



# THE FRONTIER



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## PRAIRIE FIRES RAGE SUNDAY IN SOUTHERN PART OF THE COUNTY

Fires Caused By Lightning Break Out In Five Localities, Keeping Fighters On The Jump.

Last Sunday was field day for old fashioned prairie fires, driven to fury by a dry hurricane from the southwest, that was estimated at 30 miles an hour at times. In the Chambers territory, in the southern part of the county, heavy clouds hung all day Sunday. Sprinkles of rain fell now and then. Now and again a bolt of lightning generated, striking in most cases, hay stack butts which were hot and dry and easily fired.

In the forenoon a prairie fire started near the farmer's consolidated school, along highway No. 281, a few miles south of Ed. Porter's service station. This fire was reported to have offered stiff resistance but was extinguished with loss of considerable meadow grass. The fire was on or near the Robert Starr ranch.

A second prairie fire originated following a bolt of lightning northwest of the Porter gas station, five miles east of Chambers, on the Porter farm. A general alarm was reported broadcast over telephone lines and the many persons responding quickly extinguished the blaze with loss of only an unknown number of acres of meadow grass.

Along in the afternoon, at an hour not known here, a third prairie fire flared at a point given as four miles west and two miles south of Chambers. A general telephone call sent additional fire fighters, men, boys, and some women, it was reported, out to stop this fire. The wind during this fire increased and for a time it looked like the entire south part of the county might become a seething furnace. Lightning struck the butt of a hay stack and dry vegetation and wind combined with the blaze to build up another great treat.

At a point one-mile south and three west of Chambers, a fourth fire, also started by lightning, broke shortly after the one mentioned above, and almost exhausted fire fighters had to get into action again to save nearby ranch buildings, hay, fence posts and the town of Chambers. This fire was near the farm of Ray Lienhart. The clouds of smoke rising from this blaze were said to have caused another general alarm to be sent out and at last 500 men and boys responding had to stop at, and extinguish, another fire that was just getting started and which had been burning unknown to anyone.

The harassed fighters were astonished to see another fire, the greatest of the series, casting huge clouds of smoke from a point reported to be in and around an old lake bed lying about seven miles southwest of Chambers. Rank grass and weeds and a stiff gale sent this blaze to great proportions and people flocked from every direction to save their homes and the city of Chambers. Just how many acres burned over during this fire has not been determined here, but judging by the smoke and the duration of the fire, more than one hour, it seems safe to say several hundred acres of grass went up in smoke.

Chambers citizens called on the telephone Sunday night and asked if assistance was needed and detailed reports on the fires from The Frontier, said they had been so busy all day with the fire fighting, and the general excitement, and in view of the wide territory the fires occurred in, definite facts were hard to establish.

No one was known to have been burned nor injured and as far as could be ascertained no buildings burned. A few small stacks of hay, several stack butts and some fence posts and trees and many acres of grass were thought to comprise the loss.

The weather Sunday and Sunday night was a strange condition. Here at O'Neill, dark clouds hung overhead in patches but there was no lightning here. Once or twice during the afternoon heavy thunder was heard here and it was the result of lightning in the vicinity of Chambers, the lightning undoubtedly bending in the atmosphere toward O'Neill, then back and hitting the ground near Chambers. Thunder, it is said, seldom is heard more than 20 miles. To points south and west of Chambers would be 20 miles and more. A south wind, on the other hand, might carry the sound a few miles farther.

Fire fighters came straggling back to Chambers about dark Sunday evening, tired, but satisfied with the days work which must have saved thousands of dollars worth of farm and ranch

buildings and likely the town of Chambers as well.

Only a few drops of rain fell near Chambers all day Sunday and that night. The "dry" lightning found marks of the most inflammable kind, and strong wind fanned the resulting blaze to prairie fires hard to halt. Lightning flashes were seen from here Sunday night to the south but most of these were believed many miles south of Chambers. The wind slowed down about six or seven o'clock Sunday evening.

Three or four general emergency telephone calls flashed over the wires around Chambers Sunday and almost every person able to respond in and around Chambers responded and spent one of the most unusual days of their lives speeding from one fire to another.

The fact that every bale of wild hay that could be spared was sold for South Dakota relief work saved thousands of dollars. Many persons here believed that Chambers was burning, as the smoke was uniformly dark.

## O'NEILL PLACES FIRST IN NIOBRARA VALLEY TRACK EVENT HERE

O'Neill Takes Five Firsts, One Second And Two Thirds On The Track, Placing Twice In The Field.

The annual track and field meet of the Niobrara Valley school conference for 1934 was held here last Saturday afternoon at the fair grounds in a wind that was liberal in advertising the fact that at least part of Holt county is still on the map. No serious accidents were reported, and everybody concerned seemed satisfied. O'Neill, as to points credited, according to a student, won the top honors as well as a cup, Butte won second and Spencer third.

Towns participating, according to this student, were Lynch, Stuart, Chambers, Bristow, Atkinson, Spencer, Inman, Butte and O'Neill.

100 yard dash—Medlin, O'Neill, first; Smith, O'Neill, second; Spencer, third, and Atkinson, fourth. Best time, 10.4.

220 yard dash—Medlin, O'Neill, 1st; Machiesek, Spencer, 2nd; Tremble, Butte, 3rd.

440 yard run—Smith, O'Neill, 1st; Bjornson, Lynch, 2nd; Alexander, Spencer, 3rd, and Bartley, Atkinson, 4th. Time, 59.5.

880 yard run—Bjornson, Lynch, 1st; Sedlacek, Spencer, 2nd, and Sanders, O'Neill, 3rd. Time, 2:18.

Mile run—Calvert, O'Neill, 1st; Barnett, Chambers, 2nd; Luben, O'Neill, 3rd, and Sedlacek, Spencer, 4th. Time 5:12.

60 yard high hurdles—Smith, Inman, 1st; Adkins, Atkinson, 2nd; Statzman, Butte, 3rd, and O'Neill, of Atkinson, 4th.

110 yard hurdles—Smith, Inman, 1st; Adkins, Butte, 2nd; Sedlacek, Spencer, 3rd, and Alexander, Spencer, 4th.

880 yard relay—O'Neill, first; Butte, second, and Spencer, third.

Shot putt—Zink, Lynch, 43-ft. and 1-inch, first; Smith, Inman, second; Fournier, Stuart, third, and Hawkins, Butte, fourth.

Javelin—O'Neill, of Atkinson, 125-ft. and 9-inches, first; Adkins, Butte, second; Smith, Inman, third, and Mlin, ar, Atkinson, fourth.

Discus—Baker, Chambers, 111-ft. and 2-inches, first; Zink, Lynch, second; Hawkins, Butte, third, and Crosser, of Inman, fourth.

High jump—Smith, Inman, 5-ft. 7-inches, first; Adkins, Butte, and Hunter, Stuart, tied for second, and Medcalfe, O'Neill, and Tremble, Butte, tied for third.

Pole Vault—Adkins, Butte, made a record for the conference, 10-ft. and 6-inches. A tie for second place was between Statzman, Butte; Mosieck, Spencer; Hovey, Stuart, and Madison, of O'Neill.

The scholastic contests held here last Saturday in connection with the Niobrara Valley conference field and track meet, including typewriting and shorthand contests, resulted in another win for the contestants of O'Neill. By towns the results were as follows: O'Neill, 41½; Butte 29; Spencer, 28½; Naper, 14½; Bristow 11; Chambers, 7½; Inman, 7; Lynch 5.

## Hospital Notes

Lloyd Cork, of Page, was admitted to the hospital Monday evening with an infected foot, which he injured while on the school campus.

The public is welcome to attend the program given at the O'Neill General hospital on National Hospital day, Saturday, May 12. The program will be found in another column.

## Mrs. C. K. Ernst Is Dead Following Heart Ailment

Following a lingering heart ailment, suffered patiently, death removed Mrs. Christian K. Ernst last Thursday night at her home in southeast O'Neill, at the age of 76 years. Her funeral was held last Sunday and services were at 2 o'clock at the local Presbyterian church in charge of Rev. Jacob Oswald, of Beemer. Burial was in the Menonite cemetery 13 miles north of O'Neill.

Mrs. Ernst was born in New York on December 20, 1858. On November 11, 1877, she was united in marriage to Christian K. Ernst, the ceremony being performed in her native state. Eleven children were born to them, seven of whom survive, five sons and two daughters, who are left to mourn the death of a kind and loving mother. In addition to her own immediate family she leaves one sister and one brother, both of whom reside in New York. Her children are: John and William Ernst, of O'Neill; Christ, Milford, Nebr.; Albert and Edward, Norfolk; Mrs. Maurice Graham, O'Neill, and Mrs. C. S. Kennell, of Beaver Crossing, Nebr.

She came with her husband to Holt county in 1884, coming here from Wesley, Ontario, Canada, and they located northwest of this city where the family resided for several years, until they moved into town.

The passing of Mrs. Ernst removes another of those hardy ones who helped tame Holt county and make of it a great civilized empire. Only recently she recalled again that during 1894 strong winds blew away every bit of the plowed ground on the Ernst farm north of here. She delighted in talking of the old days and the friendliness of the early settlers.

## HOLD FIRST MEETING OF NEW CITY COUNCIL

Frank Phalin Elected President Of The Council, And Appointments Of The Mayor Confirmed.

The city council met and organized Tuesday evening, with Mayor Kersensbrock presiding. Frank Phalin was elected president of the council for the ensuing year. The following appointments were made by the mayor and confirmed by the council:

City Attorney, Emmet Harmon. Chief of Police, John Martin. Engineer at Pump Station, Jesse Scofield.

Medical Advisor, Dr. L. A. Carter. Several bids were presented to the council for the position of street maintainer and the bid of Dug Hunt was considered the lowest and best and he was given the contract for the ensuing year.

Mayor Kersensbrock announced the following committees for the ensuing year:

Street Commissioner—H. E. Coyne. Streets and Alleys—Coyne, Gillespie and Phalin.

Lights—Gillespie, Brennan and Phalin.

Water—Gillespie, Yantzi and Brennan.

Sewer—Phalin, Hartly and Coyne.

Walks and Crossings—Harty, Brennan and Yantzi.

Parks—Yantzi, Coyne and Gillespie.

Auditors—Brennan, Phalin, Coyne. Finance Committee—Coyne, Phalin and Brennan.

Custodian of City Property—Harty. It was decided that the City Clerk would read the meters, make out the bills for water rent and that the collections would be taken care of in the future as they had been in the past by Mrs. Mattie Soukup.

Mrs. J. F. O'Donnell and Mrs. R. R. Dickson entertained at 7 o'clock dinner at the Bakery on Thursday evening complimenting Mrs. D. H. Cronin and her sister, Mrs. F. H. Butts, of Nebraska City, and her Omaha guests. Following the dinner they went to the O'Donnell home for cards where Mrs. Fred H. Butts received the prize for high score and Mrs. Ned Knapp the all out. Later they went to the residence of Mrs. Dickson where refreshments were served.

William Froelich came out from Chicago last Friday night to visit with his family for a few days and also to visit his mother, who has been seriously ill the past few weeks. Mr. Froelich returned to Chicago Monday, being driven to Sioux City by his wife, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Stout.

Mr. and Mrs. Alex Juracek and son, Leonard, and Ernest Juracek, of Star, were shopping in this city Tuesday.

## ST. MARY'S JUNIORS ENTERTAIN SENIORS AT ANNUAL BANQUET

Entertainment Given In St. Mary's Gym, With Dancing Following The Banquet.

Last Thursday, April 26, the Junior Class of St. Mary's was host at a banquet from 6:00 to 11:00 P. M., given for the Seniors.

Since the founding of the Academy in the year nineteen hundred three, when the precedent was established, each Junior Class has "wined and dined" and toasted the departing Seniors; and each Junior Class has always done its best to outdo and surpass the efforts of the preceding sponsors.

This year we believed that the very enterprising Juniors, in collaboration with their excellent teacher, Sr. M. Adelaide, have studied all the methods and possibilities of every banquet since the banquet idea originated, for last Thursday evening was the culmination of all the beauty, artfulness and decorative style, not forgetting artfulness in entertainment, of all the banquets that have ever been given at St. Mary's Academy.

The banquet was held in St. Mary's gymnasium, which was designed and decorated in the Senior Class colors, maroon and gold, as a Japanese garden. Japanese lamps hung from the ceiling; cherry trees bordered around the hall; and a Japanese scheme was carried out in the entertainment. According to tradition the Juniors escorted the Seniors from the assembly hall to the banquet hall. At each Senior's place was found a silver letter opener, a token from the Juniors.

After a delicious repast the toasts were given, each being called upon by Mary Agnes, the toastmaster. Lester Shoemaker toasted our pastor, V. Rev. J. G. McNamara. Father J. H. Ostdeik, a guest at the banquet, was greeted and welcomed by Edna Donson, and Peter Price hailed Rev. B. J. Leahy. After each of these toasts, the priests responded. Dorothy Morrison extolled the praises of the Sisters while Jeanne McCarthy gave the "viva St. Mary's." A farewell and Goodspeed to the Seniors was extended by Hugh Ryan, to which Robert Biglin responded very nobly.

When the toasts were concluded the hall was cleared and the banqueters danced for the remainder of the evening, thus enhancing our full measure of pleasure. Eugene F. Gallagher.

## Brain Tumor Fatal To Robert Gray, Of Page

Robert R. Gray, son of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gray, of Page, died at his home at Page May 2 at 11 o'clock P. M., of tumor of the brain with which he had been afflicted several months, and for which he had been treated by the best surgical and medical practitioners without permanent benefit.

Mr. Gray was born at Silver Creek, Nebraska, November 28, 1882. In company with his parents he came to near Page in 1883, when an infant, and has resided there since that time. The family came from Polk county, Nebraska, and the father and mother, now 86 and 88 years of age, respectively, married in Wisconsin and at once moved to the prairies of Nebraska and made a home and became highly respected pioneers. The parents of Robert R. recently celebrated the 65th anniversary of their wedding.

Robert R. Gray married Evelyn Stevens on November 24, 1904, and there was born to this union the following children: Erma, Verna, Ralph, Euna and Duane, all of Page. Besides the children, his widow survives, and his father and mother and brother, John, of Page, and sisters, Dora of Page, Mrs. Nellie Stevens, of Atkinson, and Mrs. Elsie Wagers, of Lodi, California.

Mr. Gray was a member of the Odd Fellows Lodge and of the Page M. E. church. His funeral will be held from the Page M. E. church with services at 2 o'clock Friday, May 4 and burial will be in the Page cemetery.

Hundreds of May baskets were mysteriously left on porches Monday and Tuesday nights and most of them held something good to eat. The first "May baskets" seen here were bouquets of wild flowers, then came baskets containing flowers, and then came the change to baskets and candy, nuts and pop corn.

George Posvar and his daughter, Maxine, and Goldie Boyle, of Chambers visited here Monday and Tuesday at the home of Mr. and Mrs. James Boyle.

## New Filings For Office

John Sullivan, present chairman of the county board and who has been a member thereof for several years, filed for renomination to that office the first of the week, subject to the action of the democratic voters at the primary election next August.

John P. Sullivan, one of the pioneer residents of Shields township, filed for the democratic nomination for county assessor.

Al Moler, of Rock Falls township, one of the pioneers of that section, filed for the democratic nomination for supervisor from the First district, now represented by J. C. Stein, who has also filed for renomination on the republican ticket.

E. O. Slaymaker, of Stuart, present representative from this district, has filed for renomination on the democratic ticket.

Ed. Matousek, of Atkinson, has filed for the republican nomination for supervisor from the Seventh district.

## EFFECTS OF DROUTH ARE APPEARING IN WINTER WHEAT CROP

Due To Lack Of Weather Interference, Spring Farm Work Is Well Ahead Of Schedule.

The condition of winter wheat was maintained until a week ago. Since then, deterioration has been in evidence according to Nebraska bankers in their mid-month report to the State and Federal Division of Agricultural Statistics. Estimates of abandonment remain about the same. Most of the reports indicate a shortage of moisture. Spring grain, tame hay and pastures are needing moisture.

Winter wheat maintained a satisfactory condition until a week ago when the effect of high winds and continued drouth became apparent. High winds have whipped the leaves and together with the shortage of moisture has caused tip burning in spots. The continuation of drouth will cause serious damage, but most of the crop can recover if it receives ample moisture soon.

Reports on abandonment continue to vary from 6 to 7 percent. Fortunately, most of the wheat had matted the field so that the soil could not blow. Some of the late wheat that did not get a good start last fall and a little on the lighter soil has been injured by moving soil. Ninety per cent of the bankers reports a shortage of moisture and 10 per cent of them report a sufficient supply for the present. District statisticians and others report that small spring grain needs additional moisture. Low temperatures are also unfavorable.

In general, farm work is advanced further than normal for this date. There has not been any delay from spring rain or snow but windy weather has made it very disagreeable to work in the fields. Seeding of small grain began the last week in March and was generally completed by April 18.

Bankers report a rather marked decrease in the spring pig crop. Weather conditions have been favorable for farrowing and saving pigs. Extremely low prices of hogs and 45 cent loans on corn has discouraged the production of pigs. Approximately 75 per cent of the corn land has been signed up under the Corn-Hog Plan.

The general level of grain prices compared to a month ago is slightly downward. The potato price was maintained and hay is slightly higher. The price of hogs decreased considerably. Cattle, lambs and chickens are slightly higher. Butterfat is lower and eggs slightly higher. Prices of all other commodities are much higher than a year ago, generally ranging from 50 to 100 per cent higher except for hogs and beef cattle which are not much higher than a year ago.

Preliminary prices of leading commodities now, a month ago and a year ago are as follows: Wheat, 64c, 67c and 40c; corn, 33c, 34c, and 21c; oats, 27c, 29c and 13c; barley, 30c, 31c and 17c; potatoes, 80c, 80c and 36c; alfalfa hay, \$6.40, \$6.00 and \$4.30; wild hay, \$5.10, \$4.50 and \$3.40; hogs, \$3.15, \$3.65 and \$2.95; beef cattle, \$4.70, \$4.60 and \$4.05; lambs, \$8.25, \$8.20 and \$4.55; chickens, 8.7c, 8.4c and 7.6c; butterfat, 20c, 23c and 14c, and eggs, 12.1c, 11.1c and 8.4c.

Charles Pruss, now of Inman, where he is making his home with his daughter, Mrs. L. D. Caster, was in O'Neill a few hours last Saturday. Charles came to this county in 1890, and he vividly recalls every incident of importance occurring here since that year. He mentioned that at one time there were eight saloons in O'Neill.

## FARM FIRES DESTROY QUANTITY OF CATTLE BUILDINGS AND FEED

Damage Done On Wolfe And Boyle Places Tuesday Estimated At More Than \$7,000.

During a fierce hot wind from the south Tuesday afternoon, estimated at from 30 to 40 miles an hour, fires broke out in farm buildings on the Elmer Wolfe and Edward Boyle places east of town. On the Wolfe place it was roughly estimated the loss might be as high as \$4,000. Elmer lost two barns, one large shed, one granary, a large double corn crib, five tons of hay, a pile of corn appearing to be about 750 bushels, or more, machinery, four fine work horses and the harness which was on them, and five calves.

Mrs. Samuel Wolfe and Elmer's son, Max, 13, discovered the fire roaring in the horse barn at about 4:30, just after Elmer had left for O'Neill. Elmer had been working the four horses in the field, and on account of the fierce wind, and because he had business in town, he figured he might as well put the horses in the barn and go to O'Neill. The fire spread with a fury beyond imagination because of the dryness and the roaring gale. Fence posts far from the fire blazed like oiled torches, tree bark and limbs withered, and in spite of fields between, it was feared for hours the fire might get across the Burlington and roar to the Niobrara river or beyond.

A call for help was answered by sounding of the fire siren and hundreds rushed to offer any assistance possible. Half a dozen buildings seething in flames met the gaze of those reaching the scene and little could be done save watching out for flying embers and deadly bursts of super-heated atmosphere. The cause of the fire could not be determined. In the horse barn hay-mow was several tons of hay, and more recently had been placed there.

At about the same time the fire burst to fury on the Wolfe place, another call for help came from the farm of Edward Boyle, about two miles east of the Wolfe place, one mile west and two and one half north of Inman, the old Haynes place, also on the Elkhorn river. Fire burst out in a large hay shed and jumped to and destroyed a large barn, part of which was a granary. Considerable grain was lost and some was saved. The cause of the fire is not known. Boyle had no insurance, according to those who were at the fire. Roughly it was estimated the loss at the Boyle place was around \$3,000. Saddles, harness and some machinery and tools were destroyed, many articles of small and large size that count up to a considerable outlay of money.

Mr. Wolf said he had a little insurance on his buildings and grain but none on his live stock. His loss, besides his insurance, will be around \$1,000. All of the animals but one horse met their deaths where they stood. A horse in harness nearest the south side, where there was a door, made one final leap out of the structure and must have died before he struck the ground. His legs were bent the same as if he were suddenly frozen dead while running. Wolf regretted the loss of his livestock more than the loss of his buildings.

A large stock shed, across the road from the group where the fire started, caught fire and burned. The O'Neill fire department rushed to the Wolfe farm and did all humanely possible toward saving the property.

Mr. and Mrs. Wolfe desire through the columns of The Frontier to express their heartfelt thanks to the members of the O'Neill Fire Department, their many friends and neighbors who so kindly lent assistance during the fire last Tuesday.

It is estimated that about 1,000 persons went to the scenes of the fires, everyone knowing that fire during a day like Tuesday is a threat to everyone within fifty miles. The loss at both places may be \$7,000; \$4,000 at the Wolfe farm and \$3,000 at the Boyle place, but the figures are merely estimates made by The Frontier and may be revised either above or below the amounts.

The unfortunate families have the sympathy of The Frontier and everyone in this community in their hour of tribulation. W. S. Jackson, editor of the Inman Leader, viewed the Boyle and then the Wolfe fire, and he kindly gave facts of the Boyle fire to a representative of The Frontier who was at the scene of the Wolfe fire.

A group of Royal public school students were in O'Neill Saturday.