

# The Voice

PUBLISHED WEEKLY

"Dedicated to the promotion of the cultural, social and spiritual life of a great people."

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**EDITORIALS**  
 The views expressed in these columns necessarily a reflection of the policy are those of the writer and not of The Voice.—Pub

## Lincoln on the March at Last!

There are gratifying moments which made the struggle for full citizenship status worthwhile. One of those moments came last April 14 when a conference was held at the Cornhusker Hotel for the purpose of examining community attitudes. It was most satisfying to hear citizen after citizen, some representing organizations of large membership, get up and tell the conference that the city needs a council to work toward the elimination of prejudices and misunderstandings among groups of different cultural and racial backgrounds. It was good to hear white Lincolinites say that the time is long overdue and

that we should have had such an organization long ago.

The unanimity of opinion was heart-warming.

Saturday will mark the second meeting of the group, now known as The Lincoln-Lancaster County Council of Human Relations.

Mayor Anderson and Governor Peterson are scheduled to appear on the program.

We sincerely hope that Mayor Anderson and members of the City Council will remain long enough to get a realistic view of working and living conditions of our minority groups.

The work of the council is largely educational. Studies will be made and information relating to various problems in human relations will be given to the public. The public will be informed and prepared for the changes which are inevitable in the field of race relations.

Those persons who are responsible for this growing interest in minority groups, such as the aged, national and racial minorities, D.P.'s and the handicapped are to be commended for their intelligent interest and their deep concern over the welfare of the city as a whole.

Lincoln is on the road to democracy at last.



by **JAMES C. OLSON**, Superintendent  
 STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Winter on the plains and in the mountains is something not to be taken lightly, particularly by the traveller, and even with our powerful automobiles, well-marked and well-patrolled highways, we still read the weather forecasts pretty carefully before taking an extended winter trip. Think what it must have been like in the days before the automobile and the railroad, when the roads across the plains and mountain passes were little more than trails.

It is little wonder that the overland emigrants who made their way across the plains and mountains from the Missouri River to Oregon, California and Utah took pains to start early enough in the spring to reach their destination before the snows of winter set in. Even so, some of the emigrants miscalculated, and some of the greatest tragedies in the history of the West are the stories of emigrants caught in a snow storm.

Perhaps the most famous of all the tragedies of the trail is that which overtook the ill-fated Donner party in November, 1846.

George Donner and James F. Reed, prosperous farmers of Sangamon County, Illinois, left Springfield with their families and others (32 emigrants in nine wagons altogether) on April 16, 1846. That year—the "year of decision"—was a year of heavy emigration, and in the month it took the Reed-Donner party to reach Independence, the jumping-off place for the West, they encountered many other travellers bound for Oregon and California.

At Independence, the Springfield emigrants became part of a much larger caravan. It was not a happy party, and before it had reached Scotts Bluff, it had changed leaders a number of times.

West of Fort Laramie, there was argument about the route. Reed,

Donner and a few others wanted to take a short-cut advertised in Lansford Hastings' guidebook. Though warned by James Clyman, who knew the mountains as Hastings did not, that they should stay on the main trails and avoid cutoffs because they might get caught in snow on the western slope before they arrived, they determined that they would try the shorter route.

Beyond Fort Bridger they left the regular trail and tried to make their way over the much more difficult—and at times almost impassable—trail to the Salt Lake Valley. Beyond the Great Salt Lake the road was even more difficult, and in November, at Truckee Lake they were caught in a blizzard. They suffered indescribable hardships during the winter, and only 47 out of 87 survived.

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