

Prairieland Talk

A Bit of Ancient History

By ROMAIN SAUNDERS, Retired, Former Editor The Frontier

LINCOLN—A few months ago I walked down the north side of Douglas street from Fifth to Third. I had passed that way in the long ago when a forgotten generation tread the highway of frontier life.

Where now is John McCafferty, the hardware merchant and maker of hay burners; the Mitchell hotel is gone, so is John Mang's harness shop; Gus Hanlon's few boards he called a lumber yard and Pat Hagerty's trading post where a modern hotel now stands?

Across the street on west a misfit in frontier life, John McDonough, editing a newspaper, Palmateer and Ed Kelly the frontier financial wizards in the bank; J. P. Mann, the mercantile prince of a village called O'Neill; the Thomas drug store, M. M. Sullivan, Neil Brennan, the Arcade hotel where tragedy struck when cowboys flashed six shooters over who was the favorite of a charming maiden of the hotel dining room.

I go across to the south side of the street. Where now is Jim Campbell and his shanty-like structure where for twobits you got a meal such as is never seen today? And Fred Gatz at the meat block with carving knife to cut you a round steak an inch thick for a thin dime, and the guy named Grant with a few sticks of candy in his show case, Billy Ryan's thirst quenching emporium; on across Fourth street to the Holt County Bank where Dave Darr cradled your check until they ran out of funds; above the bank a strange character from old Virginia, precise in dress and shoes polished. What did such as he find attractive in pioneer days? But he stayed, fathered the section Kinkaid homestead law, lies under the sod up on the hill.

Barnet and Freese lumber yard, Charley Shram and Billy Slocum with a stock of cowboy boots and hats and ladies' shoes and where Billy got a rap over the head with a shoe in the hand o' fa young miss whom he was fitting with new shoes. Frank Toohill was next in apron and cleaver at the town's other meat market.

A bit of ancient history.

The annual spring meeting of the Nebraska State Historical society will be held in Fremont, May 19. The Dodge County Historical society will be in the gathering in full force and furnish much of the interesting features of the gathering history-minded patriots.

Fl. Atkinson of the long ago up north of Omaha before there was an Omaha on the map will be a national shrine if Nebraska's two United States senators succeed in securing federal funds for that purpose. It is the long dead and forgotten men in military uniform and the headquarters where they caroused 150 years ago that our "history makers" build monuments for. Many would like to see somewhere out on the prairie-land a monument where stands a figure of a woman in calico gown and sunbonnet and by her side the figure of a booted man dressed in shirt and jeans, a homestead couple symbolic of pioneers from whose toll-worn hands prairieland dwellers of today have their heritage.



Saunders Romaine

The question for the consideration of the expert in such things was something like this: How can husbands be made to understand the extreme importance to women of tenderness and loving words?

I don't know what the expert thought of it, but wives understand that it was "tenderness and loving words" they fell for in the romantic courtship days. And it is of ancient days, as it has been said that until Hyman brought the love-delighted hour "there was no joy in Eden's holy realm." Out of far away China, centuries before the bias-eyed Orientals turned red, came "loving words" timeless in spirit in these lines:

The morning glory climbs above my head, Pale flowers of white and purple, blue and red. I am disquieted. Down in the withered grasses something stirred; I thought it was his footfall that I heard. Then a grasshopper chirred. I climbed the hill just as the new moon showed. I saw him coming on the southern road. My heart lays down its load.

And this found written on the wall of Pompeii that was buried when Mount Vesuvius blew up: If any man should seek my girl from me to turn, on far off mountain bleak, may Love the souldrunk burn!

California now has a population close to 13 million, increasing annually in population more than all other states. New York still stands at the top with a population of over 16 million. Pennsylvania comes next with a population of a few thousand less than 11 million, and Illinois has 9 1/2 million. We still have elbow room and breathing space in Nebraska.

As is the habit of the "lightwad" I was reluctant about reaching to the rear for the billfold, but was short two pennies in the pocket purse to pay for the purchase at the grocery counter. "Take it along—I believe in feeding the hungry," said the white-aproned proprietor of the small store. But I reached for the billfold. Then he told me he had just supplied a hungry family—father, mother and six children—with something to eat, remarking "I'll never be rich." He gives to the needy he learns about.

By late January there were 1,400 workers in Lincoln out of jobs. Community chest supervisors, Salvation Army, other charitable organizations and individuals know it continues today as it was nearly 2,000 years ago when the Lord said:

"The poor ye have always with you." Maybe—no, not maybe, but definitely supply the needs at home out of those billion-dollar "foreign aid" funds before any is sent abroad.

Two Nebraska "corn country" farms, 160 acres each, sold at public sale—the improved quarter with habitable buildings selling for \$32,000 and the other with no buildings selling for \$26,000. A dry season or two has not reduced land values in Nebraska's farming districts.

Two men walking the desert trail. One sees the cactus gorgeous bloom; the other sees the thorn.

Guns that "were not loaded" are said to take an annual toll in the U. S. of over 2,200 lives, mostly those of teenage boys.

Editorial

Gallant Fight for Life

The heart surgeons offered only an outside chance of success last week when Herschel H. Miles, prominent Dorsey farmer, entered an Omaha hospital for surgery.

The operation involved the delicate heart valve. Mr. Miles was aware of the gravity of the situation because, he told his family, he had been seriously ill since Christmas. He was aware, too, that the ailment dated back a number of years.

In spite of all that medical science could do, Mr. Miles died at the age of 50 while under surgery.

Here was a man who was a fine father, an esteemed neighbor, a successful businessman and a lover of the soil. He tended his land as though it were a sacred trust; he found those practices profitable and he induced others to follow.

Here also was a man whose neighborly deeds transcended ordinary bounds . . . aiding the woman who lived alone down the road . . . mercy missions for friends in need.

Here was a man who had known bitter tragedy and hardship in his own family . . . steadfastly carried on . . . shared . . . worked constantly for finer things . . . only to succumb, gallantly and dramatically, in what turned out to be a hopeless fight for life.

His death came on the eve of the start of the annual heart fund drive.

The bereaved widow and members of the family requested after his death that any forthcoming memorials or tributes be made in the form of contributions to the heart fund.

Lengthening Days

Already the days begin to lengthen. And a few minutes more of daylight, plus the promise of added hours of it to come, brighten our outlook disproportionately, be we ever so "realistic" about the matter.

To be sure, grim uncertainties cast as lengthy shadows as before. Half an hour more of sunlight or a longer twilight at the end of day won't end the cold war, restore free-world unity, or beat inflation.

And yet, like the reverse of some dark thought that troubles a happy day while remaining only half formed, so the consciousness that days are getting longer steals into our forebodings, making us doubt them without quite knowing why. Farmers everywhere take a practical view of the longer day, but the view from the front porch also becomes more important.

Longer days mean more or less to us according to our occupations and habits. They tell the New Yorker that there is something more than an end of the day at the end of his subway ride. The Londoner looks forward to twilights that last till 10 or 11 o'clock. Parisians will soon be strolling again through the varied vistas of their city in that familiar coppery glow of a warm day's sunset.

It is not essential to know why we somehow feel better about everything as the longer days come. And it is a mistake to discount our feelings the moment we can trace them simply to a few added moments or hours of light in a day's span. Feelings like this mark men as kin not only with their neighbors near and far but with men of all time, too.

So let's just feel good about it—this lengthen-

ing of the days—as our kind have done for unrecorded ages.

The Coaching Business

(Wahoo Newspaper)

A rash of coaching changes has broken out in the major colleges of the country. We are speaking primarily of football coaches.

The thought has occurred to us—in watching the maneuvering now in progress—that the coaching profession is a highly precarious one, not just as far as the coaches are concerned but also highly precarious as far as schools are concerned.

Most people know the coaching profession is a tough one as far as the coaches are concerned. But consider the question from the other side. A college gives a coach a contract for three or five years and that is supposed to solve the coaching problem of the college for this period of time. But the contract does not always accomplish this end.

Instead, if the coach concerned gets a better offer, he will go and talk with the officials of the other school, get the best he can out of them, and then possibly leave after staying maybe a year, two years, or six months.

The college, meanwhile, cannot do anything about the coach's breaking his contract since there is no way in which is can successfully enforce the contract.

No Alternative

After discussing the relative merits of a sales tax, an income tax and a combination tax, the Fairbury Journal makes the following editorial comment:

The whole trouble is we just don't like taxes, but taxes will always be with us, so the only thing to do is to adopt the system that will raise a comparatively large amount of revenue as painlessly as possible. In times of crop failure and depression the property tax is too frequently a tax on capital which is unjust.

The income tax is a tax on income and is regulated by the amount of the income and the tax rate. If there is no net income there is no tax. The sales tax is a tax on purchases, and this too is regulated to some extent by income.

What's in a name? Two street names that we've noted in our reading are Pumpkin Delight Lane, in Milford, Conn., and Roast Meat Road, in Killingsworth, Conn.

THE FRONTIER

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When You and I Were Young

Evans Gets Patent on Rail Door Lock

Mrs. G. C. Hazelet Off for Alaska

50 Years Ago

Ralph Evans, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Evans, proprietors of the Evans hotel, has patented a grain door lock for railroad cars.

Mrs. G. C. Hazelet left for New York to join her husband. They will leave for their home in Alaska. Miss Addie Wrede and Clyde Murnan were married Wednesday, February 6.

The infant child of the George Godel of Phenix has been very sick. L. A. Simonson is doing a good business at horse shoeing lately as the roads are rough and icy. William H. Biddlecomb and Pearl Swain, both of Ewing, were granted a marriage license. John Twyford and Colmer Ross called at Henry Twyford's recently. Zach Wood of New York, L. C. Wood of Page and John H. Wood of Ewing held a reunion in Ewing.

20 Years Ago

Deaths: C. D. Keyes of Inman, Mrs. R. H. Murray. Fred Johring and Charles Ross told how they got to town despite the huge drifts. "It was easy," they said. They drove up the Eagle until they came to a bridge. They took the bank until they passed the bridge and then took to the Eagle again. Roy William Carroll received his master's degree from the University of Nebraska. Coldest temperature this week: 15 degrees below zero. The O'Neill Recreation club consists of the Dramatic club, Art club, Boxing club and Handicraft club.

10 Years Ago

Betty Marie Storjohann and Helen Marie Hagensick received bachelor degrees at the University of Nebraska. Deaths: Mrs. Clara Ellen Bell of Chambers; Walter Scott Mordhorst, 65; Mrs. Edward Fees, 82, of Chambers; Judge Robert R. Mullen, 87, 69, of Alice, Tex.; Mrs. James O'Donnell of Hamburg, Ia.; William Gumb, 86, of Chambers. Jean and James Hickey, twins, celebrated their eighth birthday anniversary at a theater party for 28 guests.

One Year Ago

Deaths: Levi Yantzie, 66; Mrs. Ray Kurtz, 74. "Jim" F. Regal, 81; Leo M. Hanna, 57, of Cham-

Echoes from the Valley

'Mom, a Tumbleweed!'

By MRS. MERRILL ANDERSON

The following incident happened in the pioneer days. This account was taken from an old scrap book belonging to the late Floyd Crawford of Lynch.

In the early seventies, C. P. Berry and wife moved to Niobrara from Iowa. They came by covered wagon and brought their milk cow.

Mr. Berry died a short time later, leaving Mrs. Berry with several small children.

She kept the cow picketed on a rope on a nearby hillside. It was the duty of the seven-year-old to watch that the cow didn't become tangled in the rope.

One day she called to her mother from the yard where she was playing, telling of a big tumbleweed near the cow. The mother, thinking nothing of the exclamation, replied: "Run on and play. A tumbleweed is nothing to be afraid of."

Sometime later, Mrs. Berry noticed the cow was gone, the tum-

bleweed was found over the hill, and tracks showed an Indian had moved the tumbleweed slowly along, hiding behind it.

The sly visitor had pulled the picket pin and gradually led the cow over the hill.

Cow and captor were tracked some distance but were never found.

Mr. Crawford related many interesting facts concerning brushes with Indians when he was a youngster, living with his pioneer parents in northern Holt county.

He recalled the Indians invading their home three different times, taking all the furniture each time.

A favorite tactic was to threaten cutting off the little girl's braids with a butcher knife, or similar threats to frighten them.

Children in those days didn't need TV or mystery stories for excitement, but coped with it about every day.

O'Neill went East and participated actively in the war until 1864, compiling an outstanding military record.

When he retired from the army he received a government appointment and lived in Nashville, Tenn., until he became involved as a leader in the Fenian movement. His Fenian activity was a manifestation of his feelings for his Irish fellow countrymen which was perhaps the most outstanding aspect of his life. In 1866 and again in 1870 and 1871 he led Fenian attacks on Canada. These failed and he lost his place as a leader in the Fenian movement; he became interested in the idea of colonizing immigrants and Irish from the eastern mines and cities on western farms. It is this aspect of his career that brought him into the orbit of Nebraska history.

After extensive travel through the midwest, he decided that Nebraska was the ideal location for such colonies and he started promoting Irish colonies in Nebraska. In many ways, General O'Neill was a typical land promoter and colonizer. He spent a considerable amount of time and

energy lecturing in Eastern cities to attract settlers.

He also wrote and published descriptions of the area that he was promoting to present it in very glowing terms, such as his "Northern Nebraska as a Home for Immigrants."

He was a better and more successful promoter than most, however. He was sincerely interested in the welfare of his colony and colonists and unstint-

ingly put his own resources into the projects he sponsored. He also expressed his interest by living in the colony that he founded.

In general histories of the United States, O'Neill is altogether ignored or his name is made a synonym for foolish futurity in relation to the ill-fated Fenian movement. In Nebraska history, however, he has a much more secure place as a colonizer and promoter. He had the major hand in the settlement of

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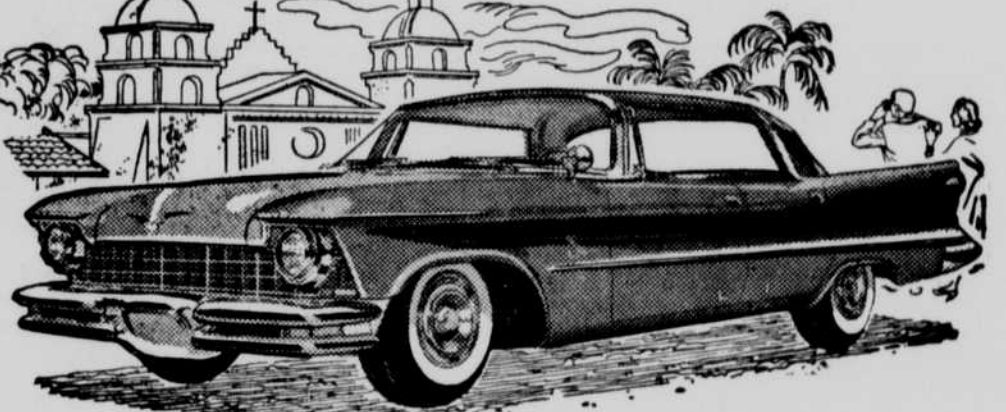
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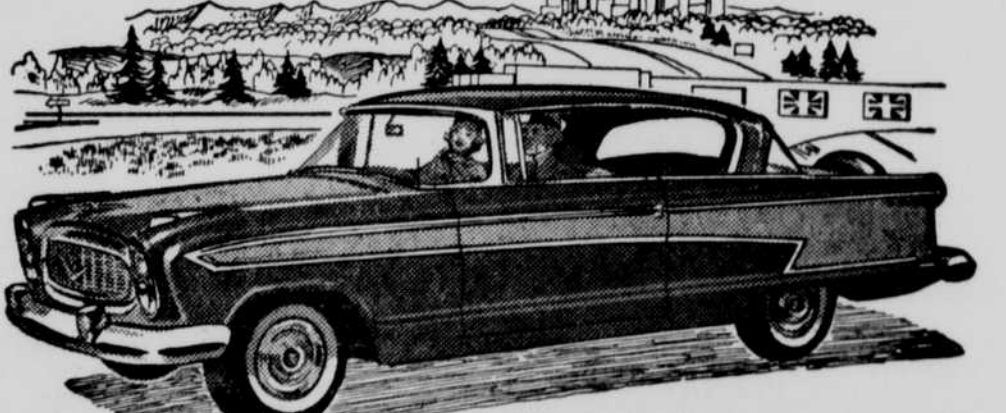
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