

PrairieLand Talk

"Rancher Turned Merchant"

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

Across the street from Hotel Evans (now the Western) there was in the early 1890's the H. W. McClure store, dry goods, clothing and foot wear. The McClure family husband, wife, two daughters and three sons, took up their living quarters in rooms above the store. McClure was a cattle rancher turned first banker then merchant but still had his ranch southwest of Ewing. One of the three sons, Hay, was more of a cowboy than a store clerk, would do anything he could do on horseback, so when McClure closed out his store business and moved the family to Sioux City Hay went back to the ranch to do the cowboy stuff. While the family still lived in the rooms above the store a party was held there one evening, and I, then a young fellow with some elocutionary training, was one of the entertainers. As I stood there orating I looked down to see Judge Roberts looking up at me, and that stiff finger on his right hand that he could not fold up with the others pointing right at me. I forgot my talk and sneaked back to have a laugh. Hay remained on the ranch for some time, then married and moved to Wayne where he died some years ago.



Romaine Saunders

In business is your ambition just to make money or is your chief concern to be of service to your customers? Working for another with an eye on pay day, or a thought of how best to serve your employer.

And God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." The golden glow of sunlight shines up there in the sky this morning. And light from out of Heaven's open door shines in my soul another morning.

Does work and business problems keep your nose to the grinding stone? Step out a bright autumn afternoon and behold that bright blue sky and your soul will rejoice in the joy of life and love.

And now another of an O'Neill pioneer family is laid to rest in the grave, a daughter of the Dave Stannard family who with her sister had carried on a food store business on south Fourth street. The two sisters made their home there in rooms above their store, their mother being with them until a few years ago when she died. Their father had a stone monument business in the building in the 1880's and later put in a stock of groceries and fruit. One Stannard daughter remains to carry on the business and the family name there on south Fourth street while others of her parental family are among the lifeless up on the hill.

As I typewrite today two pioneers of the O'Neill community stand before me in memory who came to a regrettable end among us. Pat Hagerty was about the first to open a store or trading post in the little town that General John O'Neill planted just north of the Elkhorn river. Hagerty's place of business was on that corner where now stands the city's modern Hotel Golden. The Hagerty store and building later became the property of the late Joe Horiskey and was moved just across the street where it stands today. Hagerty had a quarter section of land south of town on the southwest limits of which was a body of water we called Hagerty's Lake, where we youthful squirts fished in the summer and skated in the winter. Hagerty's first dwelling was in the center of town between what are now Fourth and Fifth streets. He went from his trading post into the banking business with an associate who brought about a bank failure, and Pat left the community never to be seen here again. And some of us shed a tear. Ed Hershiser was another who left O'Neill to be seen here no more, a pioneer and served as sheriff in the days of Kid Wade and Doc Middleton, was considered the best ever in handling outlaws and the lawless. I saw Ed at one time take a six shooter from a bronco buster who had pulled out his gun to shoot the wild little horse. Hershiser saw it and rushed up and disarmed that guy and ordered him to turn the bucking bronco loose. Hershiser eventually came to want with no means to support his family and they left for parts unknown. And before me stand today in memory five pioneer patriots who ended their days in O'Neill: Frank Campbell, Fred Gatz, Neil Brennan, John McCafferty and Odie Biglin. And their remains rest today in the abode of the dead here where they had lived useful lives.

The airplane depot a few miles out from the Capital City now has the travelers that once crowded the railroad depots. And as we drive back to the city from the airport we stop at a railroad crossing as a great long freight train rolls by. Freight trains today as yesterday but few passenger trains. And if the public wants those passenger trains to continue to come rolling into town they must travel on them.

The sunlight falls from the bright blue sky on buildings here in the city grand and high. Out in the open country on the farms corn fields will soon give us what it takes to make corn meal mush and "johnie cake." Another fruitful season on Prairieland and now another time of rich brown robing the far flung landscape. And tonight you may hear out there the prairie wolves barking in a coming winter wind.

Ducks and geese flying south, so winter is just about due on grass robed Prairieland. Turn on the heat.

Frontiers Ago

50 YEARS AGO
Jack Thomas, M. H. McCarthy, Tom Enright and Arthur Ryan started out on their annual duck shoot last Sunday morning. Miss Rose Fallon, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Fallon of this city, who has been taking voice culture in Chicago the past year and a half, has accepted a position with the Chicago Grand Opera company and is now with the company in Philadelphia. The Ewing cornet band will give public dances at the Fraternal hall in Ewing. The ladies aid went out to Mrs. W. A. Gannon's last Thursday to spend the day where they quilted and knitted. The Inman basketball boys went over to Page last Friday afternoon where they played and lost 23 to 7.

25 YEARS AGO
While out hunting ducks on the Niobrara river north of Stuart Monday afternoon, John Montgomery, 40, was accidentally shot and killed. Edward Grimes, Chambers and Vernon L. Holm, Stuart, have entered two calves in the Ak-Sar-Ben Livestock and Horse show. Progress on courthouse means Holt county eligible for another PWA grant payment. Harold Weir has been appointed clerk of the O'Neill post office to fill the position vacated by George McCarthy who was appointed rural carrier. Melvin Geister has been elected president of the newly organized Spirited Six club. This section of the state was visited with 31 inch of snow Tuesday afternoon. Preliminary arrangements were made this week to ship first carload of 4-H turkeys.

10 YEARS AGO
Stuart Postmaster W. J. Holliday, died October 20 in the Veterans hospital at Grand Island after year's illness. Nancy Lee Yantzie weds Sam Derickson October 22 at St. Patrick's Catholic church. Eagles exp. 21.8 thriller from Neigh. Patricia Vandernick is installed as president of Ewing Future Homemakers. Phyllis Carlson, Orchard weds Kenneth Pollock, Ewing in double ring ceremony October 21 at the Christ Lutheran church in O'Neill. Mrs. Vern Sageser, Amelia, retiring chairman, hands over reins to new president, Mrs. Albert Carson, Redbird, at Holt County Home Extension club meeting.

5 YEARS AGO
Neligh defeats OHS Eagles 27-6. The Rev. Ernest G. Smith, who was ordained at the Lutheran church in 1954, to leave for Ft. Slocum, N. Y., where he is to enter chaplain's school as a reservist. Mary Ryan, daughter of Neil B. Ryan, Wednesday night was crowned homecoming queen at the St. Mary's academy homecoming ceremonies. Mrs. Juliana Kamphaus has purchased the Richard Hovey home; Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Johnson buy residence of Mrs. M. J. Wallace. High winds made difficult the fighting of spectacular prairie fires in the Emmet area Tuesday night and Wednesday. Mrs. Charles Bellin is elected president of the What Not Extension club.

The Long Ago At Chambers

50 YEARS AGO
The Band Boys have just received 52 more of those folding chairs this makes them 100 of each kind. Totten the Mystery-men will present an evening of magic and illusions at the band hall for 50 cents a ticket; Mr. Totten has no superior and few equals in entertainment. Mr. Feyerherm of Amelia is very ill with typhoid fever. Eckley Brothers are having a close-out sale of their entire stock of goods this week. The Ellworth League will give a Holloween Festival October 31 and there will be a program of real seasonable mysteries.

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25 YEARS AGO
Monday afternoon a fire started at the Charley Peterson ranch northwest of Amelia, completely burning the cattle barn. The son of H. M. Arnold whose leg was crushed between two automobiles was rushed to Chambers where he was taken care of. Dr. Oxford was called to Ewing to officiate at the birth of a boy October 16 who was born to Mr. and Mrs. James Bennett. Holt county will be represented by two boys, Edward Grimes of Chambers and Vernon Handholm of Stuart, who have each entered a calf in the Ak-Sar-Ben Livestock and Horse Show. Miss Rosalie Alderson yesterday returned to Grand Island to resume her studies in business college after several weeks absence from a broken ankle.

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Editorial

The Case of Inherited Relief

From New Jersey there now comes the latest chapter in the saga of a family tradition as we never knew it.

A Union County (N. J.) grand jury investigating the handling of welfare allotment says that one family has been on relief for four generations.

The jurors quoted one witness—a County Welfare Department member—as saying he couldn't estimate the number of families receiving aid for three of two generations.

Of the four-generation welfare case, the Welfare Board director, Mrs. Florence Slocum, said "such a case may exist."

But, she added, it began as a poor family supported by state aid, which was then inherited by the county. She said that some of the children, like their parents, had become welfare charges, and that some of their offspring also may have been perpetuated on the welfare rolls.

The jury recommended that the board "use its authority to demand and secure a more realistic approach to the program on the part of the staff . . . so as to protect the public's rights and interests, as well as those of the welfare applicants and recipients."

Remember when we used to be critical of inherited wealth?

How To Live Without A Budget

We'd like to remind you that our lawmakers have just set a new peacetime spending record—appropriating \$95.8 billion, well over \$11 billion more than the previous peak.

The massive total staggers our imagination. We were never one for figuring out astronomical figures. But there is something we've discovered, to our dismay and distress. Of the \$95.8 billion, more than \$48 billion has been appropriated for non-military spending as against \$47 billion plus for defense.

So we're going to spend more money running things at the same old government stand than we spend for our global defense!

The government has lived within its income just six times in the last 30 years. It's more than \$290 billion in debt—and that debt is an obligation against every man, woman and child in the country.

Isn't it high time to abandon the ruinous welfare state philosophy of the government, and cut non-essential Federal spending to the bone?

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