

PrairieLand Talk

'Wounded Knee' Book Fascinating

By ROMAIN SAUNDERS, Retired, Former Editor The Frontier

LINCOLN—I wandered to the scenes of other days last week, out where hospitality, the inspiring touch of human fellowship and the simple pleasures of life have not been swept away by today's industrial activities.

I met friends of a lifetime, those of more recent years and some never met before. Among them were Mr. and Mrs. Will H. Spindler, who had come to the homeland of Mr. Spindler's youth to join with other homecomers and natives celebrating the 75th anniversary of the beginning of things at Atkinson. Mr. Spindler is a son of the late George H. Spindler, who came to Holt county in 1879, a boy of eight years. The Spindlers, two of three brothers, came to prairie-land from West Virginia and settled in northern Holt county.



Romaine Saunders

I had known Will only as a gifted writer, having read some of his books. Now I have another, he having presented me with a copy of his latest work, "Tragedy Strikes at Wounded Knee." Again he takes us to the mystic charm of life on prairie-land in northwest Nebraska, leads us across the border into the Dakota Indians' territory to join the redskins in the wild ghost dance that they thought would bring to them a messiah who would drive out the pale face race and restore their hunting grounds.

Mr. Spindler draws a fascinating word picture of the tragedy that finally brought about a better understanding and a sympathy for the Indians. To accomplish this it seemed Pine Ridge must be bathed in human blood. The last Indian war followed the killing of Sitting Bull by the Indian police, Lieutenant Bullhead.

Mr. Spindler's 25 years in government service among and for the Sioux of the Pine Ridge eminently qualify him to tell the story of Wounded Knee. With culture born of spiritual vision and daily contact with the youth and parents who trace their descent back to the great chief, Sitting Bull, an Indian to the last and now on the battle ground made sacred to the Sioux by the last great Indian tragedy. Mr. Spindler creates a picture in his latest literary work as none other has done in writing of Wounded Knee. And he belongs to Holt county, another star in the firmament of prairie-land's notables.

Postmaster Miller, others of the committee on arrangements, Melvan and Marvan Meals and their compatriots who policed the grounds, the venerable patriots as honored guests and the orderly crowd at Atkinson's recent birthday anniversary party may well be complimented, not omitting the ladies who plundered the hen roosts and ranch house stores to spread the park tables with a feast befitting the occasion. PrairieLand communities do it with regal honors on such occasions. To be there on such a day, take the hand of a former neighbor, meet others unknown before and occupy the speaker's stand for a half hour was a pleasure accorded PrairieLand Talker when the historic little city of Atkinson celebrated its passing into old age with the vigor of youth.

Any way, the hot dry summer, now cooled and wet down, brought a halt to the monotonous preachments about "flood control" in the Salt creek and other "water sheds."

Editorial

Restore Is Hardly the Word

A move is underway to restore Carney park. Back in the WPA days the 65-acre tract was laid out, landscaped to a degree, and the acreage was the scene of family gatherings, picnics, countless football, baseball and softball games.

But in spring and fall the lowland (immediately south of the city limits and north of the Elk-horn river) was swampy and many man-hours were spent in pushing or pulling vehicles out of mud. Picnickers were chased away by ravenous mosquitoes. The park has continued down through the years as the site for football and baseball games, but otherwise the acreage has been abandoned.

The city council has been leasing the land in order to have the wild hay cut and the weeds mowed.

Comes now the move to restore the park. Restore is hardly the word, because the trees that were planted and those mother nature provided are now mature and lovely. Soil technicians say satisfactory drainage is feasible. A volunteer "work detail" has gone into the park three times during the past eight days. Considerable dirt has been moved, dead trees and brush have been towed away, the winding driveways have been reopened.

Thus, at the present rate of progress, Carney park soon will be better than ever before and credit should go to the leaders in the Junior Chamber of Commerce, O'Neill Saddle club, Mayor Marcellus, city council, Chamber of Commerce and non-affiliated persons who are active and interested in the project.

The entire community one day soon will look with justifiable pride on the restored Carney park.

No Aid for 'Neutralists'?

One result of the high-level visit of Moscow communists to Belgrade is a proposal by two United States congressmen to cut off U.S. aid to "neutralist" countries. This would, supposedly, include Yugoslavia, India and other countries.

The idea behind the proposal is that the United States should not levy a burden of millions of dollars on taxpayers to support nations whose sentiments are not in line with ours and whose future actions are in doubt, in the event of an emergency.

Certainly, these charges can be leveled against Yugoslavia and India, and several other countries. In the event of war between the Western powers and the communists, it is probable that neither Yugoslavia nor India, nor several other neutralist powers, would become involved, unless they were actually smitten by the communists, and then they would probably awaken, too late.

We think there is much merit in the suggestion being made, although we would not like to see a blanket ban against all aid to neutral nations enacted at this time. However, we are strongly convinced that the taxpayer of the United States will get more for his dollar if his dollar is used to aid countries such as Pakistan, which is solidly with the democracies and although on the border of communism, yet is frankly anti-communistic. We mention the case of Pakistan purposely.

We think the situation in Pakistan today resembles somewhat the situation which prevailed in Greece and in Turkey several years ago. Pakistan, a Moslem country of some 80 million souls and the seventh largest country in the world, is frankly and faithfully democratic, and makes no bones about it. Pakistan leaders openly oppose

Stepping outside this calm, cool morning as the bright orb of day spread a sheet of gold across nature's picture, was a juvenile squirrel, a wary little creature of the outdoors. It spied me standing there, squatted on its bushy tail, reared erect with front paws poised for a leap if that human creature standing there should make a move. I remained motionless, the little creature blinked an eye, sniffed the morning air, bowed a dainty head as if to say good morning and slipped away into the bushes to be about the day's business. I went in, the lesson on courtesy and "mind your own business" from a little creature of the wild lingering with me.

Thirty-one cents for a loaf of 1955 bread. Don Conoley's nickel loaf, the first to come from a baker's oven in O'Neill in '84, did the job just as well.

I sat among the throng last night that had gathered to see and hear an amazing story of the vast universe with pictures thrown on the screen by an astronomer. We were lifted for an hour out of a troubled world to travel in imagination the untrod avenues of space from planet to planet. It is now the conclusion of scientists that there are uncounted millions of planets all sustaining living creatures and beings similar to man but surpassing us in intelligence and moral grandeur. And as you come down to earth after an hour up there you feel you are a pretty small potato.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Rebyler, formerly of Amelia and later of Atkinson, now living in Neligh, spent a week in Lincoln in early August.

Others, Too, Were Sinful

The Japanese minister who prayed the world might be spared another Hiroshima bombing is to be admired for his attitude, in many respects. He prayed without animosity toward those who dropped the bomb on his city killing thousands of his fellow countrymen, and he expressed the conviction the catastrophe was a punishment of his people by God.

The Japanese clergyman, in the considered opinion of the Nebraska (Geneva) Signal, thus has done much to highlight the folly of war and the suffering it causes innocent people, but we fail to see why he assumes the people of his city were being punished. They just weren't that wicked. Others who had more to do with starting and carrying out the war than the people of Hiroshima escaped punishment.

It is possible, however, the clergyman has accomplished more by the assumption that if he had said "Why did it have to happen to us?" Any fair-minded person, studying the remarks of the Japanese minister, must realize that his contriteness is sincere. At the same time, it must be realized that actually a quirk of history simply made his city pay for the sins of a world which was made irrational by the upheavals caused by war.

The Signal editor continues: It might be well if some one speaks out on each anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima to remind the world that such catastrophes need not occur. Such a reminder should cause statesmen all over the world to hesitate before becoming too aggressive. It should also cause them to be a little more patient and humble as they deal with crises which might lead to other Hiroshimas.

communism and seek U.S. economic and military aid.

We think our millions spent in Pakistan are a far better investment than those poured into Indochina in an effort to try to pull chestnuts out of a fire which is already burning at a fairly good rate. We are in favor of reducing aid to neutralist countries to a minimum, and increasing aid to countries which are openly anti-communist and ready to fight with the democracies, to a maximum. We hope congress will express its sentiments likewise and that the state department will carry out the foreign aid program in such a vein.

The Survivors

As one views the brown and sere lawns and gardens—reminders of the recent heat wave—there are two things that stand out. The dandelion plants are as green as ever and the crab grass just laughed at the drought. The Lincoln Star moves that science stop fooling around with super-delicate vegetation and convert these pests into something that will feed the world.

It is hard to realize that our modern, up-to-the-minute tools of industry and war—today's jet planes, tanks, ships, freight cars, trucks and atom bombs—are soon to be surpassed and perhaps even wholly outmoded. Yet there was a time when there didn't seem to be anything ridiculous about vast stockpiles of sabers, saddles and frigate sails.

It won't be long until the poor soul who is without airconditioning in the summer is as much an object of pity as the poor widow who is discovered without coal in the dead of winter.

One thing about this part of the country: A burned out corn crop does not have the far-reaching economic effect that it does in the pure corn country. What has hurt here is the half a hay crop.

It is curious that as pay and "fringe benefits" increase, more people seem to think it is an indignity to be forced to work for a living.

Never ascribe to an opponent motives meaner than your own.—James M. Barrie.

We'll see you at the fair!



CARROLL W. STEWART, Editor and Publisher
 Editorial & Business Offices: 122 South Fourth St.
 Address correspondence: Box 330, O'Neill, Nebr.
 Established in 1880 — Published Each Thursday

Entered at the postoffice in O'Neill, Holt county, Nebraska, as second-class mail matter under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. This newspaper is a member of the Nebraska Press Association, National Editorial Association and the Audit Bureau of Circulations.

Terms of Subscription: In Nebraska, \$2.50 per year; elsewhere in the United States, \$3 per year; rates abroad provided on request. All subscriptions are paid-in-advance.

Audited (ABC) Circulation—2,463 (Mar. 31, 1955)

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