

PLATTSMOUTH - - - As Viewed By A Bee-News Feature Writer

Text of Page Article from Sunday Bee-News of November 15th by Don Hollenbeck

"Seeing yourself as others see you" was the unique experience of Plattsmouth readers of the Omaha Bee-News last Sunday, when that paper contained a page write-up of the town by Don Hollenbeck, feature writer, who was here a couple of days the preceding week, accompanied by the paper's Candid Camera photographer. They spent the time "just visitin'" and talking with "the folks," snapping numerous pictures of interesting people of the town, some of which were published and some not. The full-page story was the net result of their visit. Through courtesy of the Bee-News, the Journal has been provided with a mat of the story and pictures, which we reproduce for the benefit of our readers who do not take the Omaha paper. Tomorrow the Bee-News will carry a similar page on the town of Weeping Water. The honor of being the first in this series of "Omaha's Neighbors" was accorded to Plattsmouth, a town that has in years past occupied as much front-page space in metropolitan newspapers as any town in the state.

The text of Mr. Hollenbeck's story, interwoven with the pictures the Bee published in connection therewith is as follows:

If there is any town in Nebraska with a dream of its past and a vision of its future inextricably bound up in the daily lives of its inhabitants, that town is Plattsmouth, about 20 miles south of Omaha, near the confluence of the Platte and Missouri rivers.

Plattsmouth dreams of its past glory, when it was one of the most important cities of the state, with a bustling river harbor, and street cars "before Omaha had them." It glories in its vision of the future, when the river again will echo to the haunting toots of steamboat whistles, and Plattsmouth will once more take its place as a river port of parts.

That vision is taking shape now. The docks are under construction, and, when the river is opened to regular traffic, the proudest town along the stream will be Plattsmouth, whose life has been transportation, by river and by rail.

Confident, Wise Shrewd

You can't spend 10 minutes in the town before the fact strikes you that here is a community that is well high sufficient unto itself, confident in its ability to prosper, wise in holding fast to what is good, and shrewd in adopting what is new.

Take the case of Fred Heisel. Fred runs the Plattsmouth roller mills, which you pass as you drive into Plattsmouth on Highway 75. Fred was born in Plattsmouth in 1869, and he's just the same age as the railroad in Nebraska. That wouldn't be so unusual, but Fred lives in the house in which he was born, just a block or two from the mill. They used to grind flour there but, as Fred says, baker's bread sort of put the small flour mills on the blink, and so now he handles mostly grits, and other kinds of feed. But he's happy, living in the old house with his sister, Anna, doing a little business with the folks that live around Plattsmouth, remembering when there were three steamboats busy on the river (that was in 1879) and when the ferry used to cross to a place called Bethlehem, on the Iowa side.

Fred's catalpa tree, which stands near the well on the old Heisel place, is probably the biggest catalpa tree around here.

Fixed Roots

Fred's case is typical of Plattsmouth folk. They have roots that are hard to pull up. Fred's father started the mill in 1856, and Fred started working in it as a youngster. You might think he'd had enough of it, especially when things tightened up, but Fred's perfectly contented. The cars go pretty fast along the smooth, hard No. 75, past Fred's mill, but speed isn't a factor in his life.

As you enter Plattsmouth, coming from Omaha, the state highway department's road marker credits the town with a population of 3,793. While true in 1930, when census fig-

larger side of the ledger, the side that has names and faces on it.

Plattsmouth's Pride

First, what has Plattsmouth the most reason to be proud of? Probably the Masonic home would cover that item. Everybody knows what a great institution the Masonic home is, how it takes care of aged and indigent members of the lodge from all over the state. But you wouldn't know the story of Plattsmouth if you didn't know the story about Bill Evers, who as a kid used to play on the spacious grounds of the Masonic home and later grew up to become superintendent. Bill has been super-



W. H. "BILL" EVERS
Superintendent of the Nebraska Masonic Home

intendent of the home since 1929, but as he says, he's known everybody that came into the place since 1903, which about dates Bill's faculty for remembering names and faces.

The Masonic home is Bill's dream and although he's had almost every honor that a grateful and proud community can pay him, it looms largest in his hopes and plans for Plattsmouth. Just last season, Bill was king of the King Koru Carnival, which corresponds to Omaha's Ak-Sar-Ben.

A very fine king he was, too, although the biggest kick he got out of the whole affair was seeing the trick moving pictures of him putting the crown on the queen. They ran the film slowly, thus making the projection about 10 times as fast, and it looked like Bill was trying to brain the queen when he placed the crown on her head. Bill, bluff and hearty, roars when he tells about that.

Eight Churches

Take the churches of Plattsmouth. There are eight in the town, which is a pretty stiff average for the average community to shoot at. There's the Presbyterian, of which the Rev. Dr. H. G. McClusky is pastor and by far the oldest in years of service of all the ministers in Plattsmouth; the Methodist, presided over by the Rev. V. C. Wright; the Christian church, led by the Rev. J. W. Taenzler; the Evangelical, pastor, G. A. Pahl, and the two Catholic churches, whose flocks look to the Rev. Fathers George Agius and Adolph Mosler for guidance. There is also a Christian Science congregation, and an Episcopal church, Father Lane of South Omaha supplying.

Suppose we go for a stroll down Main street in Plattsmouth on any weekday morning. Let's meet a few of the folks as we pass their way on a sunny fall day. One of the first you're likely to

meet is the chief of police. If your conscience is clear, greet him heartily, for it's Joe Libershal, a Plattsmouth boy, at whom his one-time playmates gaze a little awe-struck



JOE LIBERSHAL
Chief of Police of the City of Plattsmouth

now, because Joe sports a natty tan uniform, complete with Sam Brown belt.

Working for Joe are two policemen, Dave Pickrel and Jarvis Lancaster, who handle the night trick, while Joe himself looks after things during the day. There's quite a story about Jarvis. Two or three years ago some bandits took picks on a Plattsmouth bank, and Jarvis, then a deputy sheriff, proved himself the hero of the occasion.

Not the Measles

His pictures came out in the Omaha papers, and it looked like Jarvis had the measles. But the spots on Jarvis' face were there because he had rubbed mercurochrome on the places where he'd been cut by flying glass. Bullets pumped by Jarvis thru the plate glass door of the bank into one of the bandits, caused the glass to spatter his face. Jarvis was rewarded for this fine piece of work by a job as a deputy state sheriff in Bryan's administration, but was let out later.

If we're early enough, we're more than likely to come across Mrs. J. M. Roberts, who has taught about half



MRS. L. W. EGENBERGER
MIKE TRITSCH
Optician Mike Tritsch comes from his office down the hall to fix a pair of specs for Mrs. L. W. Egenberger, Cass county's only woman real estate and insurance agent.



HILDA WALLENGREN
She's just about got everybody's number in Plattsmouth

the youngsters in Plattsmouth. Mrs. Roberts used to be Kitty Cummins, member of a pioneer Cass county family. She lives opposite the new high school in a square, two-tone house, with tan predominating.

Her brother, Dr. Frank L. Cummins, is the postmaster, just appointed. He succeeded James W. Holmes, who's now in the insurance business. As they say in Plattsmouth, everybody that's out of office goes into the insurance or real estate business, and the real estate business hasn't amounted to much of late.

But we meet a lady who denies the real estate business is in the doldrums. It's Mrs. L. W. Egenberger, the only lady in Cass county to be engaged in the insurance and real estate business. In her sunny offices over Main street, she says there's no reason to complain about hard times.

The Chief Operator

Here's Hilda Wallengren, the chief telephone operator. Hilda's been working on the board for eleven years, but she hasn't been chief operator that long. Hilda's quick thinking had a lot to do with the discomfiture of the bandits during the episode in which Jarvis Lancaster figured so largely.

Working with Hilda are Mrs. Harriett Wynn, Rose Janda, Mrs. Hazel Jamison, Helen Ledgway, Eleanor O'Brien, Hilda Epler, Margaret Long and Mrs. Ruth Koukal. Pretty good sized board for a town the size of Plattsmouth, but a lot of long distance calls go through, and every progressive Plattsmouth merchant as well as most of the residences have a telephone.

This fellow with the "I'll beat the world" stride is Art E. Stewart, who runs the Norfolk Packing company. You might wonder why it's located in Plattsmouth and still called by the name of another Nebraska town, and there's a story about that.

Cliff Wescott, who's the chairman of one of the Chamber of Commerce committees, read a two-line item in a Nebraska paper that the Norfolk Packing Co. was considering moving its location from the town of that name. Cliff got busy and spent two years persuading the firm that Plattsmouth was the place for it to expand. And they're glad they took his advice, doing a fine business and pack-

ing just about everything in the vegetable line.

As BREG Goes, So—

The packing plant and the Burlington Refrigerator Express company occupy the buildings once occupied entirely by the Burlington's coach and freight car shops. Plattsmouth calls the latter outfit "BREG" and Plattsmouth thrives as "BREG" sur-



EDDIE SCHULHOF
Piano Tuner and former Band Director at Plattsmouth

lives and vice versa. Just now there is talk of a large refrigerator car building program that may add extra men to the force.

This jolly looking chap with the gold toothed grin must be Eddie Schulhof. Eddie used to be the leader of the C. B. & Q. band, when the shops were doing locomotive, coach and freight car work, and they went to puff away for Bryan at the Kansas City convention in 1900, but the band has been disbanded long since. Now Eddie is a piano tuner, and is doing what most piano tuners do nowadays—not much. So he's organized a brass quartet.

Like most band leaders, Eddie plays the baritone horn. Other members of the quartet are Lee Knolle, who teaches music in the public schools, C. E. Ledgway, clerk of the district court, and Sheldon Giles who works for his father in the Corryell oil station. Knolle's another baritone player, and Giles and Ledgway perform on the trombone. The boys are polishing up some Christmas carols.

The Rotary Club

About noon or a quarter after, we'll probably see Frank A. Clويد of the Plattsmouth State bank dropping his work and rushing across the street to the Plattsmouth cafe, where the Rotary club meets on Tuesday. Frank, an energetic, highly strung chap, with a fine tenor voice, is president of the club.

Just about everybody in town belongs to the club. There's the barber, Clayt Rosencrans, who puts gravy on pie and loves it. That's gospel. Just ask anybody in Plattsmouth.

After the Rotary meeting, we might meet Mrs. Hilt Wescott, who

has led the Methodist choir for 35 years, or her husband, who has played the organ for 40 years and taught the men's Bible class for 31 years. Hilt is secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, and with his brother, runs the only exclusive men's clothing store in Plattsmouth. Of if a long bespole-like sort of chap meets our eye, it is more than likely Fred I. Rea, never without a cigar. Fred is district manager of the Iowa-Nebraska Light and Power company.

Nose for News

The rather mournful looking fellow is Frank Smith, news editor of the Plattsmouth Journal, which is owned and published by Mrs. R. A. Bates. The paper was published for many years by her husband, Robert A. Bates, who died in 1934.

Saturday nights don't amount to so much in Plattsmouth any more since the merchants started their Wednesday siant. Throughout the week they all give coupons free—you don't have to buy anything to get one, and then on Wednesday nights the coupons with their owner's names thereon are dumped into two boxes on the street corner, and two drawings are held, one for the folks who live out in the country, and another for those in town. Lucky winners get scrip worth \$20 in trade.

It really brings the folks to town. A half hour of entertainment is offered before the drawing, and Saturday night just can't hold a candle to Wednesday night any more when it comes to crowds.

(Ed. Note—Mr. Hollenbeck evidently thinks Saturday nights are dull in Plattsmouth and we hasten to enlighten him on this fact, as a trip here any Saturday night with cars parked several blocks back off Main street would promptly do. 16th and Farnam is seldom more crowded than Plattsmouth's Main street either on Wednesday or Saturday nights. Come down and see us, sometime, Don.)

Liquor Question

You can't buy liquor by the drink in Plattsmouth, only by the package, from two stores. Plattsmouth folks didn't want repeal very badly, and some of them would be pleased to see prohibition again. But the liquor

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"CLIFF" WESCOTT
Caught in an off-guard pose by the Bee-News cameraman



MARIAN OLSON
High school's just like it always was. Here's Marian Olson reciting in business English class.



"CLAYT" ROSENCRANS
Plattsmouth barber who likes to eat gravy on his pie. He isn't doing that however in this picture taken at a Rotary club luncheon.



If the first figure was a 4 instead of 3, it would come a lot closer to giving the facts in the case. Plattsmouth has been growing in "pop" since the census of 1930.

ures were taken, that's far from accurate today. The Plattsmouth Journal, a daily and semi-weekly, claims 4,800 for the town, and the most conservative estimates put the population at about 4,500 souls. But facts and figures don't tell the half of a town's story. Let's take a look at the