

PrairieLand Talk

Blizzard Anniversary

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

Seventy-two years ago the 12th day of January prairie land was visited by the worst blizzard within the memory of man. Here at O'Neill it struck that morning between 9 and 10 o'clock, struck without warning, those times no telephones, no weather man to tell what was coming. I was 17 years of age that winter. My father had died the summer before when we were then living five miles out of town on land my father had taken as a homestead. After his death it was decided that mother, my younger sister and I leave the farm and move to town, my brother older than I then in O'Neill engaged in printing and newspaper work, and an older sister teaching in the Inman schools. We disposed of the poultry and cattle but took a team of horses to town with us, lived that winter in the four-room house that had been the home of the General John O'Neill family that stood just across the street to the north of the Methodist church. I had harnessed the team that morning to hitch up and go for a load of hay down toward Inman. The blizzard struck and I did not get started for that hay stack. A country school teacher a few miles to the southwest of town lost in the storm ran onto a hay stack, crawled in, found a day or two later, her limbs from knees down so badly frozen doctors amputated them and she died. Among other tragedies left in the wake of that blizzard Grandma Chapman of the Dustin community on her way to Stuart was found frozen to death in her sled, her team standing at a hay stack. Her little granddaughter that was being taken to her home in Stuart sat beside grandma who was in a kneeling posture as if in prayer when frozen, the child cold and frightened but not frosted. During the day and on into the night the church bells in O'Neill at the Catholic church and the Methodist church were kept ringing to give any out in the storm a clue as to directions. That day if out you were enveloped in a cloud of snow and saw nothing but snow. The prairies the morning after were the scene of hundreds of dead cattle and many settlers lost all they had.



Romaine Saunders

Neighborhood children are out this first day of the new year having fun in the snow. Those in their second childhood are in where roaring furnace keeps them warm. . . . Nellie Morse Wright died September 16 last years in a hospital in Boulder, Colo., at the age of 81 years. As a child just three years of age Nellie Morse was in the home of her parents in northwest Holt county, spent her girlhood and young womanhood in that community, attended school one year in Atkinson. And she is the subject of the story "Nellie's Prairie" recently mentioned in PrairieLand Talk. . . . President Ike got things straightened out in the Far East; next going to South America to do the same. . . . Sixty-five years ago early in the month of January the lifeless body of Barret Scott was fished out of the icy waters of the Niobrara river, Barret hung for doing in a small way what the late Franklin D. Roosevelt as president did in a big way.

We have crossed the portals of another year, leave behind the story of life's achievements, its failures, its joy and sorrow; step ahead to do it all over again, while memories linger.

Joe Ballou, a product from the good old cow town of Atkinson now sits in his easy chair more than a mile from where I do likewise here in the Capitol City. Joe was a pioneer homesteader kid down there in the Holt Creek valley south of Atkinson and knew about everybody from Atkinson to Swan Lake, the Berry family, the Watsons, the Rileys, the Carpenters and others. I recently had contact with Mr. Ballou by telephone and hope to see him soon.

Holt county today has four newspapers. Where are the others — dead. The Holt Record with a Scottville date line in '79, the Dustin Dispatch, the Mineola Sun, the Stuart Ledger, Atkinson Plain Dealer, Chambers Eagle, Bugle and the Sun, Shamrock Picikin's Inman Index, Ewing Advocate, Page Recorder, O'Neill Tribune, the Alliance Tribune, the Beacon Light, The Free Press, Holt County People, the Item, the Sun and G. M. Cleveland's Personal Organ, and about the last to go was Sam Eves' Democrat. Editors and printers come and go, but The Frontier goes on forever.

I learn from a cherished holiday greeting that Mrs. Melvin retains her connection with the O'Neill community, has a pleasant residence at Fifth and Clay streets. She is the daughter of the pioneer J. J. McCafferty family, Mr. McCafferty owning at one time a two story business building where the bus depot now is, was the town's pioneer hardware dealer and turned out the hay burners in use in homestead days. As a girl before her marriage in the dance floor in the upper story of the hardware building with the notable and notorious Doc Middleton, the horse thief and lover of the dance, always nice to the ladies, Miss Brennan of the Grattan township library is another still here who springs from pioneer parents, Mr. and Mrs. Neil Brennan, he too being a hardware merchant. And a third lady I think of as this is written is Miss Anna O'Donnell, the daughter of O'Neill's first couple to launch out in the hotel business, Mr. and Mrs. John O'Donnell. Miss O'Donnell served for some time on the school board and was also connected with a financial organization doing business in O'Neill. She may be living in retirement in the family home on east Everett street or the street just south of Everett. And what has become of that capable Miss Keys who for so long managed the affairs of the Ryan Hay Company?

Frontiers Ago

50 YEARS AGO

Farmers living in the neighborhood of Dorsey met last Thursday and organized the Dorsey Cheese company with a capital of \$3,000 and they will build a factory at Dorsey. The contract has been let for the machinery to be installed before April 1, 1910. . . . Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Wilcox, who have been visiting relatives in Missouri for the past two weeks returned home Wednesday. A large crowd of young folks gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. DeLong last Saturday night to help celebrate the 16th birthday of their friend, Roy DeLong. All enjoyed the evening. . . . Elsie Thomas returned to Gross, Nebr. Sunday afternoon after her vacation at home. The river being frozen it is much nearer to Gross shortening the way twelve miles. . . . A. E. Wilke, an old settler of Inman, came from Ohio last Thursday for a short visit with his many friends and old acquaintances of this place.

25 YEARS AGO

Everything is now quiet and serene in the office of county superintendent and Superintendent M. J. Burg and his assistant, Harold Weirs, are in complete control. Last Monday morning Mrs. Luella Parker sent the keys of the office up to Mr. McClurg, thus relinquishing all claims to the office, several hours before the matter was decided by the supreme court. . . . One of the smallest babies ever born in Holt county was Donna Rae, weighing 2 1/2 pounds, born last Thursday morning to Mr. and Mrs. L. D. Calkins in southeast O'Neill. The daughter lived about twenty hours and died Thursday night. . . . Mr. and Mrs. Harry McGraw, J. T. Tompson and Jim Hoxie narrowly escaped serious injury and perhaps death Saturday while enroute to Norfolk. They were driving between Page and Ewing when they hit a horse. The horse was instantly killed and the car badly damaged, but Mr. and Mrs. McGraw, Tompson and Hoxie were unhurt.

10 YEARS AGO

Well, The Frontier's fourth annual baby contest is over. The winner is none other than Master David Lynn Tracy, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Tracy, of Chambers. . . . Mrs. Emily Van Uraker celebrated her 92nd birthday anniversary at the home of her daughter, Mrs. A. C. George Thursday, December 29. . . . Mr. and Mrs. Dean Streiter entertained Sunday in honor of their 32nd wedding anniversary. Friends and relatives attended. . . . A group of neighbors and friends met at the Earl Parks fine Wednesday evening, January 4, for a farewell party for Mr. and Mrs. L. C. Rakow and son, Ross, who are moving to White Salmon, Wash. . . . Deaths, Russell Shoemaker, 41, O'Neill rancher; Clyde Allen Crawford Jr., 1, Bassett tot; Miss Mary Jane Flanagan, 70, O'Neill resident; Frank J. Heying, 74, Nebraska resident since 1906; Mrs. Mame Mellor, 79, widow of a pioneer O'Neill businessman.

5 YEARS AGO

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Davis of Atkinson, who have been residents of this community more than half a century, Sunday observed their 60th wedding anniversary. The Davises were married at Auburn. . . . Mr. and Mrs. Newton E. Haas of Butte, who were the first couple to be married in the Friends church at Gross, Monday observed their golden wedding day at their home at Butte. . . . Mr. and Mrs. Henry Reimer and Elayne of Deloit left Friday, December 19, on a trip to California, returning to their home Sunday, December 26. . . . Frederick B. Holsclaw of Kansas City, Mo., son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Holsclaw of O'Neill, will be assigned to the American Embassy at Madrid, Spain, effective March 1. . . . Deaths: Ralph Nelson, 45, former O'Neill farmer; Emma Schauf, 44, native of the Stuart and Atkinson communities; Floren E. Gesirtech, 72, retired Atkinson farmer.

Lynch News

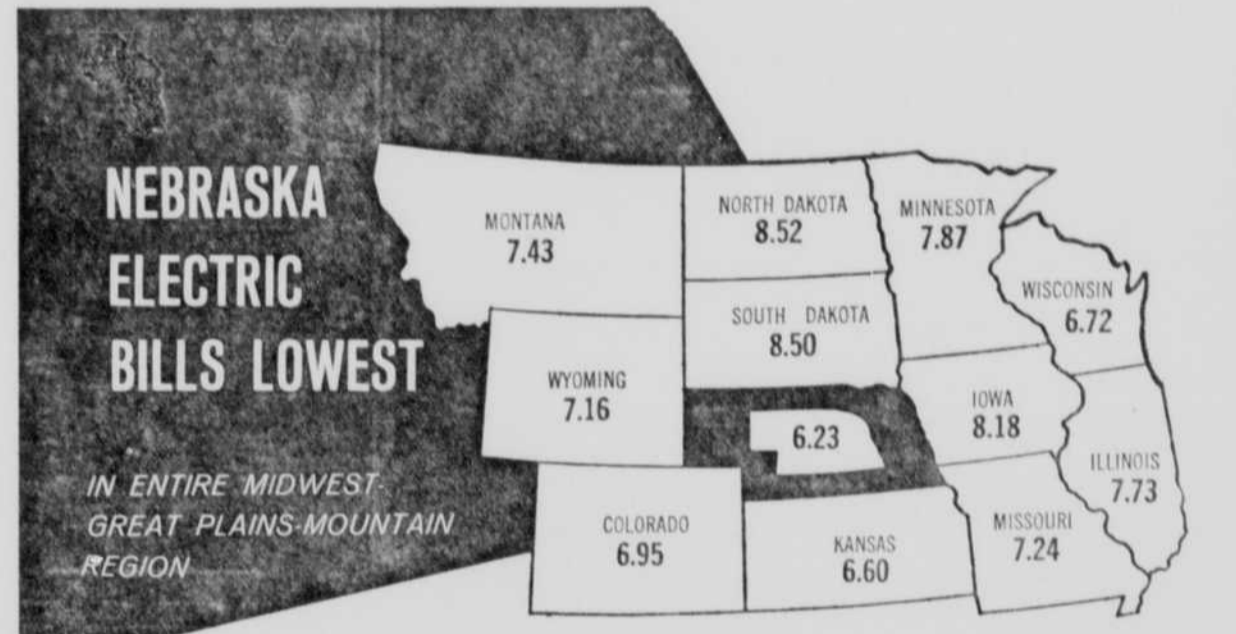
By Veldeen Pinkerman Mr. and Mrs. Guy Hull and family were Friday evening visitors in the Leonard Havranek home. Gail Heiser returned home from Omaha Friday afternoon. Miss Mary Ellen Schindler was a Wednesday overnight guest of Veldeen Pinkerman in the Hannah Street home. Mr. and Mrs. Guy Pinkerman, Danny and Delmar, and Eddie Krugman were Tuesday evening, Jan 5 supper guests in the Robert Wilson home in Verdell for Kay Christensen's birthday. Mr. and Mrs. Leo Kalkowski and Kevin were supper guests in the Bob Courtney home Thursday evening. Marjean Birmeier was a Jan. 5 overnight guest of Marlene Streit in the Hannah Street home. Johnny Weeder left for Florida Tuesday, January 5. Glena Courtney went to Omaha Tuesday, Jan 5 where she will attend school. She has been working at St. Anthony's hospital in O'Neill. Jerry Carsten and Mrs. Veldon Pinkerman were January 5 dinner guests in the Reggie Pinkerman home. Mr. and Mrs. Guy Hull were Friday evening supper guests in the Fay Pinkerman home. Del Anson was a January 4 evening supper guest in the Veldon Pinkerman home. Cathy Hrbeck is staying at the George Courtney home for the second semester of school.

Randy Pinkerman stayed at the Wayne Christensen home the past week. Nate Conrad called at the Veldon Pinkerman home Friday morning. Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Purviance Jr. and Brian left Wednesday for their home in Denver, Colo., after spending several days here with relatives. Mrs. Marvin Schindler and Mary Ellen are staying at the Eddie Heiser home while they are gone. Mrs. Bob Courtney and Sherry called on Mrs. Leroy Purviance and Brian Tuesday afternoon at the Phyllis Mulhair home. Mr. and Mrs. Berl Moody and family left for their home in Sioux City after spending several days here with relatives. Mr. and Mrs. Pete Mulhair were Thursday callers at the home of Mrs. Roy Lowry in O'Neill. Mrs. Glen Hull, Mrs. Leo Kalkowski and Kevin, Mrs. Bill Spencer and family, Mrs. Dick Hull and Dawn and Mr. and Mrs. Pete Mulhair were Friday dinner guests in the home of Mrs. Roy Lowry at O'Neill. Sharon Courtney was a Jan. 4 overnight guest of Carolyn Rexney. Albert Carsten, Mr. and Mrs. Rex Carsten and Dick Ladley were Jan. 5 callers in the Ray Witherman home in O'Neill. Mr. and Mrs. Richard Christensen and children were Friday evening guests in the Glen Rihaneck home. Mr. and Mrs. George Calkins, Mr. and Mrs. Eldon Sedivy and family, Mr. and Mrs. Guy Hull, and Mrs. Fay Pinkerman spent Friday evening playing cards in the Guy Pinkerman home. Mrs. Eddie Heiser and Gail Heiser took Eddie Heiser to Omaha January 4 where he entered the Clarkson hospital. Mrs. Joe Rihaneck and daughter, Donna and children were Friday evening visitors in the Glen Rihaneck home. Mrs. Fay Pinkerman, Mrs. Veldon Pinkerman and Veldeen were Sunday dinner guests in the Reggie Pinkerman home. Jerry Carsten went to Bonesteel, S. D., Saturday evening returning to Veldon Pinkerman's Sunday. Mrs. Fay Pinkerman is spending a few days in the Reggie Pinkerman home in O'Neill. Mr. and Mrs. Guy Hull, Mr. and Mrs. Guy Hull and family were O'Neill callers Saturday. Mr. and Mrs. Vigo Christensen and Kay were O'Neill callers on Saturday. Judy McGill was a Thursday overnight guest of Halle Carsten in the Frank Carsten home and Mary Ellen Schindler was a Thursday evening supper guest of Shlene Johnson. Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Purviance Jr. and Brian from Denver, Colo., are here spending the holidays with relatives and friends. Mr. and Mrs. George Calkins were Tuesday evening, Dec. 29 callers in the Veldon Pinkerman home. Veldeen Pinkerman was a Dec. 29 dinner guest in the Reggie Pinkerman home. Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Havranek and family, Mr. and Mrs. Leo Kalkowski and Kevin, Mr. and Mrs. Dick Hull and Dawn, Mr. and Mrs. Bill Spencer and family, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Lowry and Jerry and Mrs. Spencer were New Year's day dinner guests in the Pete Mulhair home. Mrs. Irene Carsten from Bonesteel spent the weekend with Mrs. Fay Pinkerman. Mrs. Delbert Nelson and girls were Thursday dinner guests in the Guy Hull home. Mr. and Mrs. George Calkins were callers at the Guy Pinkerman home Wednesday. Irene Boelter visited Mrs. Pete

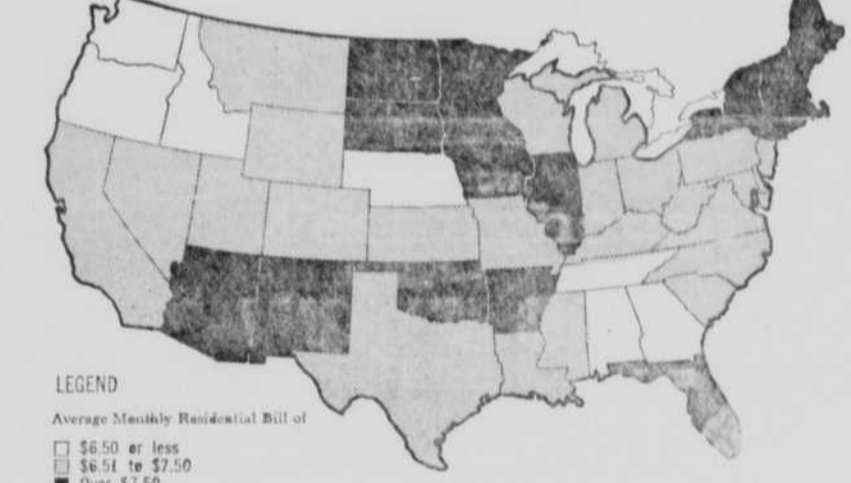
Mulhair on Wednesday. Mr. and Mrs. Hershel Mullen spent their Christmas vacation at the George Calkins home. Mr. and Mrs. Herman Heiser were Butte callers Wednesday. Mrs. Willa Schollmeyer and Bruce spent several days in Omaha the past week. Bruce underwent a physical check-up. Mr. and Mrs. Herman Heiser entertained several friends at a card party December 29 evening. Present were Mr. and Mrs. Lorie Micanek, Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Stewart, Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Christensen, Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Heiser and Mr. and Mrs. Pete Mulhair. Mrs. Veldon Pinkerman and Mrs. Fay Pinkerman were Thursday evening supper guests in the Reggie Pinkerman home. Miss Mary Ellen Schindler spent from Tuesday till Thursday night in Omaha with Janie Schindler. Mrs. Veldon Pinkerman and Veldeen were Thursday overnight guests of Mrs. Fay Pinkerman. Ray Wilson and Dick Ladley were to Gregory, S. D., Wednesday to Earm Wilson in the Duane Wilson home. Mrs. Leonard Havranek entertained at a party for her daughter Debbie's birthday. Guests were Mrs. Glen Hull, Mrs. Bill

Spencer and children, Mrs. Roy Lowry, Mrs. Leo Kalkowski and Kevin, Mrs. Dick Hull and Dawn, Mrs. Pete Mulhair, Mrs. Bill Havranek and Mrs. Kenneth Fish and children. Ice cream and cake were served. Mr. and Mrs. Sued Sedivy and Mr. and Mrs. Guy Hull and family were New Year's dinner guests in the Guy Hull home. Misses Shlene Johnson and Marlene Streit were Thursday overnight guests of Marjean Birmeier. Mr. and Mrs. Leo Farran spent from Thursday till Sunday in the Leslie Stewart home. Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Carson spent Saturday night with Mrs. Nata Bjornsen. Mr. and Mrs. George Calkins were Saturday overnight guests in the Guy Pinkerman home. Frankie Matejcek was a Friday overnight guest in the Herman Heiser home. Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Haselhorst, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Streit and Marlene, Mrs. Berj Mooly and children, Mr. and Mrs. Duane Audiss and family, Mrs. Delbert Haselhorst, Mr. and Mrs. Herb Rossmeier and Mr. and Mrs. Emil Micanek were Wednesday evening guests at the Leslie Micanek home.

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Editorial

School Survey Report

On December 3 representatives of the State Department of Education and the University of Nebraska met with members of the O'Neill School Board. These men, Donald O. Bush and Merle A. Stoneman, surveyed the O'Neill public school system and made a number of recommendations. The following account is printed to inform O'Neillites of our school problems and the solutions given to the problem are printed without comment at this time.

small site is seriously overcrowded. Of the two possibilities, the Survey Committee members feel that the first, the construction of a new senior high school, is by far the better of the two possibilities for relieving the present situation. Should such a unit be constructed, it should be so planned now that it may be expanded to serve the entire secondary school program, grades seven through twelve, at such time as a complete school district reorganization program takes place in Holt County. At such time some enrollment increase at the elementary school level may be anticipated and a great deal of increase at both junior and senior high school levels is likely. The elementary school increase will likely be limited since it is probable that some of the elementary schools in outlying areas will be continued in use. The construction of a new senior high school at this time would permit the utilization of the present plant for junior high school classes and would relieve the increasing pressure in the elementary school. The special rooms available in the present plant would serve junior high school purposes reasonably well—much better, in fact, than they are serving the senior high school at the present time. Present enrollment in the elementary and junior high school grades would fill the rooms of the present building nearly to capacity. The new high school site should be near the present athletic field. It would be possible to build the new plant either to the east or to the west of the athletic field. The location to the east is by far the better because of the amount of land available in that location. Twenty to twenty-five acres is considered minimum for a six-year high school. The area to the west of the athletic field is much too limited for the six year high school which will eventually be needed. The Survey Committee members will be available to provide further assistance upon the request of the present O'Neill Public School authorities. Relief of the present overcrowding and provision of more adequate special rooms are basic to the promotion of a sound and adequate educational program for the public schools of the O'Neill attendance area.

The O'Neill School Survey Report A Survey Committee representing the State Department of Education and the University of Nebraska visited the O'Neill Public Schools on December 3, 1959. At this time an examination was made of the existing public school plant. An oral report on the findings of the Survey Committee members was made to the O'Neill Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools on the evening of December 3. The present report is a summary of that oral report. The present report may also be considered a supplement to the O'Neill School Survey Report previously submitted to the O'Neill school authorities under the date of November 2, 1953. The O'Neill Attendance Area O'Neill and its surrounding area give every indication of present and probable continued prosperity. Continued increases in school enrollment tend to bear out this conclusion. There is no apparent reason to anticipate any drop in enrollment in the near future. A modest increase seems much more likely. The Present School Problem At the present there are two serious limitations on the O'Neill School Plant. One is the matter of inadequate space and the second is the lack of provision of sufficient special rooms to offer a complete educational program. Both of these limitations have been developing over a period of years. The condition was alleviated by the construction of the recent elementary school addition. This addition is now full. The need for more special rooms has been apparent for some time. Facilities at present are inadequate at the senior high school level for science, physical education, music, industrial arts and library. At the junior high school level limitations are even more severe since sufficient time in special room areas cannot be allotted to seventh, eighth and ninth grade classes for science, music, shop, physical education and homemaking activities. Hence the result is a junior high school program which does not meet modern curriculum requirements satisfactorily. Possible Solutions Two possible solutions to the present building problems are apparent to the Survey Committee members. One would be the construction of a new senior high school to house grades ten, eleven and twelve. The other would be the erection of a new junior high school building to house grades seven, eight and nine. In either case the new construction would need to be on a new site since the present

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