

LOUP CITY NORTHWESTERN

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PROFESSIONAL CARDS

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THE OLD OLIVE TRAGEDY

HISTORY AND LOCAL TRADITION NOT AGREED ON FACTS

VARIOUS STORIES OF SAME

Gruesome Story of a Pioneer Crime as Remembered in the Vicinity Where it was Enacted

Callaway, Nebr.,—In the death of James Kelley, better known as "Nigger Jim," on Wednesday, February 7, Custer county has lost one of its most noted characters.

Even though some enterprising reporter has heralded to the world since his death that he was one of the men who took part in the hanging and burning of Mitchell and Ketchum in 1877, such is not the case.

This tragedy occurred some five miles southeast of Callaway, and the graves where the bodies reposed until disinterred and removed to Kearney are still in evidence.

In justice to the departed negro, who, even though he had his faults, and was at one time considered a bad man, also had his good points, a representative of the Journal has secured the following information from a gentleman who was at that time one of the cowboys of the community although connected with another ranch.

"Nigger Jim" was a Texan, and in the spring of 1876 accompanied the Olives from Texas to the South Loup ranch with a herd of cattle and was the cook of the gang. At that time he was eighteen years of age. Upon arriving at the Custer county ranch he was installed as cook, which position he held for many years, or until the ranch business was given up by the Olives.

On the night of the tragedy he begged to be allowed to accompany the "gang," but was ordered by Olive to remain at the ranch house with a visitor. Whether or not "Nigger Jim" knew that night is not known, but it is positively known that he remained at the ranch house with the visitor, and upon the return of the gang after the hanging he arose from his bed and prepared supper for them the visitor also arising and partaking of the meal. Nigger Jim has often been accused of being one of the gang to help lynch the homesteaders but there are old timers here who would swear he was not, and that he was at the ranch house when the same took place.

The lynching and burning of Mitchell and Ketchum has also many times been enlarged upon, and your representative gives the following facts as they have been given him by one who was on the ground soon after the tragedy:

Mitchell was a man of family about sixty-five years of age. Ketchum was a young man, a blacksmith by trade, but had grown tired of the business and came to Custer county to homestead and "grow up with the country." He was stopping at the Mitchell home, he and a daughter of Mitchell being sweethearts and were engaged to be married.

It was noticed by the Olives that some of their cattle were being missed. The theft of them was traced to the Mitchell home, and in the trouble which ensued, Bob Olive was shot. In the side from the effects of which he died. At the same time Ketchum was shot in the arm the ball breaking the bone of the same and his arm being in a sling at the time of tragedy. In justice to his dead brother, I. P. Olive and some of his cowboys took the law in their own hands.

Mitchell and Ketchum were captured, handcuffed together and placed upon a seat of a wagon. They were driven to the place of execution, the wagon being stopped under the limb of a tree which extended out over a canyon. Olive then stepped up to Mitchell and attempted to get him to confess that he had stolen the cattle and that he was guilty of murdering his brother, but neither Mitchell nor Ketchum would speak. Olive then pulled his gun and shot Mitchell in the side the same as his brother had been shot. Mitchell fell over backward on the bottom of the wagon box and a rope was immediately placed about his neck. When the rope was being placed around the neck of Ketchum he threw his chin upon his breast and the rope had to be drawn across his mouth to make him hold up his head. The team was then driven from under the bodies and they were left hanging in the air.

Mitchell was clothed in an overcoat and the close proximity of the garment at the time he was shot by Olive set fire to the overcoat. This was noticed by Olive before the gang dispersed and he ordered one of his men to put it out. The man took the butt of his revolver and rubbed out the sparks and he supposed he had put out the fire. However, the

sparks smouldering underneath the garment were fanned to a blaze by the wind after the dispersion of the party, and all the clothing was burned from the bodies before they were taken down the next morning, and unbeknown to the party. The story to the effect that a fire was kindled under the bodies is a mistake, and there was no intention to burn them. The rope around the neck of Ketchum was also burned in two, and the body was found in a kneeling position upon the ground the next morning being supported only by the handcuff upon the wrist of Mitchell.

RELATED BY WRITTEN HISTORY

The story of the murder of Mitchell and Ketchum, as told in a history of Nebraska published thirty years ago, a few years after the crime and corroborated by court reports, differs in essential particulars from that given in the recollection of Callaway resident. Throughout the story where the Callaway version favors the Olives, the story in the history of the state inclines to favor Mitchell and Ketchum. The latter account indicates that neither of the two murdered men were guilty of cattle thefts although the reminiscence quoted above says that some of the thievery was traced to Mitchell. "Nigger Jim" is not mentioned.

According to the historical account Ketchum was implicated by a confession of a cattle thief, but this confession is discounted in history. Accordingly Bob Olive, then living under an assumed name because of crimes committed in Texas, was appointed a deputy sheriff to arrest him, despite the well known fact that there was an acute personal enmity between the two. Bob Olive and three others rode up to the Mitchell and Ketchum home just as these two were leaving in a spring wagon, the posse firing wildly as they dashed up. Ketchum had heard that Bob Olive was seeking to kill him and in self defense fired and mortally wounded the leader of the posse, he not Mitchell firing the fatal shot.

Fearing violence, the two settlers went to Merrick county. After consulting an attorney they decided to give themselves up and stand trial for the murder. They were arrested by Sheriff Fletcher of Merrick county and Sheriff Crew of Howard county.

After some dispute over the distribution of reward of money, the two men were delivered to Sheriff Gillian of Keith county, a friend of the Olives and reputed to be a desperate character. He put them on a west-bound train, from which they were removed at Plum Creek, the home of I. P. Olive and started cross country to Custer county.

At Devil's canyon the party stopped beneath an elm tree. The historic account then reads as follows:

"Two ropes were thrown over a branch and Gartrell tied one around Ketchum's neck and Pedro Dominguez tied the other around Mitchell's neck. The ropes were not prepared with slip nooses, however, but were simply tied that their agony might be prolonged. The prisoners were handcuffed together, Ketchum was first drawn up.

"Olive caught up a rifle and shot Mitchell. Olive and Gartrell then caught hold of the rope and drew Mitchell up. Fisher and Brown pulled on Ketchum's rope. A fire was then kindled under them. Accounts differ as to whether this was done purposely or not. The party had been indulging freely in whisky and some of them claim that this fire was started accidentally. However this may be, the bodies were frantically burned. The next day when the bodies were found about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, Ketchum was still hanging with his legs burned nearly to a crumbling condition. Mitchell's rope had either burned off or had broken and he was lying on the ground, one arm drawn up to Ketchum by the handcuffs and the other burned off up to the shoulder."

The account then tells of the organization of citizens and the final capture and trial of I. P. Olive and Fred Fisher. They were sentenced to life imprisonment but were released in a year by the supreme court which passed its decision on technicalities in regard to the jurisdiction of the court. Justice Maxwell, dissenting. The decision practically made it impossible for another trial to be held and all the murderers escaped without further punishment.

MOUTH A SOURCE OF DISEASE

Many Ailments Are Due to the Fact That It is Not Kept Clean.

It is only within the past few years that we have begun to appreciate the necessity of a clean mouth. True, we brush our teeth, and make occasional visits to the dentist, but the absolute necessity of a clean mouth as a preventive of disease has not been impressed upon us, until recent times. Now we know that often it occurs that a person may take medicine for years for an internal disease, when the true source of the trouble lay at the front door. The mouth presents one of the most favorable fields for the invasion of microbes into the body, and if unclean, and with cavities in the teeth where food may lodge and decay, he is fortunate indeed who escapes serious trouble.

The danger coming from an unclean mouth arises from two sources. The swallowing of pus, germs and decayed food along with the saliva, and the fact that, with diseased teeth, we are unable to chew our food properly. It is needless to enlarge upon the amount of danger which comes from the swallowing of poisonous substances along with our saliva. We know that these substances are not only harmful, but that the effort to counteract the effect of these poisons weakens the body. If this were all, it were enough, and yet the inability to properly chew our food under these conditions renders the problem more serious. If the teeth are decayed they become sensitive, and a person will unconsciously refrain from chewing on a sore tooth. As the condition becomes aggravated, good chewing becomes impossible, and the habit of bolting the food is formed.

Now, it is all right for a chicken to bolt its food, because there is arranged for the chicken internal apparatus for afterwards grinding the food. Man, however, has no gizzard, and this habit of bolting our food not only causes excessive strain on our digestive apparatus, but also impoverishes the blood, and thus weakens the system so that it cannot ward off the disease.

That this condition is serious there can be no doubt. Examinations made of the teeth of children in the schools of New York, and some of the cities in the western states, show the percentage of dental decay to be as high as 85 per cent. About 50 per cent. were found suffering from malnutrition, directly due to their inability to properly chew their food.

PROFESSIONAL MAN'S IDEALS

Earnest Study and Conscientious Effort to Keep Ahead of the Times Bring Success.

To deserve and earn the respect and good will of his patrons, friends and fellow practitioners is the first aim and object to the professional man who strives for the best. He endeavors to improve himself, render more efficient his efforts, more useful his operations, more painless his procedures, more active his brain and more deft his fingers. He is constantly reaching forward, not satisfied with today, but hoping to do better tomorrow. He eagerly seeks information, grasps quickly that which is beneficial, and useful, and adopts it. He keeps in touch with all that is new and novel in the literature of his profession. He anticipates with extreme pleasure the meetings of his local, state and national associations and faithfully attends such as he is able to, carefully reading all published literature relating to those from which he is unavoidably absent. He pays fraternal visits to his professional brethren and notes with satisfaction that in almost every instance he receives and imparts desirable and useful information. He scans the advertising pages of the journals in quest of whatever is novel and frequently learns of something that will, if adopted and made use of by himself, be of benefit to his practice. He peruses with much satisfaction the printed discussions following the reading of papers and essays, and often finds them far more interesting and instructive than the papers which called forth the discussion. He adopts every method that seems to promise better results.

By such careful and conscientious attention to his profession he is bound to succeed, slowly perhaps at first, but none the less surely. His foundations are built upon rock and cannot be shaken loose, and as his superstructure gradually rises he notes with satisfaction its beauty as well as its utility. It moulds itself to his own character, and becomes a portion of himself. His very earnestness will attract patrons to him, and of the very best obtainable class, who as long as he cherishes and nurtures his ideals, will remain steadfast to him. This is much more satisfactory to his inward self than where dollars and cents are the sole consideration. He feels that he is useful to humanity and that he is, in his humble way, assisting in forwarding the plan of world advancement.

And thus he goes forward, he sees better things ahead, perhaps, at that time, considered unattainable, but with earnest efforts he is able to reach and pass beyond them to others still more difficult of access. Perfection is always still further in advance. It should be his aim to make his profession a study and leave it better for his having entered it.

(Copyright, Western Newspaper Union.)

In shedding your illusions you don't have to drop the fundamental!

Commercial Club Fully Organized

By some hocus pocus, the Northwestern neglected to speak last week of the adjourned meeting of the Commercial Club to perfect its organization the Friday evening preceding its publication. Pure neglect in forgetting to make note of it, is the aforesaid hocus pocus. At the meeting the committee on constitution and by-laws made report and gave to the club a proposed copy of these, which was discussed, section by section and adopted as read or amended and we will later when we have room, publish said constitution and by-laws as adopted. The matter of dues was discussed and decided upon at \$1.50 per quarter. The board of directors was decided on as composed of seven members, the president, vice president, secretary and treasurer, and three other members, S. E. Galloway, R. J. Nightingale and Gus Lorentz being elected to finish out the board in addition to the regular club officials. The fourth Friday evening of each month was decided upon as the regular meeting nights of the club. Much enthusiasm was manifest and it looked as though we were to have a commercial club that was here to stay and one in which Loup City was to be a unit in support.

Last Friday night the Commercial Club again met to perfect such matters as were not finished at the previous meeting. Another good attendance was in evidence. Discussions pro and con on many things of interest was the order of the evening. The president made public his selection of the various committees and the memberships thereon, which we will give below. Society Hall was decided upon as the place of meeting of the club for the present, and discussion was earnestly made by various members favorable to the selection of a hall in full control of the club that would be open at all times for the use of the members, the general opinion being expressed that simply having a hall for meeting nights once a month was insufficient to the needs and accommodation of the club interests. This was left to action by the board of directors. There being no other special matters of interest adjournment was taken to the regular session on the last Friday evening of the month. The following compose the membership of the various committees as given out by the president:

Finance: S. A. Allen, O. E. Longacre, W. S. Waite.
Publicity: S. E. Galloway, Edgar Draper, W. F. Mason.
Roads: T. H. Elsner, A. C. Ogle, A. B. Outhouse.
County affairs: F. M. Henry, J. I. Depew, E. F. Jones.
Municipal: Vic Swanson, W. T. Chase, E. G. Taylor.
Township: Gus Lorentz, S. N. Sweetland, J. W. Burleigh.
Foreign Solicitors: J. W. Long, R. H. Mathew, Wm. Larsen.
Miscellaneous: R. J. Nightingale, J. P. Leininger, J. S. Pedler.

For Cash Rent

On or before Feb. 15, my farm one mile north of Loup City.
MRS. IONA SHARP.

ROAD NOTICE

(Christenson)

The Commissioner appointed to vacate the following: That part of road No. 45 known as the old Delaney road which crosses the northeast quarter of section six (6), township fifteen (15), range fourteen (14) Sherman County, Nebr., has reported in favor of the vacation of said road and all objections thereto or claims for damage must be filed in the County Clerk's office on or before noon of the 5th day of April, 1912, or such road will be vacated without reference thereto. Dated this 5th day of February 1912.
W. C. DIETERICHS,
County Clerk

ROAD NOTICE

(Fletcher)

To All Whom It May Concern:

The Commissioner appointed to locate a road commencing at the Southwest corner of section ten (10) in township fourteen (14), range fourteen (14), and running thence on section line east to the southeast corner of said section and terminating there, has reported in favor of the location thereof and all objections thereto or claims for damages must be filed in office of the County Clerk on or before noon of the 10th day of April 1912. Dated this 3rd day of February 1912.
W. C. DIETERICHS,
County Clerk

BRIDGE NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that bids will be received at the office of the county clerk of Sherman County, Nebraska, on or before noon of the 12th day of March, 1912, for the letting of a yearly contract for the building of wood and steel bridges, as per plans and specifications adopted by the County Board of Supervisors of Sherman County, Nebraska, on the 9th day of March 1909, as the same are on file in the office of the County Clerk. All bids must be accompanied by a certified check of \$1000.00. The board reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

Witness my hand and seal of said county hereto affixed this 19th day of January 1912.
W. C. DIETERICHS,
County Clerk
Last pub. Feb 29.

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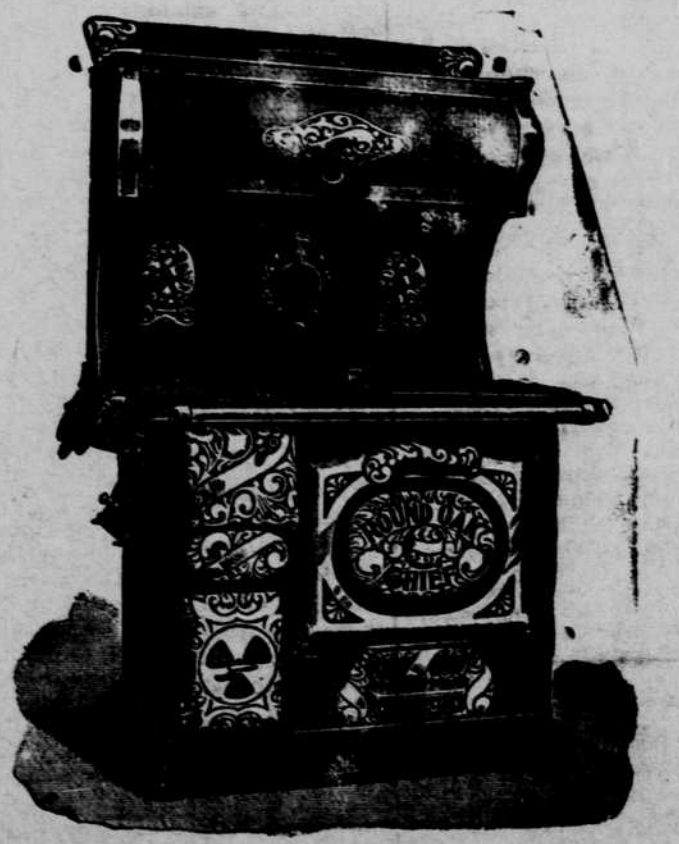
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