

Prairieland Talk

"Memories of 1888 Blizzard"

By ROMAINE SAUNDERS, 4113 South 51st St., Lincoln 6, Nebr.

These bright mild sunny January days are so wonderful! And then we think back to that terrible day in 1888. That winter my mother, my brother, my sister and I were living in the house across the street north of the Methodist church which had been the home of General John O'Neill and family. That winter storm struck without warning and I see in memory once more that old printer O. C. Bates as he stood at his case of type and picked letters up one by one and made up the story of that terrible event and coined the word "blizzard". And again I see in memory the stories of the frozen people that were found after that storm and the prairie covered with dead cattle. Some frozen to death in that storm were never found until the next spring out on the prairie and Grandma Chapman kneeling as in the attitude of prayer in her botched with her team standing up to a hay stack and she herself frozen to death with her little granddaughter alive at her side wanting her father and mother.



Romaine Saunders

It was somewhere about the year 1885 and I was a winner in a horse race. Frank Mann and I mounted our steeds up west of town and came racing down the street to about where the Knights of Columbus Hall now stands. My split-eared Indian pony a horse's length in the lead. I won the race. And a few spectators there on the street took in the show. Rarely a day passed in those years of long ago that there wasn't a horse race of some kind.

The Rileys are no longer there, Robylers are gone, James is no more, Blighs are gone from their old home, John Bowers is gone, Berrys are gone excepting one of the third generation and the Prairieland Talker household is no more, but that beautiful land in the Swan Lake vicinity still lies there robed in the Prairieland sod.

I recently had a visit from Tom Brennan of the pioneer Brennan family of O'Neill. Tom and his wife have been residents of Lincoln now for twenty years and still have an interest in their father's store building in O'Neill. And he has a great interest in the welfare of O'Neill as is manifested in his wish for it's continual progress. Mr. Brennan goes to O'Neill from time to time as does his wife who was one of the Shoemaker family.

My esteemed friend Ed Mann Gallagher and Mrs. Gallagher disposed of their beautiful home in O'Neill and I suppose Ed's banking interests and they have gone to California. The state that catches the overflow of adventurous humanity. Mr. Gallagher is of the Ed F. Gallagher family and as far as I know the only one who has survived of that family.

Editorial

Support Industrial Development

If the opinions of those who study national trends are correct, then a reasonable conclusion is that agriculture of the future will become a big operation managed and carried on by fewer people and on a larger scale. Even now, farm boys are being urged to train for other fields of work since it is no longer possible for a young man to rent or buy a small family sized farm and start with a modest beginning.

Time has long passed when farmers pooled their work jobs and this makes it necessary for each man to have his own complete line of machinery costing as much, or more than the amount that his grandfather hoped to accumulate in a whole lifetime of work.

In the past, and with a farm family on each quarter section of land, the goodly rural population furnished the life blood for the small towns that dotted the country, in cases as close as four or five miles from each other. And while the towns were small, the volume of business was considerable. The typical town boasted one or two banks, a lumber yard, elevator, a doctor, drug store and a livestock market, to say nothing of other places of business and entertainment.

There are many who mourn the passing of such rural life, providing as it did, homes and wholesome dignified work for so many people. It may be presumed that the small town will disappear from the scene along with the small farm and the idea is even now being advanced that it is only a matter of time until the county seats may be the last of the small towns to survive.

Personally, we would be sorry to see such a day, although we realize, and already see, the reason for the gradual destruction of the old way of rural life. Say what you will in favor of progress, this change may not be for the better.

If only the county seat, of all the small towns, is to survive, a much greater burden of responsibility must rest there and forward looking men are already aware of that.

They know the need for employment in industries, markets and above all, educational facilities. Here in O'Neill we have men who are both capable and aware. They know the challenge that O'Neill faces and they are meeting it. Always educational facilities have had first consideration here and now even more preparation is underway. A development group is in the process of organizing what will have as their consideration the whole industrial development of the city. The possibilities are unlimited and we have O'Neill men who are equal in judgment and ambition of those to be found in any segment of our country.

Senator Frank Nelson's introduction of LB177 in the Legislature last week asking for a trade school similar to the one at Milford to be situated in O'Neill is definitely a step in the right direction. But, it's going to be a tough, uphill battle if O'Neill is to be selected as the location for the state vocational training school.

Let's back the Industrial Development Corporation and Senator Frank Nelson with everything we have.

B J R

GREAT FALLS, MONT., LEADER: "There is one thought that may not have occurred to you in regard to the recent thalidomide scare. The drug originated and was freely used in just two nations, England and Germany. These are the two nations which have the oldest and most deep rooted systems of socialized medicine. . . . It just goes to show that under the crushing burden of nationalized medicine neither doctors nor scientists can exercise caution that is required in testing new drugs."

WELLINGTON, OHIO, ENTERPRISE: "Back in 1936, Franklin D. Roosevelt forecast the beginning of the end of public relief. That was the starting year of the Social Security program, with Old Age and Survivors Insurance and unemployment compensation. It was also the starting year for federal sharing in local relief programs. How are things working out? Upwards of \$15 billion a year is flowing out to workers and survivors covered by Social Security. In 1960 another \$2.7 billion was meted out in unemployment benefits. Yet public relief has not lessened, instead has moved up with each passing year until payments have reached \$5 billion a year."

Frontiers Ago

50 YEARS AGO

Lily C. Brown has brought suit against Fred L. Brown for divorce and alimony. . . . Col. James Moore reports a great sale out at Sibert and Burnam's Wednesday. There was a good crowd and bidding was lively. . . . The city has entered into a contract with the McGinnie Creamery company to pump the water and take entire charge of the water works plant until May 1 at an expense of \$125 per month. . . . The citizens of O'Neill soon will be asked to consider the proposition of bonds for a new public high school building. . . . Rev. Mr. Williams of Royal was in the city Tuesday and Wednesday and occupied the pulpit these two evenings in the Methodist church, where services have been in progress the past two weeks.

25 YEARS AGO

Mr. and Mrs. Seth Noble returned last Saturday from a three week business and pleasure trip to Carthage, S. D. . . . A party of twenty friends tendered Mrs. Vic Halva a surprise party at her home last Friday evening to help her properly celebrate her birthday anniversary. . . . St. Mary's Cardinals won their fifth victory of the season. . . . The Alpha club met at the home of Lillian Drayton on Wednesday, Jan. 12 with eleven members answering roll call. It was announced that the O'Neill public library named the book entitled "Slogum House" by Mari Sandoz.

10 YEARS AGO

Cpl. Raymond Walter of Chambers is a member of the 325th airborne battalion at Ft. Bragg, N. C., which will be represented in President-Elect Eisenhower's inaugural parade in Washington, D. C., on January 20. . . . Mr. and Mrs. T. H. Davis quietly observed their 58th wedding anniversary in Atkinson on Friday, Jan. 9. . . . Mrs. Leona Shoemaker, teacher of the sixth grade of the O'Neill public school and 39 members of her class toured The Frontier Wednesday morning, August 20, Chambers, purchased the 320-acre ranch owned by Charles and Tracy Berner in an action held Wednesday. . . . Duane Pinnit, 17, who was seriously injured during the holidays when his auto struck a bridge near Lynch, returned home Monday, Jan. 5, from an Omaha hospital.

5 YEARS AGO

Mr. and Mrs. Anton Tomjack quietly celebrated their 64th wedding anniversary Friday at their home in Ewing. . . . J. B. ("Ben") Grady, veteran cashier of the O'Neill National bank, Tuesday was elevated from cashier to vice-president, it was announced by President F. N. Cronin. . . . The barn at the Lee Skalberg place in Orchard was destroyed by fire Sunday, plus the hay contents. . . . Miss Regina Vist of St. Mary's academy and Miss Linnell Tompkins of Inman high school have been named Betty Crocker "homemakers of tomorrow" in their respective high schools in written examinations. They will compete for state honors. . . . S/Sgt. and Mrs. Albert Emmons and Sheryl of Rockville, Ind., came Tuesday, Jan. 7, for a visit with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Focken and family. . . . Theresa Breiner was guest of honor at a family get-together and dinner commemorating her 78th birthday anniversary Sunday January 12, at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Floyd Johnson and family.

The Long Ago At Chambers

50 YEARS AGO

Terms on the Hiram Hubbard farm sale were one year's time will be given on sums over \$10, with approved security and 10% interest. Sums of \$10 and under cash. . . . Mr and Mrs E V Sageser moved to town Monday and Dode will take possession of the harness shop in the near future. . . . Dentist Hemingway is here to stay until next Monday. See him about your teeth. . . . Gladys Baker is on the sick list this week and Clara Higgins is teaching her school during her illness. . . . The revival meetings in the M. E. church closed Sunday night and Miss Ryan departed for Omaha Monday morning. . . . Od Jarman started to Omaha Tuesday with a carload of cattle.

25 YEARS AGO

Miss Leola Lorraine Fluckey, younger daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Fluckey of Chambers was united in marriage to Mr. Erwin Stapleman, elder son of Mr. and Mrs. Louis Stapleman of Rupert, Idaho on Dec. 24, 1937. . . . Mr. and Mrs. Carl Niemand were at the Lutheran hospital at Norfolk Monday where Mrs Niemand went through the clinic. . . . A dinner was served at the Harry White home Sunday, Jan. 16 in honor of Mrs. Nancy White's birthday. . . . Mrs. W. A. Smith underwent a major operation at the Methodist hospital in Omaha Saturday morning. . . . Mrs. L. Pierce of Burwell was calling on Mrs. Harve Lee, Monday. Mrs. Pierce was a judge of the County Fair exhibits for five or six years. . . . E. H. Medcalf was sawing wood for some of our town residents the fore part of the week, going from here to Mrs. F. M. Clark's to saw wood.

Pages Past

50 YEARS AGO

Howard Bryan was an arrival from Tekamah the first of the week. . . . J. B. Anderson of Dorsey was a Page visitor on the first day of the year. J. B. and his neighbors bring a lot of trade to Page in the course of a year. . . . Ethel Waring and family and Clarence Stevens and family spent Christmas in the R. K. Stevens home. . . . Autos were kept busy Monday taking men out to fight the big prairie fire near Middle Branch, Dec. 28. More than 100 men, including the pastors of both churches, fought hard to bring it under control. Charles Manning and Bror Beguston lost all their hay and R. K. Stevens lost two stacks. . . . Royal is preparing to dedicate their new

ten thousand dollar school house. . . . G. W. Kincaid of Randolph, was a Page caller Tuesday. George J. Timmermeier and his daughter, Mrs. Faulhaber of Middle Branch left Friday for a several weeks visit in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. . . . Gus Hansen and family returned Monday from a visit with relatives at Randolph and Wayne.

40 YEARS AGO

Mae Hartford, who has worked at the Orchard switch board the past year spent a fortnight with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. P. Hartford. . . . WCTU reception was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Kightlinger. . . . Mr. and Mrs. Andy Morton of O'Neill were Sunday dinner guests in the James Carson home and supper guests at the R. D. Copes home. They are old friends of both families. . . . Theo Finley has built some of the finest homes in Page. . . . Gordon Rakow celebrated his eighth birthday with a party of 16 guests

Jan. 2. . . Thirty six members attended the installation of officers Wednesday evening with Mrs. G. L. Roberge, state deputy, the installing officer. Mrs. Murphy drew the quilt. Lunch (glorified service, etc) was served by Mrs. M. F. Phillips, G. L. Roberge, James A. Carson and F. R. Cotton. . . . Mrs. Shanner reported that Christmas Day was the finest in forty years.

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