

Prairieland Talk

Drumbeat of Eternity

By ROMANE SAUNDERS, 4110 South 51st St., Lincoln 6, Nebr.

The morning of the day this is written the drumbeat of eternity rumbled through the death chamber of our state prison down at Lincoln. Another condemned killer led to the death chair, strapped in and the current turned on. Death reached an inexorable hand and snuffed out the life of Charles Starkweather. Now after many months of appeals and post-mortem verdicts the jury of twelve citizens has met its fulfillment. When the wrecked roll is ended and the reverberations of a wrecked and ruined world sound forth that young killer might stand face to face with the eleven victims of his youthful rage and hear the final sentence pronounced—the wages of sin is eternal death.

She and her young daughter take off for Chicago via railway. Will return driving a highway vehicle. She and her leige-lord will then each have an automobile and the daughter, two saddle ponies. No, they are not in the million-dollar class of prairie-lancers—he's a preacher! Memories of our pioneer preachers who traveled the prairies astride a horse or on foot.

All passenger train service has been abandoned in the state of Maine, the first state to come to that. It appears others are headed that way and maybe the whole country. My respected grandsire told me once that he was a passenger on what he said was the first railway train in America. Who will be the grandsire today to ride the last train?

Sixty miles up the trail from O'Neill where gold seekers traveled to the Black Hills in the long ago is the quiet village of Longpine. From there we hear the tooting of horns and see printed appeals calling attention to Nebraska's Hidden Paradise, the Longpine canyon with its seven springs of clear water gushing from a rock wall. Nebraskans trot the continent over to visit the beauty spots while ignoring our own state's Hidden Paradise. Seventy years ago a national and notable setup known as a Chautauqua came from far places to the Longpine canyon and for days entertained and inspired the crowds with vocal and instrumental music, interesting speakers and a bit of comedy. For those occasions our fading old railroad of today conveyed the citizens to Longpine round-trip for a one-way fare. I don't know now how we scraped up the car fare



Romaine Saunders

Editorial

It's a 'Funny' Law

"Good for the state patrol!" The words were spoken with feeling by a mother of three sons—all old enough to drive and all old enough to recognize responsibility.

The O'Neill mother was referring to the apprehension of seven Holt county minors charged with the possession of alcohol by a state patrolman last week.

She knew, as she was saying it the slaughter of hundreds was about to begin. The mingling of blood, alcohol and gasoline on the Fourth of July week-end was expected and what is worse, would be taken for granted.

But it's a "funny" law, the one that charges a minor with possession of alcohol—not necessarily a bad one, mind you, but one which admits a failure of enforcing another law.

This newspaper would like to see another group of names on the front page. How about the adults who do the selling? What about them?

And how about the adults that buy from the beer sellers and then sell to the youths?

Policemen the world over work hard to get a confession or a statement out of a person who is charged with such crimes as murder.

Is it so difficult for the same policemen to get a statement out of a 17 or 18-year old youth, to find out who stole the alcohol to the minors? Killing of a different type could be stopped on our public roads.

Would it not be far better for police everywhere to question and to continue to question the youths until they find out who the adults are? We do not wish to imply that the minors are not to blame or that they should be shielded. We do think, however, that if a few beer licenses in the "right" places were had the youths wouldn't have the opportunity to go wrong.

He Wouldn't Say

Senator Frank Nelson walked into the newspaper office the other day, and although he didn't appear tired, and ready for a rest, he had good reason to be.

The session was the longest and one of the most difficult on record.

More than the average amount of bickering—and our laws are hammered out on anvils of steel personalities—was seen.

He wouldn't tell us whether he intended to run again, and you can't much blame him for that. Newspapermen, however, will always ask immediately after a session. Senator Nelson, like most senators right about now, do have some sort of an answer.

Like Senator Nelson, they smile a relaxed smile and say, "no comment at this time."

Those Fund Drives

A battle has been raging in the last few years between those who would combine the massive number of disjointed and uncoordinated fund-raising campaigns, in behalf of various diseases, etc., and those who want their individual organizations to carry on separate drives each year.

We are solidly on the side of the United Fund, or Community Chest, or Torch Drive, or whatever it may be in the various communities. Several recent studies have shown that too much money is going into New York headquarters of certain of these or-

and sandwich money, but Clint Lowrie and I never missed the Chataqua at Longpine. As the one, over whose furrowed brow and greying locks the years wrote the record of a lifetime, senses the importance of the present there lingers the cherished memories of the past. Life has woven a web of smiles and tears and we would not have it otherwise. Joy inspires a song and a sorrow humbles the soul. So the onward march through smiles and tears makes life what it is, a step on the way to the bliss of eternity.

After days of scorching heat the door closed on the month of June wet and cold. It was in the late 30's down west of Amelia. The boys backed the car out to head for Atkinson to celebrate the Fourth of July. Boys, Dad said, you better take your overcoats. They did, and were back from Atkinson before the shades of night settled across the prairie. Cold and wet this last day of June as one of those boys, now living in Indiana plans to take off with his life's companion and their three-year-old daughter for a trip to the Pacific coast. Son, take your overcoat; daughter, wear your furs and wrap a blanket about Dorris! I have turned on the furnace.

Gov. Brooks refers to one of our state senators as an "egomaniac". That is printable, but what that egomaniac says of our chief executive is not fit to appear in this refined family paper going as it does into the best homes throughout this and adjoining counties.

She had ministered that afternoon in a home where dwelt an aging invalid. I sat alone. Then as the long prairie sun would soon glow a good-night across prairieland I walked out and saw her coming along the road. My anxious heart layed down its load as down the dirt road I went to meet her. Then hand in hand back again to our own door. What is it that throbs in these human breasts of ours that binds two beings together as one. A short word of four letters tells it all—Love!

The St. Lawrence waterway conveying ocean going streamers into ports of our Great Lakes has been dedicated, with the queen of England and our national chief executive present to make the dedication addresses, and other free-world notables and mobs of Canadian and Yankee commoners taking it in. Now you can board a ship in London and paddle by water all the way to Chicago. COME ON TO PRAIRIELAND ON WHEELS!

gations, and that local United Funds, for example, can divide the money more evenly and, with one drive a year, create less work and trouble for everyone concerned.

Moreover, there should be some check on all the various drives and crusades today, and a United Fund, or similar group can decide what is legitimate and what is a racket.

There are rackets among the various fund drives. One interesting thing, pointed out recently in Harper's Magazine, is the fact that some of the fund drives today collect far more money than they ever did, even though the purpose for which they were formed has long been accomplished, or mostly accomplished.

For example, the annual T.B. Seal sale is grossing more money than it ever has, even though T.B. mortality has been cut from 200 per 100,000 persons to 3 per 100,000 persons.

The case is similar with polio, and the famed "Mother's March" is the greatest fund-raising gimmick ever invented.

Yet the incidence of polio is down to 47 cases per 100,000 as compared with, for example, 5,848 cases of cardiovascular disease, for which no such huge sum of money is collected.

In summary, we contribute about the same amount of money on behalf of 150,000 victims of muscular dystrophy as we do for the 9,000,000 Americans who are mentally ill. Arthritis and rheumatism, of which there are 10,000,000 cases, get even less.

No Shortage Here

(From the Stuart Advocates)

Noticed in the county seat papers that a water shortage has been created in their town due to the excessive usage of water, and inadequacy of present pumps. It is ironic, indeed, to note that on another page of this issue, the local village dads are encouraging the use of more water by cutting the rates in half during the summer.

Come to think of it, we can point with pride to our local plant for its efficiency enabling the abundance of water for gardens and yards.

A THOUGHT FOR THE EVENING—There is no darkness in the night that cannot be lighted with faith. Watch the mother comfort the small child that wakes in the night. While we fools strike matches, she smiles.

THE FRONTIER

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Frontiers Ago

50 YEARS AGO

Supervisor Roberts of Shields had considerable damage done to in his vicinity due to a heavy hail storm. The rye was literally pounded into the earth and his oats was cut so badly that he is now plowing it up. The northwestern railroad sold 203 tickets to people going to Atkinson for the Fourth of July celebration. Father Cassidy went to Chicago to see about the windows for the new church. John Sullivan resigned his position as janitor of the K. C. hall and Pat Donohoe was appointed. T. B. Harrison was in from the north country and he says they are having so much rain in his section that he is afraid it will rust their oats.

John Bushard had sixty three hogs on the market here in 1909 and received \$1,159.95. The hogs brought \$7.30 a hundred which was the highest price paid here for several years. They were sold to Jim Muller. Miss Etta Morgan of Sioux Falls, S. D., visited her sister Mrs. William Froelich for a month. Married: William DeVall of Meek and Miss Mary Storjohm of Phoenix.

20 YEARS AGO

The Fourth of July was celebrated by the various citizens of O'Neill in many ways, but the best thing to be said, is that there were no serious accidents. A. E. Bowen planned to start remodeling his store building. At the conclusion he was to have the largest store room in the city under one roof. Mrs. Helen Simar had a force of men at work remodeling the old Bentley building on east Douglas street purchased by her. John Melvin moved his grocery store to the P. J. McManus building, just north of his store. William W. Griffin, Atkinson was one of the 122 applicants to the Bar by the Nebraska Bar Commission. A large delegation of O'Neill people attended the Fourth of July celebration at Inman. 4-H Judging Day in Atkinson was made a huge success by the attendance of over 400 4-H Club members from Holt, Rock and Boyd counties. The O'Neill baseball team trimmed Verdigris at the City Park here with a score of 10-7. O'Neill played eight games so far and have won seven, losing only to Redbird. Mrs. Charles Reka sold her interest in the Arbutnot & Reka filling station to R. L. Arbutnot and son, Jack, who took possession on July 1, 1939 under the name of Arbutnot Oil Company. Deaths: Bernard Augusta Grass, 29, of Page, due to complications from a previous attack of influenza. John Lappan, early nineties, of Craydon, Pa., former homesteader of dry creek south of this city.

10 YEARS AGO

Installation of \$600 worth of playground equipment was started at Ford's Park by the members of the Parent-Teachers association. The J. P. Gallagher store, one of the oldest firms in the O'Neill business directory has sold its stock in preparation of terminating business. It has operated from its present site on the Northeast corner of South Fourth and Everett streets since 1901. Lee Kjelsen, bandmaster at Valentine, conducted the O'Neill municipal band at regular Saturday night concert. The Holt county assessed valuation is up \$1,351,280, over 1948 according to L. G. Gillespie, county assessor. O'Neill volunteer firemen were called twice this

week to put out minor fires at the William Krotter Co. and the Frank Dalton home. Married: Gilbert Fox and Miss Doris Tomlinson; Miss Marilyn Fritton was accepted as a student nurse by St. Catherine's hospital in Omaha. Births: Veldon Wayne, son of Mr. and Mrs. Merle Spangler, Dorsey; Beth Eileen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Kramer, O'Neill. The Women's association of the Presbyterian church held their annual ranch picnic at the ranch home of Mr. and Mrs. J. Henry Patterson, near Emmet.

FIVE YEARS AGO

The city council authorized a pay increase of \$25. per month to the newly appointed police chief, Joe Wert. The new pay figure is \$250—increased from \$225. Miss Marjorie (Margie) Weichman was crowned queen of the seventh annual American Legion swimming rodeo at Stuart. A record crowd gathered at the O'Neill Country Club and parked automobiles choked nearby side roads for the annual fireworks jubilee. Married: Miss Betty Jane Johnson and Cec Bishop. Mr. and Mrs. Kurgewit built a new home on their farm South of Ewing. Mrs. Chet Fees, O'Neill, grabbed first place honors in the powder puff derby, the feature of the Fourth of July stock car race show at the Airport speedway. A night rodeo was staged under the arc lights at the Holt county fair at Chambers. Harry Stokely, 1954 graduate of the University of Nebraska college of Agriculture arrived to begin his duties as assistant Holt county agent, working under county agent, A. Neil Dawes. R. A. Cahill has resigned as mathematics teacher in the Page public school. Deaths: Mrs. Della Walker, about 80, of Stuart; Rhonda Sue Borg, 3 months, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Baur, O'Neill.

State Tax Commissioner Fred Herrington reckons the boost in tangible property value—against which the levy is applied—may run close to \$150 million, based on the trend in early reporting from counties. The tax commissioner guesses the hike in intangible A property—cash and accounts receivable—may be in the neighborhood of \$120 million. That's a 25 per cent increase. In the case of intangible B property—mainly stocks and bonds—the boost is expected to be \$288.9 million—up 75 per cent. July 1 was the deadline for counties to report to the State Board on values this year. The board then goes over the figures and decides whether to summon any counties to explain changes at a public hearing. Then, the levy is set. Although there is much interest yearly in the state property tax levy, it is only a small percentage of the overall tax bill. Eby stays. Gov. Ralph G. Brooks, under pressure from veterans' groups, reversed himself and retained State Veterans Affairs Director Louis R. Eby. The governor made it plain he wasn't happy about keeping Eby, but said he wanted to acknowledge the wishes of "frank-and-file" veterans who belong to both Republican and Democratic parties. Brooks said he wanted to replace Eby because he has permitted a state employee in his office, later identified as James Smith, State American Legion Commander, to serve as head of the veterans group. This, Brooks said, involves a great deal of time, travel and expense. The chief executive also charged that Eby had permitted himself to be associated with "partisan organizations and candidates." Further, the governor stated, if his objections were not taken care of he would still remove Eby. Bank Deposits. The word has gone out to 192 banks in Nebraska: The state wants its idle funds for investment in government bonds. State Treasurer Richard Larsen, a Democrat, issued the call for some \$45 million in dormant funds in the banks. This money, plus \$4 million already invested in bonds by reducing the size of deposits in 11 clearing banks, would make \$8.5 million available for investment. It was estimated that amount would produce \$25,000 monthly in interest which would go into the property-tax supported general fund. Gov. Ralph G. Brooks said Larsen is carrying out a campaign pledge. Larsen has announced he will seek re-election and it is apparent the investment will be part of his campaign statements. The action was taken after the Legislature declined to pass a bill requiring banks holding the funds to pay interest to the state on them. Appointment Confirmed. The Legislature confirmed the appointment of Jack Obbink as

State Aeronautics Director, but not without dissent. Obbink was appointed by Gov. Ralph G. Brooks to succeed Roland Harr. The appointment is subject to legislative confirmation. Shortly before adjourning the 1959 session, the lawmakers approved the selection of Obbink. But there were five opposing votes, cast by Sens. John Cooper of Humboldt, John Donner of Elgin, George Fulton of Beatrice,

Earl Hollenbeck of Long Pine and M. P. Russillo of Omaha. All are Republicans. Obbink is a Democrat.

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Out of Old Nebraska

Nebraska's Passes: Roubidoux, Mitchell

In a prairie state such as Nebraska, there are few passes through hills or mountains dignified by that title. The state does have two passes that are well known to history and to travellers. It is not surprising that they are within a few miles of each other and are passes through the same obstruction, Scotts Bluff and the Wildcat hills to the south.

They are Mitchell Pass, the one now used by highway 86 past the National Monument, and Roubidoux Pass which is several miles southwest of Mitchell Pass. Roubidoux's years of use and fame were before 1850. The Mitchell Pass route was first traversed, or made passable, by army troops hauling goods to Fort Laramie.

The army, like other travelers, wanted the trail to stay as close to the river as possible, and the Roubidoux route away from the river from near present Melbeta to Horse Creek seemed like a thirty mile detour. The way through Mitchell Pass never left the river far, and seemed much more direct and less circuitous. The army made a passable road and from about 1851 on the Roubidoux Pass route was less and less travelled. This first famous pass is now almost forgotten.

In its heyday, Roubidoux Pass was a noteworthy place on the Oregon trail, described in the en-

tries in the journals that have survived. The trading post and blacksmith shop of Roubidoux elicited comment as they provided most welcome service along the trail. Also, the beauty of the Gering valley, the good quality of the road and the view showing Laramie peak in the distance from the top of the Pass, impressed the travellers, they thought they were seeing the Rocky mountains for the first time as they saw Laramie Peak. This pass had a more favorable aspect and was a better and easier trail to follow than the one that became more popular through Mitchell Pass.

Merrill Mattes, historian of the area, has pointed out an irony in the desertion of Roubidoux for the Mitchell Pass route. The travelers who made the change realized they had picked a more difficult route, but took it because it was more direct—shorter. Actually, the mileage of the two routes from the time the trails parted till they came back together was almost identical.

As this was true, the travellers who foresook the Roubidoux Pass route for the new one saved nothing and lost considerable in quality of the trail.

If they had stayed with Roubidoux Pass it is at least possible that towns such as Gering would have been located differently thirty or forty years later.

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