



**doug voegler**  
**The vast**  
**Nebraska frontier**

How much do you know about Nebraska? For many, a junior high school course where one learned about the Pawnee Indians and the Unicameral and perhaps a mention of Willa Cather in high school literature is all that they have been taught of the state's history and literature.

Sometimes, it seems, we are unconsciously led to believe that we are living in an intellectual and literary wasteland. We see ourselves sitting "out in the boonies" having our literature shipped in from Boston, San Francisco or Europe. We are not encouraged and therefore do not look at the contribution of Nebraskans to the field of literature.

It is entirely natural for people to write about the experiences around them. Therefore, much of Nebraska's literature deals with pioneer and frontier conditions.

Very few of us realize the true nature of what the pioneer and frontier heritage was. Here were people who left their homes, whether in another state or a foreign country, and came to live on the frontier, where the barest of necessities of life were the products of

hard effort. It was a promising experience but at the same time a very traumatic one.

They left friends and relatives behind knowing that almost certainly they would never see them again. It was a mixed culture; Germans, Swedes, Czechs, French, English, Northerners and Southerners all thrown together in the frontier situation. Much can be learned from their feelings and experiences, that would be relative today.

One must realize that the land we live on has been settled for barely a hundred years. However, for this short period of time and the relatively small size of the population, Nebraska has much to be proud about in this field. Compared to other western and midwestern states such as Wyoming, Nevada or Oklahoma, it is considerably far ahead.

Most people have heard of the three giants of Nebraska literature: Willa Cather, Mari Sandoz and John G. Neihardt. The recent national attention that Mr. Neihardt has been receiving is good indication of the quality of literature that the Nebraska environment has

produced.

In addition to these, however, there are many others who deserve study: Alvin Johnson (author of *Pioneer's Progress* and founder of *New Republic* magazine), Elia W.

Peattie (who wrote about the intense loneliness felt by the frontier woman), Kate Cleary McPhellan, Wright Morris and L. C. Wimberly. Not all of Nebraska's literature is a thing of the past, either. Several Nebraska poets (Roy Scheele, James Cole and Greg Kuzma) have had their works published recently.

The University's literary review, *Prairie Schooner*, is considered a distinguished quarterly and is read all over the world.

In the past there has been only a graduate level course in Nebraska literature taught now and then under a title such as "Writers of the Plains," etc. According to Bernice Srote of the English Department a similar course for undergraduates is in the planning stages in conjunction with the American Studies Program and will hopefully be ready for the spring of 1973.



**tom braden**  
**The bench warmer**

WASHINGTON--There is a sense in which politics is like football and in that sense the pressure on Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) is now becoming severe.

The analogy is simple. Considered as a football team, the Democratic Party is not moving the ball. Quarterback Edmund Muskie is losing ground; McGovern, Jackson, Lindsay have not done as well as he. The crowd is yelling for Kennedy who has been on the bench for two years with an injury once considered serious. The question is whether or not he is fit to play.

The crowd seems to think so. Matched against Richard Nixon, Muskie has fallen six points in the polls while Nixon has gained three. The comparable figures for Kennedy are Kennedy up one; Nixon down three. "It's a funny thing," said Larry O'Brien, chairman of the Democratic Party, the other day. "Here in Washington we all assume Kennedy is not going to run; we don't even talk about it anymore. But everytime I get out into the country, the first question I get asked is, 'What about Teddy?'"

Meantime, political life for Edward Kennedy must be more fun than political life has ever been. Note the Kennedy speeches of the last few weeks. First, he pointed out that President Nixon was willing to go 9,000 miles to China but was doing nothing to normalize relations with Cuba, 90 miles away.

Next he complimented Mr. Nixon on his willingness to use television to demonstrate his leadership and asked why he didn't appear on television when the country really needed leadership--as when it was confused about whether it was backing one China or two.

When Mr. Nixon broached the names of the unsuitable six for the Supreme Court, Kennedy said, "Let me be blunt. The men who are involved in the selection of Supreme Court nominees, Richard Nixon, John Mitchell and I understand, John Connally, remind me of the people who used to put 'Impeach Earl Warren'

signs on the highways."

One week he says the American Medical Assn. is more interested in keeping the supply of doctors low than it is in a good health program; another week he says the President is responsible for the defeat of foreign aid because the President was busy taking cheap shots at the United Nations. Kennedy says all the bright things; and winds up with his picture on Page One.

The moment Kennedy becomes a candidate, the television cameras will cease to follow him; his most intelligent lines will appear on Page 32 as do those of Edmund Muskie and George McGovern; the injury which sidelined him two years ago will be discussed with less compassion. Up to a point, men will not speak ill of the injured. When the injured run for President, the point is exceeded.

Can Kennedy take that point? Can the Democratic Party take it? If the answer to the question is "no," then they must refuse to heed polls which show him the most popular of Democrats and the only one moving against Nixon. Shall they leave it to time and hope that Ed Muskie or George McGovern can do better? What if they don't?

Edward Kennedy has the best staff in the Senate. Kennedys always do. It is not a national staff. It contains no well-known delegate hunters, but it is issue-oriented, and when the senator wants to know something about health, crime or transportation, he has instant expertise. Perhaps that is the way it will all end--with Kennedy pointing out weaknesses from the sidelines while somebody else tries to move the ball.

But the political history of the last few weeks suggests that the time may come when the pressure is irresistible, when a party about to lose an election looks down its bench and says, so to speak, "Injured or not, let's put in the first team."

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