge Robert R. Dickson had

3,508 votes to James J. Harrington's 2,699, without the mail votes, in the district judge election. . . Emil Block, northwest of town, has twin heifer calves, each weighing 65 pounds and both white faced Herefords. . . Born to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Fox, a daughter, Barbara Lea, and to Mr. and Mrs. Harry Prouty, a girl, born at the Spencer hospital. She is their only daughter, acre being five older brothers. . . Mrs. Mary Plants, a resident of Emmet the past 13 years, died at the home of her granddaughter, Mrs. Elwin Thompson of O'Neill. . . Miss Dotty McNally entertained 14 friends at a Halloween party.

10 Years Ago
Mrs. Charles Richter, 60, a lifelong resident of Holt county, died after a year's illness. 3,000 head of livestock were unharmed at a fire at the Atkinson Livestock Market. Virtually every building except one was destroyed. . . Mrs. Charles Edwards, 3, and Miss Doris Vargason, about 19, both of Chambers and Len Quim, 25, of Worley, Ida., were killed in an auto accident, in which two of Mr. Edwards'

trip, Viola Z. and Gerald, 4, were seriously hurt.

One Year Ago
Twenty-eight men with 12 cornpickers worked on the Glen Stewart farm near Page because of a back injury to Mr. Stewart. . . M. B. Huffman has purchased controlling interest in the Commercial bank at Bassett. . . Mrs. John Rotherham, who lived six miles south of Inman and two miles east, died after a six months' illness. . . Clarence Hoxsie, 68, a lifelong O'Neill resident, died. . . The top three essays on soil conservation were written by Ruth Osborne of district 100, Richard Ernst of district 90 and Robert Collins of district 180. . . Oscar Eaton, 17, and Lyle Kopejka, both of Inman, were sworn into the navy.

Jean Thurber Wins State 4-H Honor—
BURWELL—Jean Thurber, 16, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Willis R. Thurber of Burwell, is one of 16 state 4-H club award winners. . . She will receive a wrist watch from the Wilson Packing company for her leadership work.

Miss Minnie Gathje Seized by Pupils

ATKINSON—Mrs. Ethel Linville, teacher of school district 99, took the pupils of her school to the home of Miss Minnie Gathje, who has been an invalid for a number of years (victim of polio when a child). They entertained her Wednesday afternoon with a choral, readings, recitations and songs, and also presented her with a Halloween treat. . . Guests last weekend at the Roy Berner home were his mother and sister, Mrs. Clara W. Berner and Muriel, his aunt, Miss Clara Berner and Mr. and Mrs. George Schelley, all of Norfolk.

They came for little Suzanne Elizabeth Berner's baptismal.

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