

Prairieland Talk

Neglected to Arrange for Water

By ROMAINE SAUNDERS, Retired, Former Editor The Frontier

LINCOLN—A lady up at Bassett, writing a thesis entitled "The Settlement and Development of the Northeast Sandhills," has asked us what information I could give her relating to early day irrigation proposals in this territory.

Many schemes sprouted in the active brains of energetic gents in O'Neill. Irrigation, sugar beet growing, a chicory factory that functioned for a time grinding up the chicory plants into "coffee," a meat packing plant, a creamery, a brickyard, railroads, artesian wells, rainmakers and race horses.



Romaine Saunders

In the early 1890's the Elkhorn Irrigation Canal, a ditch from Cherry county across Brown, Rock and Holt, sprang into life on paper to be financed by bonding the precincts in these counties through which the ditch was to pass and all adjacent territory benefited thereby. It was never quite clear where the water was to come from.

Another and later irrigation proposal that the lady at Bassett mentioned at the Golden Irrigation ditch which culminated in Ditch Company cattle ranch layout in the Dry creek country and ended up as a little lake out there that became a resort for O'Neill bloods. Irrigation and the various other pioneer projects passed out of the picture for nature to take over and convince promoters that prairieland is the grass, hay and cow country of America.

The first herds bore the brand of the Spade Outfit, the first bale of hay was the work of the capable hands of Tremaine VanValkenberg of Inman and the first prairieland song came from a homestead pioneer south of Inman who wrote the "Little Old Shanty on My Claim"—"My ears are tough as leather and they flop in windy weather, but I'm happy as a clam in this land of Uncle Sam while holding down my claim!"

It will be Governor McNichols for Lieut. Gov. Steve McNichols of Colorado, a cousin of the late Billy McNichols. The recently elected governor of Colorado is a son of William McNichols of a pioneer O'Neill family. His father left O'Neill many years ago for Colorado and for some years past has been a city official of Denver. His son now becomes chief executive of that Rocky Mountain State.

"Vanishing Prairie" is the title of a group of pictures now being shown on the screen. Seventy years ago there were pioneer patriots on nearly every quarter section where now none remain. Settlers have vanished but the prairie remains as it was a hundred, twenty years ago. As recently as 40 years back, 25 miles south of O'Neill, in the adjoining county of Wheeler there was a homestead family on every section. Today there are none, the open prairie remains, human habitation has vanished. Where the compiler of Prairieland Talk was a homestead lad in the long ago there were lights in the windows at night. Today there is neither window nor light. The virgin prairie remains stretching to distant horizons robbed in velvet green in summer, now this November clothed in a robe of autumn colors, the feeding grounds of beef herds where buffalo once roamed. Vanishing Prairie—generations are born, live their little day and pass on; the prairie stays with us.

Editorial

K-12 Move Is Tempered

Proponents of the K-12 school redistricting proposal, including the state board of education, state education commissioner, school groups and other enthusiasts, have had a change of heart lately. Whether or not the election results have influenced the softening attitude, we cannot say.

The K-12 plan is a device under which each district in Nebraska would HAVE to offer schooling from kindergarten through high school. If made into law, this would have the effect of forcing "shotgun" mergers of school districts and bringing numerous rural districts under a single administrative head.

Of course, the basis for the K-12 movement is to insure that all property in the county proportionately pays for the maintenance of the high school; whereas, it is contended, some people virtually escape school taxes under Nebraska's horse-and-buggy school system.

K-12 enthusiasts point out that Nebraska has many more school districts than Texas. However, they fail to state that some of the Texas districts have from five to a dozen schools within the district.

The Nebraska legislative council, meeting in Lincoln last week, rejected the K-12 redistricting proposal on the theory the final word should be left with the local people. And, in post-election decisions, some farm groups and education groups see the light and now recommend the redistricting technique should be a matter of "deducting" the people.

State Senator Frank Nelson of O'Neill steadfastly has argued both on the floor and before civic, teacher and parent groups that the voluntary redistricting is the only way.

"We will have lost something of far more value if the forced redistricting is imposed. Forced redistricting is not democratic," he contends. And Senator Nelson is correct.

Thus the K-12 movement has been tempered somewhat.

It is reassuring to us that a far-sighted, studious and seasoned man like Frank Nelson has been returned to the legislature.

Senator Nelson's wisdom has helped short-stop other rare notions for legislation and, by virtue of his overwhelming reelection earlier this month, he can be depended upon to continue.

Usually his "shortstopping" is not dramatic, but he plays the game cautiously, and to our knowledge, has never fumbled the ball.

Meanwhile, The Frontier feels that redistricting needs a shot-in-the-arm, all right, but the "shotgun" approach is the incorrect way to go about it.

Redistricting in Holt, Boyd and Rock counties, for example, is attended by certain problems that do not exist in Burt, Washington and Dodge counties. Well-graded and graveled roads at every section line and denser population make redistricting simple, even on a voluntary basis, compared to vast distances and sparse population such as we have to deal with in Holt.

Not Good Ambassadors

American soldiers in general prove to be sorry ambassadors in times of peace. Whether we like to admit it or not, the average American is flamboyant, boisterous and prone to brag a bit about his country.

Because the GI has lived on the highest standard of any peoples in the world, and because

When You and I Were Young . . .

E. E. Babcock Shows Speed in Picking

But Paper Doesn't Tell Full Story

50 Years Ago  
The Page reporter contains this item: "E. Babcock picked 48 rows, 50 rods long, which made 100 bu., in nine hours. How is that for a pick in Holt county?" That is pretty good picking, no doubt, but a better estimate of Mr. Babcock's speed would be made if the reporter would tell us what he picked. Frank Damerio of Phoenix expects to have a phone put in his house this week. Mrs. J. Twyford was quite sick last week but is feeling better. Helen C. Boyd and Floyd J. Kelly were united in marriage.

20 Years Ago  
Mrs. Eliza Graves, 80, died in her sleep at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Iva Dixon. Thelma L. Alm, nine-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Alm, died after an operation for acute appendicitis. Harvey Allen of Page has a mule which he raised himself that is 30-years-old, fat and in condition to work. Another mule, a full sister of the 30-year-old, died a little over a year ago at 29.

10 Years Ago  
The distinguishing service cross was awarded to Bernard F. Co-day of Atkinson, who served as a first lieutenant in the Seventh Infantry regiment in France during World War II. Weddings recently were Miss Beatrice Jar-dee of Stuart and Charles Siegel of Columbus, Miss Dorothy Mae Brandt of Atkinson and Lawrence Schneider of near Stuart, and Beverly Hills, Calif. in a double-ring ceremony. John J. Stein and Frances Louise Myers and Richard R. Stein and Betty Jo Hamilton. The bridegrooms are the sons of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Stein, formerly of O'Neill. In 1907 Zeffa Ziemer and Oscar Marcotte were also married in a double-ring ceremony.

One Year Ago  
Rodney Elkins of Chambers ate the most flapjacks during the veteran's day celebration. Mr. and Mrs. Rex Chapman and five children of Ewing, were hurt when their car hit a patch of ice. Mrs. Cora Tasler, 87, of Atkinson, who traveled by covered wagon to Holt county with her parents, died. The mother of the Riverside church staged a wood-cutting bee at the Don Larson farm. "Grandma" Sarah Evans of Venus, who does her own housework, celebrated her 92d birthday anniversary.

Leader Presented Appreciation Flats  
The Grattan Flats 4-H club held its final meeting for 1956 at the home of Clarence Ernst. All members were present. Members and parents staged a program in honor of the leader, Mrs. Homer Ernst. She was presented a blanket in appreciation for all she did for the club. Grattan Flats club members received 19 blue, 31 red and eight white ribbons for exhibits, demonstrations and judging at the Holt county fair; also two blue, one red, three white and one pink at the state fair and Ak-Sar-Ben. — By Connie Jean Brockman, news reporter.

John Joe Uhl, a student at Creighton University, arrived Wednesday and his sister, Miss Mary Lou, a student at the college of St. Mary in Omaha arrived the same day to spend the holidays with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Norbert Uhl.

Carnival skating party, Thanksgiving night, November 22, at Neligh Rink. 30p

Letters to Editor

Dear Editor:  
Last week, you carried a guest editorial captioned, "How Ya Gonna Keep Them Down on the Farm". And, at the end of the article, the question was posed, "Where are the farmers of 1970 coming from — what is your guess?"

We feel that they are going to be the sons and daughters of the present farmers and ranchers. They may, or may not, have a college degree but our bet is that a larger percentage of them will have. Probably an even larger percentage of them will have some college training.

Farming is no longer a business engaged in by people who do no other job. If the farms and ranches are to be maintained in high productivity through the application of standard conservation and management practices, we feel that the standard of living will be sufficiently high (comparatively) to attract young people with college educations.

At the present time, one of the winners of the recent Sioux City permanent agriculture contest, Merwyn French, jr., has a college degree and is farming and doing a commendable job of it, not because he has to but because that is what he wants to do. There are a number of other young farmers and ranchers in the county who have a college degree and are back on the land by their own choice.

We must keep in mind that modern mechanization is reducing the number of farm people necessary to produce the needs of the nation. For example, an acre of wheat now requires three man hours of labor to produce. Not too many years ago, that same acre of wheat (with probably less yield) required 60 man hours of labor. Although it may not require as many farmers in the future, they will be compelled to do a superb job of management, must know about fertilizers and insecticides, and must conserve the soil to keep it productive.

Perhaps as your guest editorial expressed, farms are being sold in Wisconsin because sons and daughters of the present generation, who have attended college, are not returning to the land. We do not feel that this, and don't believe it will be the case in the future.

High County Soil Conservation District Board of Supervisors

Bonesteel, S. D.  
I heard you on WNEA Night Call, Monday, November 12, and it brought back childhood memories.

I wonder if anyone in reach of your voice had an experience with Kid Wade such as my father had.

My father had but two horses and Kid Wade stole one of those.

As his captors were taking him to the Bassett jail, he gave my father a letter telling him where to find the horse on a ranch in Wyoming.

Always a soft spot in our hearts, for a horse thief, who had some good points.—Mrs. A. D. Pretymann (Just an old lady from Bonesteel, S. D.)

Elkhorn Club Plans Yule Party

The Elkhorn Project club met in the Mrs. Frank Grenier home on Tuesday, November 13, with 17 members and one visitor present. The lesson "Finishes for Furniture", was given by Mrs. Bob Cook, assisted by Mrs. Ed Price. Lunch was served by cohostesses, Mrs. John Kersensbrock and Mrs. Clay Johnson Sr.

The Christmas party will be held at the Mrs. Tess Protovinsky home at 7 p.m., December 11.

Donald Schoenle, a student at the seminary in Elkhorn, plans to spend Thanksgiving at home with his mother, Mrs. Francis Schoenle and daughters.

KC's from 4 Boyd Towns Meet at Lynch

LYNCH—The Boyd county Knights of Columbus council held their November meeting at the American Legion hall Thursday evening, November 15. Members from Butte, Naper and Spencer attended with the Lynch men as hosts.

Other Lynch News

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Barta and Mr. of Dorsey were Lynch callers Saturday.

The junior class is busy practicing their play, "The Groom Said No", a three-act comedy being directed by their sponsor, Joe Peniska. Plans are to present the play the first week in December. Mrs. Violet Tweedy and daughter of Verdel visited with Mrs. Thirza Crawford Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Tuch of Niobrara called at the John Hurd home Tuesday.

Ernest Vomaacka of Gregory, S.D., was a business visitor at the Martin Jehorek home on Monday.

The Raymond Havranek family spent the past week with relatives in Sidney.

Joe Sextro of Butte was a Lynch visitor Thursday.

Mrs. Thomas Muller entertained a group of ladies at her home Monday afternoon.

Eldon Carver of Pierre, S.D., called on old time friends here last weekend.

The Lynch fire department sponsored a Thanksgiving dance in the Lynch Ballroom with the Mullen family furnishing the music.

Georgie Courtney left this week for his base in Othello air force base, Washington having spent 20 days here with his parents and other relatives.

Henry Hulls of Verdel visited relatives here last Sunday.

Lose Weight on High Protein Milk Diet



Drink 3 glasses of milk every day American Dairy Association of Nebraska

HARDING CREAM Phone 84 — O'Neill "Butter Capital of the Sandhills"

Mrs. Joe Fredrickson of Gross visited her sister, Mrs. Nata Bjornsen last Monday. Mr. and Mrs. R. M. Ducker attended the Fred Kaplan funeral at Verdel Monday. Ike McDonald is home for a 20-day furlough with his folks here. He is stationed in Massachusetts. Mr. and Mrs. McDonald met him at Grand Island Sunday. The First Methodist church ladies sponsored their annual bazaar at the American Legion hall Saturday. Chicken dinner was also served.

DANCE American Legion Ball Room O'Neill 3 Big Nights of Dancing Thursday, Friday and Saturday November 22, 23, 24 Music by Star Teens ADM: 50c

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We've Turned the Tables . . . We are having a Pre-Christmas right up to Christmas Day, rather than the old customary "After The Holiday" clean-up sales. Buy your Christmas Gifts when you want them at the prices you want to pay. On all gift and houseware items we will bring you great savings right up to Christmas Day. Look at these for a few samples. Anything we don't have, we will order for you at a reduced price and guarantee delivery by Christmas if ordered within the next three weeks. Regular Sale NORESCO Electric Razors \$24.95 \$19.95 HOOVER "Lark Cleaners" \$89.95 \$59.95 COLORFLYTE Dish Sets \$14.95 \$12.50 SILEX Coffee Server & Warmer 6.75 \$ 5.75 REVERE-WARE Cooking Ware 10% Off & Better on Sets Sunbeam Appliances IF WE QUOTED OUR PRICES IT WOULD START A WAR! YOU CHECK THEM AND THEN COMPARE. Many, Many More Items Too Numerous To Mention And With All of These Low-Low Prices We Are Still Giving TOP-VALUE STAMPS With Each and Every Sale. P.S. Don't forget to look at our complete line of Maytag Appliances. REMEMBER IT PAYS TO GO WEST WM. KROTTER CO. THE COMPLETE FARM STORE IN WEST O'NEILL Serving North-Central Nebraska Since 1891 Audited (ABC) Circulation—2,559 (Mar. 31, 1956)

Together we thank the Power that made and preserved us. By the millions we speak prayers. We sing hymns — and no matter what their words may be, their spirit is the same. In God is our trust. Religion nurtures men of faith, men of hope, men of love, such men are needed in the building of a new world reflecting the glory of God. — Dwight David Eisenhower