

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 are those of the writer and not necessarily a reflection of the policy of The Voice.—Pub.

Good Neighbors

The little (pop. 1,849) town of Fruita in the valley of Colorado's Rocky Mountains, had always been an all-white town. Because no Negro had ever lived there, few townspeople even knew of their Jim Crow ordinance forbidding Negroes to remain in town after sundown. Then the Minters came to Fruita.

The Minters were Melvin Minter, a Negro lumber worker from Ansley, La., his wife and ten children (aged 2 to 17), heading for Yakima, Wash., where Minter had a new job waiting. One morning last month, as they approached Fruita in their pickup truck on Highway 6, a car nosed out of a side road. Braking to avoid a collision, the Minter truck skidded and overturned. Margaret, 14, was killed. Mrs. Minter was seriously injured. The other children were cut and bruised.

Fruita responded to the emergency. Townspeople sped to the scene in private cars to carry the Minters to a hospital. Mrs. Wilda Lahue offered them an unoccupied house she owned. "Here's the key," she said. "Use it as long as you wish." Other womenfolk brought furnishings and food to stock the house. Cecil Schafer gave Minter a job as a laborer with his Schafer Construction Co. While

Mrs. Minter was recovering, women took turns caring for the family. Fruita's citizens paid for repairing the Minters' truck, for their hospital bills, and for Margaret's funeral. City Judge I. L. Harris and Police Chief Herb Johnston were pallbearers.

Then someone remembered the town's Jim Crow ordinance. No one seemed to know who had passed it, or when or why. Smarted Judge Harris: "We just won't enforce the bill. It's unconstitutional." But there it was on the law books. Finally, Mayor Lewis Moore called an emergency meeting of the city council which voted unanimously to abolish the law.

Last week, with Mrs. Minter home from the hospital but still under the care of Dr. Robert Orr, Judge Harris ripped the old law from the ordinance book. The Minters thought they would stay in Fruita. "I never had such treatment in my life before," said Minter. "Why would a man leave a place like this?"

Letters to the Editor

Dear Mrs. Shakespeare:

I once read that there are three decisive stages in a person's life; birth, marriage and death; per-



by JAMES C. OLSON, Superintendent
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Nebraska Counties (4)

The history of Banner County, like all of the southern half of Nebraska's panhandle, traces back through old Cheyenne County, established by the legislature in 1867, and embracing all of the area included in the present counties of Kimball, Cheyenne, Deuel, Garden, Morrill, Banner and Scotts Bluff.

The population was so scarce in the region that such an arrangement worked very well for a while. Indeed, until 1870, Cheyenne County remained unorganized and was simply attached to Lincoln County for administrative purposes. In that year, however, the county showed a population of 190 and an organization was established.

In 1888, the voters of Cheyenne County approved the creation of Banner, Deuel and Scotts Bluff counties out of part of the area embraced in the original county. The name "Banner" was chosen because it expressed the hope of some of the new county's enthusiastic citizens that it would indeed become the "banner county" of the state.

The early whites in Banner County had been occupied almost exclusively with cattle raising, and much of the county consisted of free range land used by the larger ranches. In the eighties, however, homesteaders began to come in, and by the time the county was organized, much of the land had been taken away. The homesteaders, however, found the

sonally I can add another, that of being thought worthy enough to be nominated the Voice's Mother of the year.

Words simply cannot express the sincere thanks and humble elation which fills my heart to overflowing.

May God continue to bless all Mothers everywhere.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Osceola B. Nathan

going tough and many of them moved away.

The first population figures returned for Banner County were those of the census of 1890. In that year, the county had a population of 2,435. This was the highest it's ever been. By 1900, the population had dropped to 1,114. It jumped up again in the early years of the twentieth century, and by 1930 had reached 1,676. It went down to 1,403 in 1940, and the 1950 census shows 1,321. A number of villages—or, at least combination stores and post offices—were started in the county's early days, but only one remains, Harrisburg, the county seat, with a population of about 100.

In Banner County is located the highest spot in Nebraska, an elevation of 5,340 feet, just inside the Wyoming line, about midway between the north and south boundaries of the county. The high tablelands of the county posed a serious problem for the early settlers, with some of them having to dig 200 feet and more to secure water.

Today the lands of Banner County support some of the state's finest wheat fields, and wheat is by far the county's leading crop.

Trial of Officials

Continued from Page 1

Konovsky, chief of police; Theodore H. Wesolowski, fire marshal, and Nicholas Berkes, town attorney, on charges of conspiracy to keep a Negro from moving into Cicero.

Also Police Sgt. Roland Brani, and Patrolmen Frank Janecek and Frank A. Lange as well as Sandusky, Konovsky and Berkes on a second count of depriving Harvey E. Clark, Jr., of his civil rights.

Clark is the Negro who tried to move his family into an apartment at 6139 W. 19th St., in Cicero, but eventually was rebuffed by a mob of whites. He managed to move his household property into the apartment, but never lived there.

On the night of July 2, the mobsters surrounded the building, eventually destroying all of Clark's property and forcing white families in the building to move. It took the Illinois National Guard to quell the violence after city police failed to take action.

Minister Named Moderator of Presbytery

LOS ANGELES, Cal.—(ANP)—The Rev. St. Paul Epps, pastor of the Bel-Vue Community church here, recently became the first Negro minister to be elected moderator of the Los Angeles Presbytery of the United Presbyterian church.

As moderator, he will have titular supervision over all of the United Presbyterian churches in the Presbytery, a territory that includes all of Southern California.

He also will convene all Presbytery meetings; preside at all ordinations and installations of ministers and will be the fraternal representative of the Presbytery at meetings of other church courts and conventions.

Rev. Epps has been in the Presbytery for five years and has been active in the youth work of the Presbytery.

A Cook county grand jury indicted three Negroes—although no Negroes took part in the violence—including Clark's attorney, George Leighton and three white persons including Konovsky. All the indictments except the one against Konovsky were thrown out of court.

Konovsky eventually was found not guilty when a Criminal court judge directed such a verdict.

Under count one, the defendants are accused specifically of conspiring to prevent any Negro from ever moving into the town of Cicero, particularly into the building involved in the riot. The count lists 15 different acts beginning March 31, 1951 and climaxed by the riot which began July 12, 1951.

Count two, charges that the defendants violated the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution by depriving Clark of his property without due process of law and also denying him equal protection of the law in connection with his right to lease property.

Clark, his wife, and two children now live in the Michigan Boulevard Gardens apartments.

Archie Furr

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