

THE FRONTIER

INTERESTING CHAPTER OF HOLT COUNTY'S EARLY HISTORY

Third Installment

(Continued from last week)

The last and most conspicuous and spectacular of all the many lurid scenes which had been enacted on Holt County's soil, was the kidnaping and hanging of Barrett Scott, County Treasurer of Holt County and the throwing of his corpse into the Niobrara River where it was later found.

Scott was accused, tried and found guilty of embezzlement of county funds to the amount of \$90,000 to \$100,000. In the trial of the case Scott was granted a change of venue from the courts in Holt County to the courts of Antelope county and found guilty as charged by a jury of that county. He was sentenced to five years in the penitentiary but took an appeal from judgement and sentence of the court to the supreme court at Lincoln being admitted to bail pending the disposition of his case in that court. Previous to his arrest and trial he had fled to Mexico but was pursued and apprehended in that country and placed in jail by the authorities. A requisition by the government at Washington upon the government of Mexico for the delivery of his body was duly honored and he was returned to Holt County. His trial followed. At the time he was kidnaped he was out on bail. Scott resided in O'Neill but still owned his old homestead, the postoffice, of Sottville being situated thereon.

He was on a visit to that place and neighborhood and when returning therefrom with his family to O'Neill on the afternoon of December 31, 1894, he was held up by masked men, some of whom were in hiding and who shot down the horses of his conveyance. The Scott party consisted of himself, his wife and daughter, a young lady friend of the family and his hired man. In the shooting which occurred all of the party escaped injury except the young lady friend, who received a slight wound.

Scott was surrounded by the vigilantes and carried off to a secret hiding place. That was the last seen of him alive. Some days after, his body was fished from under the ice by a searching party, near Whiting Bridge in the Niobrara River. The body when found had on it a piece of 3/4 inch rope attached to the neck and about four feet long. It was found close to the Boyd County shore of the river having drifted into a little cove of still water out of the current.

Half a dozen or more suspects were arrested and tried for the perpetration of this awful crime in the courts of Boyd County, the dead body having been found within that jurisdiction, but were all acquitted and set at liberty. At this writing the culprits are still at large and unpunished.

It can be truthfully said that whilst many excuses which could not receive the approval of any God-fearing person, were laid at the door of the old Vigilance Committee all of which are to be deplored by every good citizen of Holt County who loves law and order; never-the-less the knowledge that the "Gulch Boys" were ever in the saddle and ready for business at all times, acted as a wholesome deterrent on the viciously inclined element of the community and finally, in a large measure, succeeded in stamping out of existence the Hydra-headed demon of disorder and crime that had so long and successfully reigned within her confines.

Mr. Prouty in describing the Black Hills rush relates that in the fall of 1873, eleven men and one woman went to the Black Hills in South Dakota taking with them supplies for one year. The Black Hills country belonged to the Indians, so the U. S. government sent troops the following spring taking the intruders out. The woman afterward returned and became Superintendent of Schools. This stimulated the gold fever to a higher pitch and in 1874, Gordon at Sioux City, Iowa, started with

and dogs shook to death if not doctored. Later on we passed through a locality where migrating swarms of locusts had visited destroying the timber. The school houses were crude affairs, furnished with plank or slab seats and a shelf against the side wall on which to write. Instead of persuasive methods of government the whip or ruler was commonly used. Necessity is the mother of inventions and many of our present day conveniences are the outcome of the early settlers. He says there are two systems of education, the damaging radical graded hold-back system, to restore the feeble, dead and lost talents to useful activity and the other the progressive system, to educate the live and living talents for future use.

In his "Frontier Life," as he experienced it in the Buckeye, Badger and Goldenrod states he says, "Looking back about seventy years I find myself in the Buckeye state in a dense forest thickly settled; each family having a few acres from which to support it. Beech trees were felled in winter to supply the shortage of feed. The stock would eat the ends of the limbs and buds as a substitute for hay. Many of the hogs ran wild, living on beech nuts and roots, thus the saying, 'Root hog or die!' They became as wild and fierce as a pack of wolves. Wild fruit was plentiful as well as nuts and a welcome food. Money, more than enough to pay the taxes, was an unknown quantity. Prices were low as well as wages. School teachers were not expected to pay; first class carpenters could be had for fifty cents a day and board, and the board was poor. When a new house or barn was to be built a crew of about twenty men with teams some oxen and some horses were invited in order to complete the erection in one day. Some would fell trees or plow the sod as the case might be, some draw the logs or sods and the others put up the building. The women too were invited and boys and girls to be there in time for supper. A generous entertainment and social time would follow after supper. The houses were, if log, covered with long shingles or shakes shaved by hand. The cracks between the logs were chinked with wood fitted to fill the various sized openings, then plastered with mud, lime or mortar. The fireplace was usually of stone and the chimney of lath and mortar. A crane on which to hang the stew kettle, a dutch oven to bake in and a skillet or spider for frying meat and pancakes, were the essentials necessary. The grain was cut by hand and threshed with a club or flail and separated from the straw and chaff with a wooden fork. The chaff was blown away by two men using a sheet for a fan. After dead timber was felled, the tops were burned and log rolling bees were made and logs were hauled and piled ready for burning, then dinner for all. An additional number, particularly boys and girls were invited for supper. Supper over they played and sang songs, the amusement varying to suit the crowd, thus with happiness, love and sunshine, life was prolonged and easier. If salaratus or soda was short they would go to a burned logheap, rake the ashes and get a crust or cake equal to the best of soda. Ashes when sold brought one cent a bushel. Shoes and boots were made from home tanned leather and had had to last a year or go without. The fashions changed, men's pointed vests and swallowtail coats, women's quilted petticoats and bustles, lace or stay jackets. Little boys and large girls whittled hickory stays to rib or support the jackets. The middle stay was so annoying that they called it the "cussed board."

Fashions prevailed no matter how beautiful or ridiculous. One day we heard a roaring noise like the distant roll of thunder. It was a great cloud of wild pigeons that lit and devoured everything eatable. They bent the limbs of the trees so low that by using torches to blind them many were caught and killed with clubs and eaten. By the time we reached the Golden Rod state the country was rapidly building and railroads taking the place of freight teams. Cook stoves, matches, steel pans, brass clocks, instead of wooden ones, grain cradles and many other improvements were common on the trip out,

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S. J. Weekes Re-elected Director in One of States Leading Ass'n.

The fiftieth annual meeting of stockholders of the Occidental Building & Loan Association convened at the association's offices in Omaha last Thursday. Fred E. Hovey, president, told the stockholders that 1938 was one of the best years in more than a decade for the Association, which was founded here June 12, 1889. Plans are under way to celebrate the golden anniversary throughout the year.

"We have continued to participate in the excellent showing made by all state-supervised building and loan associations in Nebraska and Wyoming," Mr. Hovey said. "These associations have taken long strides in the direction of sound assets, liquidity, modern and up-to-date loan programs, and attractive dividends."

He cited a substantial increase in new savings accounts opened with the Association in 1938, and said that the reserves and undivided profits of the organization—more than twice the amount required by law—are adequate "insurance" for every investor.

"Wage earners are appreciative of the fact that a dividend return of three per cent per annum with an incident demonstrated safety of investment is extremely attractive under present conditions."

Reductions in real estate holdings, real estate sold on contract, and foreclosures, as shown by the January 1st statement, all tend to the strengthening of the Association, he said.

S. J. Weekes, president of the O'Neill National Bank, of O'Neill, Nebr., was unanimously re-elected to the board of directors of the Association, at the nomination of E. S. Waterbury, Armour & Co. general manager. He was the only director up for re-election.

Holt County Rainfall For Past Ten Years

Following is the rainfall in this county for the past ten years, as compiled by Harry Bowen, official weather observer for this city, as prepared by his son, Elmer:

Year	Total
1929	31.80
1930	18.00
1931	16.05
1932	22.58
1933	16.67
1934	15.40
1935	21.43
1936	14.42
1937	20.93
1938	19.54

Births

Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Sterns, of Phoenix, announce the birth of a son on Wednesday, February 1.

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth McIntosh, of Page, announce the birth of a son on Monday, January 30.

Taxes Are Going Up Higher And Higher

How hard taxes, national, state and local, hitting the average individual in the United States is indicated in a recent report made by the National Tax Research Committee, which has gone into the subject at great length. One of the most discouraging features is that the burden is growing comparatively greater, rather than less. The committee asserts that, according to best reports, the ratio of total taxes to national income for 1938 approximated 24 per cent. This is just twice the ratio for the year 1929. The estimated ratio of public expenditure to national income is believed to have approximated 32 per cent. Back in 1929 the ratio was only 14.2 per cent.

Some of our political demagogues declare that higher expenditures don't matter because the rich will be taxed to take care of the outlay. But the figures prove this is not the case. During the fiscal year 1936, for example, our direct taxes, which are principally income taxes, constituted less than half of the total federal revenue, 48.1 per cent, to be exact. This means that indirect taxes and customs receipts made up the balance. Now it is through the indirect taxes that the little fellow is hardest hit. It means taxes paid in higher rent, in more expensive

food, clothing, automobiles, gasoline and the other things he buys. Continuing, the National Tax Research Committee says:

"A farmer, earning \$500 a year, must pay approximately \$60, or 12 per cent of his yearly income to federal, state and local tax collectors.

"A wage-earner in the middle \$2,000 bracket contributes \$334 on the average to the support of government.

"A salaried worker, earning \$20,000 a year, pays out in taxes approximately 37 per cent of his income, or \$7,459.

"The price of bread is estimated to include 58 different taxes which aggregate .64 per cent of the price. Milk contains 1 1/2 cents of taxes per quart; beef, 8.14 per cent; sugar 18.3%, including 45 different taxes; hosiery, hats, shirts, 20%; men's suits, 10 to 20%; including 63 different taxes on \$35 suits; shoes, 8% to 20%; drugs and medicines, 33 1-3%; automobiles, 345 different taxes; cigarettes, 6 cents per package."

Here is something worth thinking about. We are being told now that additional billions will have to be raised for national defense, for spending and relief. All of this must come out of taxes. Of course, borrowing some of the money postpones the evil day, but even then, in this generation we cannot avoid paying higher interest on government loans, as well as greater taxes to meet, in part, the running expenses of the government. This is in addition to saddling an unbearable burden on our children and our children's children.

But until the nation becomes really tax conscious, until the little fellow realizes he is paying his share in taxes as well as the rich man—even more than his share in proportion to his goods and earnings—then it is going to be difficult to do anything about it. But steadily more people are beginning to see the dangers of greatly increasing our tax burdens.

St. Mary's Lose Strenuous Game Here

St. Mary's lost a closely contested basket ball game to the Atkinson High team in the local gym on Monday night by a score of 19-20. The game was very exciting, Atkinson forging ahead in the closing seconds of the game on a goal by Bob Jungman, forward. Both the second team and the eight grade teams of St. Mary's defeated the Atkinson second team and the eighth grade team. St. Mary's will meet O'Neill High on the High floor on Friday night in what is expected to be another close game.

O'Neill Dress Shop Is Sold This Week

Mrs. Cleota Carney, who has been an employee of the Bordon-McCartney dress shop in O'Neill for the past year, has purchased the dress shop of Mrs. Helen Simar and took possession on Monday. Mrs. Simar retains possession of the millinery department and they will operate the two in conjunction. Mrs. Carney has had considerable experience in buying and selling ready-to-wear, and plans to operate an up-to-the-minute dress shop—carrying a complete line of dresses. The Frontier welcomes her to the ranks of O'Neill business people and wish her success.

The Weather

The weather has been fairly mild the past week until the last day of the month when we had a little snow and at times on Wednesday it looked as if we might have a real blizzard. But it did not amount to much as it cleared up before night and it is clear today with a slowly rising temperature. The snow fall, which amounted to about three inches gave us .13 of an inch of moisture. The coldest of the week was this morning when it was 5 above zero. Following is the weather for the week:

	H.	L.	M.
Jan. 25	41	25	
Jan. 27	53	21	
Jan. 28	45	22	
Jan. 29	35	17	
Jan. 30	37	16	
Jan. 31	37	24	
Feb. 1	34	7	.13

Holt County Pioneers Observe Golden Wedding

On Sunday, January 29, about 100 friends and relatives gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Grenier, northeast of O'Neill, to help them celebrate their Golden wedding anniversary.

Mr. and Mrs. Grenier have lived in Holt county for twenty-seven years. Before moving to this county their home was at Lyons, Nebraska.

Mr. and Mrs. Grenier are the parents of twelve children, seven sons and five daughters, nine of whom are living. They are: Frank, of O'Neill; Mrs. Mary Crippen, of Farmer, S. D.; Mrs. Hattie Kindlund, of Geddes, S. D.; Max, of Star; Mrs. Edith Cline, of Bassett; Vern, of Bassett; Mrs. Lucille Donohoe, of O'Neill; Cecil and Byron at home. There are nine grandchildren and one great grandchild. They are: Charles, Evelyn, Loris and Doris Crippen; Ardis, and Carol Grenier; Joan Donohoe, Mrs. Deloris Sawyer and La Vern Grenier and Arlene Sawyer. All the children and their families were there to help them celebrate.

The house was nicely decorated, the color scheme was carried out in gold and white. A three-tier golden wedding cake was baked by Mrs. Kindlund and decorated with a bride and groom. Each guest received a piece of the cake during lunch, which was served at 5 o'clock. A smaller four-layer white coconut cake was baked by Mrs. Hallie Crippen for Mr. and Mrs. Frank Grenier, this being their twenty-second anniversary.

Many nice gifts and cards were presented by those in attendance. Among the gifts were a set of six chairs and a set of silverware, service for eight. These were given by the children.

After a day of celebrating it was decided to have a dance which lasted until the small hours of the morning. A delicious lunch was served at midnight, music being furnished by Elmer Juracek, Cecil Grenier and Harvey Sawyer.

Out of town guests present for the occasion were: Joe Grenier and Mary Grenier, of Lyons; Mrs. Lily Thibault and son, Harvey, and Mrs. Drayton Thibault and son, Dale, of Naper; Mr. and Mrs. I. J. Donohoe and daughter, Katherine, and son, Francis, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Richter and daughter, Louella, of O'Neill.

Guess It Was Dry And Arid Here in 1873

The sage of the southwest, now of the southeast, Romaine Saunders takes exception to a statement in the old time history of Holt county, written by the former county clerk of Holt county, M. D. Long, in 1901, in which in the early days this was classed as an "arid desert region."

In a letter written by John T. Prouty, one of the real pioneers of the county and published in the Nebraska Farmer in 1923, we take the following:

"In 1873 most of us considered the land between the rivers worthless for agricultural purposes. Along the rivers and streams one might live by trapping and hunting. Land was then worthless because of lack of rain and the prevalence of grasshoppers and prairie fires. However, since 1873 the climate has changed. We get more rain and winters are harder and longer."

O'Neill Archery Team Meet Defeat at Norfolk

The O'Neill Archery team journeyed to Norfolk on Monday where they went down to defeat at the hands of the Norfolk recreation club by a score of 1410 to 1134. The members of the O'Neill team are: Jack Davidson, Fritz Gunn, Orville Green, Al Gaskell, Vic Breidenhoft and Clarence Selah.

Miss Mildred Miller Spent Sunday at Ewing Visiting at the Home of Her Parents

Mrs. F. J. Kubitschek returned Thursday night from Omaha where she had been visiting at the home of her mother, Mrs. L. B. Van Sant for the past week.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Waite, of Loup City, Nebr., Spent Tuesday as the Guests of Mr. and Mrs. D. H. Cronin. Miss Van Waite, who had been visiting at the Cronin home since last Friday returned home with them.

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Holt County Farmer Kills Himself Saturday

While in a state of mental aberration Charles Arthur Shobe shot and killed himself last Saturday evening at his home about twelve miles east of this city, using a 12-gauge shot gun, the muzzle of which he held under his chin and pulled the trigger. The funeral was held Monday afternoon at 2 o'clock from the Methodist church in Page, Rev. Leo D. Carpenter officiating and burial in the Page cemetery.

Deceased was born at Ewing on July 16, 1899, and was 49 years, 6 months and 12 days old at the time of his death. Except for the time he was in the army during the World War he had been a resident of the county all his life. He was united in marriage on April 5, 1930, to Mabel Duncan, who with a son and daughter, Charles A., of Ewing, and Marjorie, are left to mourn his passing. He is also survived by six sisters and three brothers.

His death is another that can be charged up to the World War. He suffered severely from shell shock during the war and he never was able to shake off the effects of that horrible experience and since the close of the war was never strong mentally as a result of the shocks received. He had many friends in the eastern part of the county, where he was well known, who learned with regret of his tragic death.

Judge Dickson Presides in Condemnation Court

Judge R. R. Dickson and Court Reporter Ted McElhaney, accompanied by Mrs. Dickson and Mrs. D. H. Cronin drove to Loup City last Friday morning where the ladies visited friends while the others were looking after legal matters. They returned that afternoon.

Judge Dickson and Judges Lewis H. Blackledge, of Hastings, and Adolph E. Wenke, of Stanton, were appointed by the State Supreme court a few weeks ago for the purpose of appraising the power plant at Loup City, which the city has taken steps to take over as a municipal plant. The three Judges met at the Court house at Loup City last Friday as a Court of Condemnation and organized. Judge Dickson was selected to act as presiding Judge and Ted McElhaney as the reporter. April 10, 1939, was fixed as the time for hearing the evidence in the matter.

Strengthens His Faith in His Fellow Man

About two years ago a young man approached John Kersenbrock, then mayor, and said that he was busted and hungry. John says he was a clean-cut looking young fellow and that he felt sorry for him and staked him to a meal, gave him a dollar and sent him on his way. John said the young fellow was profuse in his thanks and said that he would remember it and pay it back. John forgot all about it until Wednesday morning when he got a letter from the young fellow enclosing a money order for the amount he had expended on him. The letter was from Kansas City and he again expressed his appreciation for the favor extended him. John is naturally elated, not so much for receiving the money as in the fact that again his judgment of human nature was not misplaced and that not all the boys on the road are bums.

BRIEFLY STATED

Mr. and Mrs. Sydney Dunkerley drove to Bloomfield on Tuesday and visited relatives and friends.

H. B. Hubbard, of Lincoln, arrived here Tuesday night to look after some business matters.

Miss Mildred Miller spent Sunday at Ewing visiting at the home of her parents.

Mrs. Loran Nelson entertained two tables at bridge at her home on Tuesday night. Miss Grace Connolly won the high score.

Mr. and Mrs. Al Broderson announce the birth of a son on Monday, January 29, at Neligh, where Mrs. Broderson is at the home of her parents.