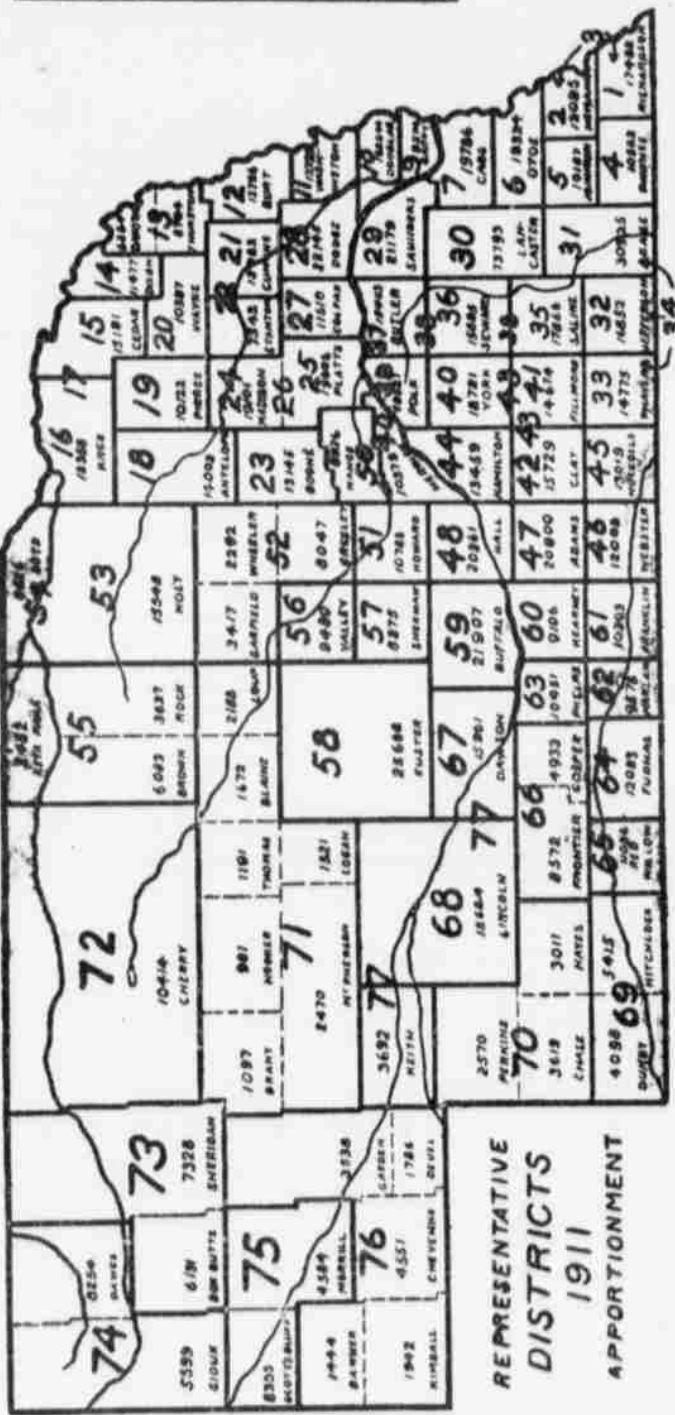
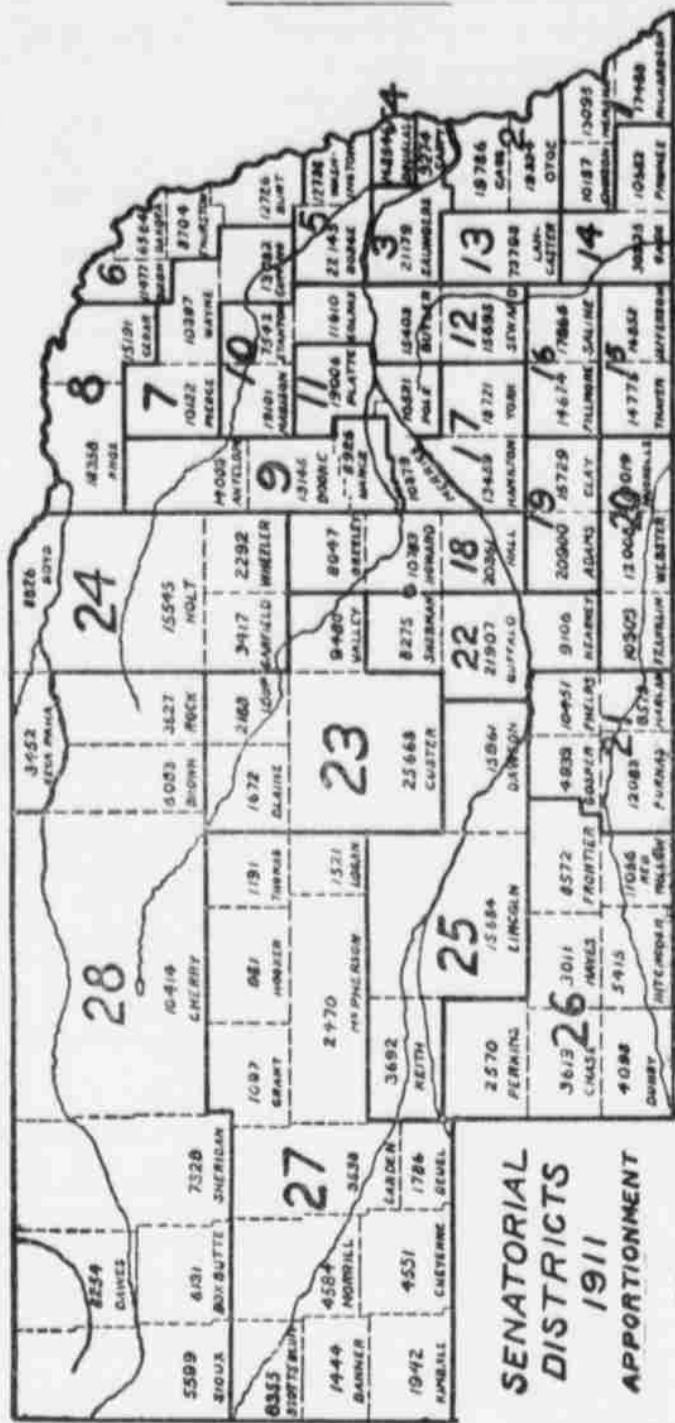


NEBRASKA'S NEW APPORTIONMENT

Senatorial and Congressional Districts as Arranged by Act of the State Legislature



A BUNCH OF VIOLETS

By CLARISSA MACKIE

It was one of those uptown cross-streets whose dividing line is Broadway. No. 87, west, was one of many handsome stone dwellings, while No. 87, east, was merely a shabby boarding house given over to the accommodation of working girls.

Esther Mason wearily climbed the stairs of No. 87 east, and paused as Mrs. Beggs' shrill voice called her name from the hall below.

"Here's something for you—a boy left it a few minutes ago—flowers, I guess! Suppose your beau sent 'em," said the boarding house mistress as Esther descended the stairs.

The girl's face flushed as she took the square box and examined the address on the violet and gold cover. "Miss Esther Mason, No. 87 East—sixth street." Surely it must be for her, and yet—who would send her a box of flowers on her birthday? Save for the few persons in the office where she was employed she had scarcely an acquaintance in New York—and as for the home people? Esther swallowed a little sob and with a murmured word of thanks to Mrs. Beggs she ran lightly up the stairs to her little room and tossed the box on her narrow bed.

When she had removed her outdoor things she bathed her face and brushed her dusky hair into satin smoothness before she sat down.

All the home folks had passed away to another and more beautiful country two long years before Esther had taken her small patrimony and gone bravely to the great city to make her way among thousands of wage-earners. The investment of her money had brought her a business education, and she had slowly worked her way upward until now she could look forward to the time when an increased salary might permit of a more congenial home. In the meantime the little bank account must grow larger.

This was her birthday and she alone knew it. It was a strange coincidence that some one—some new-found friend might send her some flowers on that day.

She lifted the cover and gazed with delight upon an immense bunch of violets.

Still mystified and yet with a feeling of relief that she might not be obliged to return the gift to some unrecognized donor, she arose with the quick decision that was characteristic of her and changed her gown for the pretty pale gray that was her best.

When the large gray hat with its single long gray feather was perched on her pretty head and the fragrant violets were pinned at her waist, Esther ran down the stairs and knocked at the door of Mrs. Beggs' sitting-room.

"I am going out to dinner, Mrs. Beggs," she called softly.

It was after 6 o'clock and the streets and shops were brilliantly lighted. Esther hummed a little song as she turned into Fifth avenue and made her way toward a large and fashionable hotel.

She knew all about this hotel—rich and fashionable people dined there every night. This was her birthday and she was alone. She would treat herself to the luxury of a perfectly cooked dinner and while she listened to the music she might see all these great people whose gay doings filled much space in the newspapers.

Ten minutes later she was seated in a quiet corner of the immense restaurant with hundreds of tables glittering with silver and cut glass.

As she ate the delicious meal, the payment for which would drain her purse to the bottom, her beautiful eyes took in the varied charm of the scene. The handsome gowns of the women; the quiet well bred air of the men; the lovely girls, most of them her own age, to whom this dinner was a common occurrence.

At the next table to Esther's sat an elderly woman, gowned in soft black lace with a jeweled butterfly quivering above her snow white hair. With her was a tall young man with serious gray eyes and handsome face bent above the menu card. In the pauses of the music their conversation floated in snatches to the young girl at her solitary table.

"You are not wearing my violets, Aunt Esther," said the young man after a while. "You said you wanted violets."

"I haven't received them, Dick," returned his companion; "I supposed you had forgotten them or that you would stop for them on the way to the theater."

"They were ordered—let me see, I bought them in a little shop just off the avenue—some German name, Reinz, I believe—he said he would send them over immediately. Some mistake, I suppose, for I distinctly told him they were for Miss Esther Mason, 87 West—sixth street." The young man lifted his eyes and encountered the gaze of a pair of startled brown ones whose like he had never seen before.

In wondering delight he noted the brown of the eyes, and the distinct black of the curling lashes and delicately marked brows.

She had heard the conversation about the violets and understood. The name on the florist's box had been "Reinz" and there was another "Miss Esther Mason" for whom the blossoms had been purchased. A stupid shopman and the mere difference of east and west—and a singular coincidence of names—had completed the tangle.

The violets were not hers. They belonged to that beautifully gowned woman at the next table who was drawing on her white gloves and preparing for her departure.

Esther paid the waiter and slipped into her loose gray cloak. With a graceful movement she crossed to the next table and bent over her astonished namesake.

"I must ask your pardon," said Esther composedly, "but I could not help overhearing your conversation about the violets. My name is Esther Mason and I live at 87 East—sixth street. Tonight I received this beautiful bunch of violets and as there was no card—why I just thought they came because it was my birthday. It did not occur to me there might have been a mistake—the address was so plain on the box."

As she spoke, Esther unpinned the flowers and laid them on the table beside Miss Mason, but the older woman thrust them back into her hands.

"No, no, my dear, you must keep them; it is your birthday—and I am very glad that you have them." She smiled sweetly at the lovely young face bent above her own and as she looked, a puzzled expression came into her eyes. She flashed a quick glance toward the table where the girl had been sitting, and then added: "You are alone—here—tonight?" Perhaps your friends are waiting for you."

Esther flushed and drew back. "I am all alone," she said with dignity. "I came here to dine this evening because it was my birthday and I wanted a treat—the violets tempted me—they seemed to lure me into spending one delightfully luxurious evening. If you will not take the violets, Miss Mason, let me thank you for them and say good-night."

She turned away with a slight inclination of the head, but the older woman's hand caught hers and detained her.

"Wait a moment, please. You did not understand me, my dear. I asked about your friends because I thought I might recognize among them one whom I knew—your face is so familiar—it is very like—someone I knew." Miss Mason's own face was pale now and her dark eyes shone strangely.

Esther hesitated an instant, then her firm white chin went up never so slightly. "I am sure you cannot have known my people, Miss Mason. You see, No. 87 East is a boarding house and I am merely a working girl. My people are all dead." Her lips quivered slightly, and Dick Redmond suddenly dropped his eyes from her face and twisted his dinner card viciously.

Miss Mason leaned back a little wearily and dropped the girl's hand. "I am very sorry," she said gently; "but I was sure—you look so like Tom Mason, he was my cousin."

"My father's name was Tom Mason—Tom Henry Mason they called him," said Esther quietly. "You see we are Maryland people. They are all dead—every one save some distant cousins whom I have never seen."

Miss Mason arose quickly and slipped her arm around Esther's waist. "My dear girl," she half sobbed, "Tom Henry Mason was my cousin—on the other side of the house, Dick—and I really believe you were named for me. There was a misunderstanding between us which was never cleared up. Oh, you must come with us now, let me introduce my nephew, Dick Redmond—my cousin Esther Mason, Dick, is it not delightful that you made the mistake about the violets?"

Dick's hand closed around Esther's and his gray eyes sought hers eagerly. "We are on our way to the theater," explained Miss Mason as they passed into the lobby and made their way to the street, where a handsome carriage waited at the curb. "You must come with us—it is your birthday, you know, and between the acts I will ask you about all your home people and we will lay plans for the future."

Dick, following them into the carriage, mentally decided that he, too, was very lonely and that he would make it his business to relieve his solitary condition at the earliest opportunity.

Perhaps he felt a bit encouraged when, as he left Esther at the open door of No. 87 East, he asked her for some of the violets.

"I could not," said the girl quickly, clapping the bunch with eager hands. "You see they mean so much to me—see what they have brought me tonight!" She waved her hand to Miss Mason in the carriage below and then placed it in Redmond's outstretched palm.

He looked at her from grave eyes. "The violets mean so much to me now—I would like just one," he said.

With downcast face Esther pulled out a little bunch of her precious blossoms and gave them into his hand. Then with a little murmured word of farewell, she disappeared within the door of No. 87 East.

GREAT MAJORITY OF BIRDS OF PREY ARE FRIENDS OF FARMER

Deserving of Protection as They Feed Largely on Noxious Rodents and Larger Insects, Such as Grasshoppers, Crickets and May Beetles and Keep Such Pests Under Control.



Cooper Hawk (Chicken Hawk). (Upper Figure, Adult Male; Lower Figure, Immature Female. One-fourth Natural Size.)

The sooner farmers, ranchmen, horticulturists, and nurserymen learn that the great majority of birds of prey are their friends and deserve protection and that four or five species only are injurious, the sooner will depredations by noxious rodents and insects diminish. In the more thickly settled sections of the country, except at rare intervals, the goshawk, duck hawk, and great horned owl are so infrequent that years may pass without an individual being seen. Two species that need to be kept in check are the sharp-shinned and Cooper hawks, small and medium sized species which feed almost entirely on wild birds and poultry. The illustration will materially assist those interested in identifying these birds.

The important fact to bear in mind is that all hawks and owls feed largely on noxious rodents and the larger insects, such as grasshoppers, crickets, and May beetles, and, from their size and voracious appetites, are important factors in reducing the numbers of such pests and keeping them under control.

Ravens, crows, and jays also do effective work in destroying pests. Occasionally, however, in localities where they have increased out of proportion to the available food supply, they become troublesome by killing small chickens and destroying eggs and nestlings of wild birds.

It is demonstrable that so long as a useful species is kept within bounds and is not allowed to increase beyond its normal food supply, just so long will it fulfill its natural mission and be of true economic value. If, however, the staple of food supply temporarily falls, then in the effort to main-

tain life the animal is likely to become obnoxious and may have to be controlled.

The annual loss of crops by insect and mammal pests in the United States amounts to many millions of dollars. Moreover, not only is this loss diminishing, but on the contrary, it is steadily increasing, partly as a result of the encroachments of new insect enemies, partly from the increase of both insect and rodent pests—for the number of these naturally grows with the extension of tillage—and partly, perhaps mainly, because of the destruction of their natural enemies. These, instead of being permitted to keep pace with the multiplication of the pests upon which they feed, have been destroyed until their numbers are entirely inadequate to preserve the balance. It is therefore of first importance that the farmer and stockman should everywhere seek to protect and encourage the natural foes of injurious mammals and insects.

Milk and Butter.

Shipping milk seemed to pay better than making butter, so father and sons sold the cows which were not big milkers and bought Holsteins, getting a registered bull. They now have mostly full-bred Holstein cows and heifers of which they are justly proud.

Run-Down Farm.

Many a young farmer with small capital would probably do better to go east and buy a run down farm with substantial building and fencing on it rather than pay two or three times as much for raw land in the bitter climate of Canada.

STRONG STUMP-PULLING DEVICE



Realizing the importance of a cheap and effective method of removing stumps with so many farmers who are not able to buy or obtain a modern expensive outfit, I thought I would send you an illustration of a plan (while old) which I have seen used with great success, writes O. F. Holmes, Luray, Va., in Progressive Farmer, and which has the treble merit of being effective, cheap and not patented.

The outfit consists of two screw jacks—those I saw used had 1 1/2-foot lift working in cast iron pedestals—a stout log chain, a stout beam 8 feet long and about as heavy as two men would want to carry, and two pieces of plank for the jacks to stand on. Place the beam across the largest and stoutest root of the stump, one jack

on each side and as near the stump as the roots will allow, and resting on a piece of plank. The chain is passed around the beam and the root. One man at each jack will raise almost any stump to the full lift of the screw, which, in most cases, is sufficient; if not, place a stud under each end of the beam; let down the jacks and place blocks under them; give the stump another lift.

Two men can pull from twenty to fifty stumps a day, and the outfit will not cost over \$15 to \$20, while the jacks are useful for many other purposes, and can frequently be hired from some party who possesses them. Or, if you cannot borrow them, have a neighbor or two join in the purchase of the outfit, which will make it cheap to each in case you have to buy.

May Open Lands to Entry.
Washington.—The senate on Thursday passed the Gamble bill opening to agricultural entry 1,200,000 acres of land on the Cheyenne Indian reservation in South Dakota.

Foreign Wheat Acreage.
Washington.—The International Institute of Agriculture at Rome, Italy, has cabled the United States Department of Agriculture the following foreign crop information: The area sown to winter wheat in Belgium this season is 104 per cent of last season's area; in Spain 95 per cent; in France 112 per cent; in Great Britain 106 per cent; in Canada 97 per cent; in British India 99 per cent. Weather conditions are favorable for winter cereal crops and their germination is regular.

Want Lower Rates.
Excessive freight rates and unfair competition in the state were the chief objects of discussion taken up by the State Association of Monument Dealers which met in Lincoln. Many of those present argued that the trade is discriminated against in this state by the railroads, in that marble for buildings and construction work is differently classified in the freight schedules. An effort will be made to take this matter up with the interstate commerce commission for adjustment.

Ben Craven Found Guilty.
Guthrie, Okla.—Charles J. Maust, under trial under the name of Ben Craven for murder, was found guilty by a jury in the federal court. Punishment is life imprisonment.

Discussion of Rates.
Kansas City.—Railroad rate experts from six middle western states, composing a special committee of the National Industrial Traffic League, met here on Thursday to discuss the rate ruling known as western classification No. 51, which is to go into effect February 15. The ruling affects all railroads between the Mississippi river and the Pacific seaboard. It submitted more than 1,700 subjects recommending changes in ratings on about 5,000 articles in the new order of things.

Scoffs at Universal Peace.
In a stirring address in which he scoffed at the idea of universal peace advocated by President Taft and a multitudinous array of peace societies, Pastor E. T. Russell of the central conference of Seventh Day Adventist churches declared before the delegates of the central and northern conferences, in session at Lincoln recently, that the last message to a doomed world is now going to the utmost corners of the earth and that Christ is soon to return. Meantime we are being glorified by his coming.