

PrairieLand Talk

Bold Thugs Get \$2

By ROMAINE SAUNDERS, Retired, Former Frontier Editor

LINCOLN—A quiet evening early in August just 49 years ago Mrs. J. B. Ryan, seated on the porch at the Ryan home on East Douglas street, was approached by two men who demanded that she turn over any money she had. Mr. Ryan was away and being alone and confronted by two thugs, Mrs. Ryan thought the wise thing to do was to hand those fellows her purse, which she did, and they walked away. The purse contained \$2. . . That night County Surveyor Norton and Hugh O'Neill, who had hoked up together in one bed at the Dewey hotel, were each robbed, Norton of his watch and O'Neill his money. The money and watch were recovered and a guy caught and landed in jail. . . It was in the summer of 1904 that Congressman Kinkaid saw the fruition of a measure he got through congress that opened for entry under the homestead act 640-acre homesteads in two townships in Keya Paha county that had been withheld when the section homestead law was passed. . . We got a paper from New York City that year at The Frontier with a picture of the democratic candidate for president and a few other bigwigs, our own Col. John Maher standing in the center of the group. . . Sadie Skirving, A. J. Roberts, Mark Howard, John Howard, C. L. Davis, Pat Welch and Henry Cook were the O'Neill citizens who drew land in the Rosebud lottery that year.



Romaine Saunders

I have just greeted and had a brief visit with a friend from the Missouri Ozarks who came to Nebraska for a car of hay. He is in the milking business. Reports that they are burned up in south Missouri and he has had to dispose of 40 head of cows and was in south central Nebraska after feed for as much of his herd as he feels able to keep. This is now two years that they have been short on rainfall and it has begun to be seriously felt. He is a former Nebraskan and at the suggestion that he "come home" together with the lure of the hay meadows spread across prairieLand it had an appeal.

Disaster marks the introduction of the work of the scientists in the O'Neill community. Much of the world's progress in science, religion and learning has left a trail of tragedies along the way. Out there where PrairieLand Talker roamed as a carefree youth across the open country six men were crushed to death in a moment. In the previous 70 years that community knew of but one death, and that from natural cause. The tragedy of a few days ago is shocking, another added to the daily growing list of similar death plunges that leave desolated homes, sorrow and tears all over the land.

"That looks so much better," I heard a lady say to the man by her side as I passed a home. The world is indebted to the ladies for keeping the men and things looking respectable. And then I saw a guy with a begrimed face, indifferently garbed in dirty duds. I thought what he needed was a competent woman to see that he cleaned up and then tell him, "That looks so much better." Daughter casts a critical eye at me from time to time and if it's a clean shirt that's needed, I hear about it. That means, do something about it.

In view of what they did down here at the statehouse to property values in Holt county for assessment purposes, patriots out on the grasslands may swing into step with the harassed property owners who feel there should be a sunrise firing squad. They need the money at the statehouse, \$8,891,482 the operating expenses for June. And after a tour of the statehouse and the annex two miles to the south, you wonder what it is all about.

Editorial

Tragedy in Research

A tragedy claimed the lives of six persons connected with the widely-publicized Air Force-Cambridge research center's field project here. In a single, fateful moment the lives of Dr. Guenter Loeser, a civilian, and five air force personnel were wiped out in the helicopter crash — Holt county's most grim tragedy on record.

Broken and charred bodies were mute evidence of an ill-fated flight that may or may not have been necessary. However, the annals of pioneering and researching in most fields are filled with tragedies.

It would seem to the observer that little if any danger would attend a peacetime field project of this type, where tranquility prevails, where placid cattle graze in vast pastures, and where unobstructed winds whisper and blow as they've done for centuries.

There are broken homes strewn from California to Massachusetts. There are homes in which mention of the name O'Neill forever will bring back sorrowful memories.

We were told by the pilot, Capt. Charles A. Johnson, that the craft was not wholly air-worthy. We were convinced by the close relationship between Captain Johnson and the crew chief-flight engineer, S/Sgt. Robert Ide, that there was a fine degree of harmony between the two, and both mutually respected the other's technical knowledge and ability. The writer of this editorial had an opportunity to superficially inspect the curious whirlbird craft shortly after its arrival and we talked with both Captain Johnson and Sergeant Ide at length in a tape-recorded interview.

We feel quite certain the flight was not undertaken until after there had been consultation. We know something of Doctor Loeser's eager and thorough nature. He was a research scientist first, last and always and literally bounced about O'Neill's streets in pursuit of his objective. His keen mind was highly geared to the task here that lay ahead. Often he spoke to us about the fine progress that had been made in preparations for the test. The inception and planning for the O'Neill venture, officially known as the Great Plains Turbulence Field Project, to a great degree was Doctor Loeser's work, and certainly he would have figured prominently in the consummation of the work.

We feel that Doctor Loeser had a minute study of air turbulence in mind since the 1930's, when a smaller-scale test was conducted in Liepzig, Germany — a study in which he played a prominent role.

Doctor Loeser was immeasurably proud of his 14-year-old son, Rudolph, who was on the test site at the time of the tragedy. We are certain Doctor Loeser was a fine father; there is ample evidence he deserved the international fame that he enjoyed among scientific thinkers; and we feel he would have made a valuable United States citizen had not this copter tragedy interfered.

Captain Johnson was a quiet, modest fellow who flattered when we asked him what wartime decorations he had earned. He had a host of them,

A churchman filling a high position in the great Methodist Episcopal church has been before the senate committee to clear himself of suspicion that he was at least leaning toward the reds. One senator says the bishop was neither washed clean nor found guilty. This same bishop was at one time located in Omaha and messed into things that left not too good a feeling among Nebraska Methodists. Churchmen and university instructors are for the most part loyal Americans, but that there are some who have flirted with the Muscovites cannot be denied. The Methodist church is not what it was in the days of the Wesleyans or a Lutheran or a Martin Luther. Churches and colleges, as well as various branches of government, need to do a bit of housecleaning.

Young fellows who have married and become dads are not to be exempted from military service unless the extenuating circumstances overtake them of being able to show "extreme hardship and privation." As the business of a soldier is to die, he has a choice between death or being a dad encompassed by "extreme hardship and privation."

Evening shadows gather over the hot city now fanned by a cool breath out of the north. Sunset but no evening star visible among the streaks of gold and purple bars where a moment ago the sun's burning disk hung above the prairie rim. The pale half-moon rides high in the southern sky, a sky that an hour earlier was overcast by a solid mass of clouds which floated out of our view without dropping a tear. The past two nights had given a wide scope of country refreshing showers. Rain two nights in succession in late July is an unusual gift from nature's rain maker. PrairieLand is robed in summer's green, yet rather than boast there may well be a spirit of humble gratitude for the bounties heaven bestows upon us, while other lands have become but drifting sands.

The car with Minnesota license plates rolled to a stop at the curb. The man slid out from behind the steering wheel and started across the street to a cafe, followed by a woman who had slid out the door on the opposite side of the car. The man swung open the door to the public eating place and went in, assuming the woman would follow, which she did. Married couple—probably. And had life's hard struggles robbed that man, still youthful, of the chivalry, the courtesy, the romance and attention he had once shown escorting a lady to the banquet board? I did not go in to watch who paid for the meal, but that capable woman having found her way to a table maybe carried the bag with the swag. Maybe that's the way they do in Minnesota.

The rejection by congress of the president's request that the national debt limit be raised again, this time by 15 billions, no doubt meets with public approval. The president's appeal in this instance is revealing. Like made a campaign for the job he got on promises of debt reduction and curtailing high living costs. These promises were made in good faith. The result shows that political campaign promises are made not knowing the score. The president desired to cut the cost of government and should have known that this is impossible unless our country retires from its assumed position of financing the world and occupying seas and lands with our military might. After three weary years on the bloodstained battle fields of Korea, the guns are silenced but what has been accomplished? The silencing of the tramping armies on foreign soil. And while this goes on and appealing hands from abroad are held out it could be that President Eisenhower needs another 15 billion.

Out of Old Nebraska . . .

Newman Known as Cattle Pioneer

Got Idea from Vast Buffalo Herds

By JAMES C. OLSON, Supt. State Historical Society
An ever fascinating aspect of the history of old Nebraska is the story of the range cattle industry. Among the pioneers of the Nebraska range cattle industry—and for that matter of the whole western range cattle industry—was E. S. Newman. In an interesting article for a recent issue of Nebraska History, the quarterly magazine of your state historical society, Robert H. Burns of the University of Wyoming tells the story of the Newman ranches.

The vast herds of buffalo spread out over the plains gave thoughtful travelers the idea that the area would sustain cattle. The first direct evidence that cattle could prosper on the plains, however, came quite by accident—an accident that happened to E. S. Newman.

Mr. Newman, engaged in freighting supplies to the mountains was snowed up on the Laramie plains during the winter of 1864-65. He arranged the train as best he could then turned the cattle out to die in the wasteland. To his surprise, the worn out cattle began to improve from the start and the next March were rounded up in better shape than they were when originally set adrift to starve. This discovery led to the purchase of stock cattle for fattening in the north and the ultimate development of the great northern range cattle industry.

Mr. Newman grew rich in the freighting business and branched out into banking, operating in Leavenworth, Salt Lake City, St. Louis, Joplin, Mo., and El Paso, Tex. He also followed up his lead in the cattle business, developing extensive ranching operations in Nebraska and Montana.

His Nebraska operations are of the greatest interest to us.

The Newman ranch was located at the mouth of Antelope creek on the Niobrara, about 12 miles east of the present town of Gordon. It was a big ranch for the time, handling from 10,000 to 15,000 head.

Ranching along the Niobrara was made both possible and profitable by the gathering in of the Sioux Indians to Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations. With that, ranchers could run their cattle in the former Sioux area north of the sandhills and the reservations themselves provided an important outlet for the marketing of Niobrara region, each had government contracts for furnishing fresh beef to the Indians on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations. Most of the Newman cattle went to Pine Ridge.

Mr. Newman, along with many other ranchers lost heavily during the middle 1880's. He sold his holdings in Nebraska and moved his cattle to Montana.

Mr. Burns visited the old Newman ranch last year. He described the site in Nebraska History. One of the original buildings was still standing at the mouth of Antelope Creek. The old hewn logs, however, were covered with siding, weathered and broken. That building and the reminiscences of some of the men who worked for the Newman are about all that remain of this once great ranching operation.

When You and I were Young . . .

Lynch Points to Electricity, Water

50 Years Ago
Barney Mullen stepped off the Black Hills passenger train long enough to shake hands with a few friends at the depot . . . Michael McCoy sold his farm, 10 miles northeast of O'Neill, for \$2,000. The purchaser was from Michigan. Five years ago the farm was offered for \$500, but no buyer appeared. . . The Boston Bloomers ball game was said to be the best game ever put up in the county. The Bloomers are all ball players, conducted themselves as ladies, and won the game on a score of 7-3. . . David Ward and family of Chamebers were poisoned by eating a box

of sardines. Mr. Ward, one son and one daughter died. Paralysis had set in before they received medical attendance. . . Lee Card was captured by Sheriff Hall on the Ray McClure ranch 18 miles south of O'Neill. Card was charged with the assaulting of John B. Hodge of Lake Township. . . Charles Mohr was injured seriously when hanging up a loaded shotgun. A nail hit the trigger causing the gun to discharge into his left hand and lower arm. It was necessary to amputate the shattered part of the arm. . . Electric lights, water works system and an artesian well are some enterprises pending in Lynch.

20 Years Ago
Rev. H. D. Johnson and a party

of boy scouts went to the exposition at Chicago for two weeks. . . C. P. Hancock resigned from 20 years of service as bookkeeper in the O'Neill National bank and joined his son, Charles, to open an insurance and real estate office. . . D. H. Cronin drove to Nebraska City to get his wife, Nebraska City to get his wife, and family, Marjorie and Richard, who had been visiting relatives there. . . The St. Mary's alumni held a picnic at the Andy Clark place.

10 Years Ago
Dorothy Wilson underwent a tonsillectomy. . . Sgt. Lewis Green of Chambers was killed in a vehicle accident at Camp Chaffee, Ark. . . Miss Constance Golden returned Friday from Cheshire,

Conn., where she had spent a month's vacation with relatives. . . Jack Gallagher joined the navy and went to Omaha to be transferred to duty at another point. . . Miss Helen Biglin went to California to spend several weeks there on vacation.

One Year Ago
Russell Miner was seriously injured when run over by a truck enroute to a grass fire. He was placed in a full length cast. . . The hospital at Stuart was closed due to the doctor's departure. . . On July 26, Miss Judy Martin became the bride of Pvt. Robert Shaw. . . On August 3, Mr. and Mrs. Lyle McKim were hosts at a McKim family reunion held in Ford's park.

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