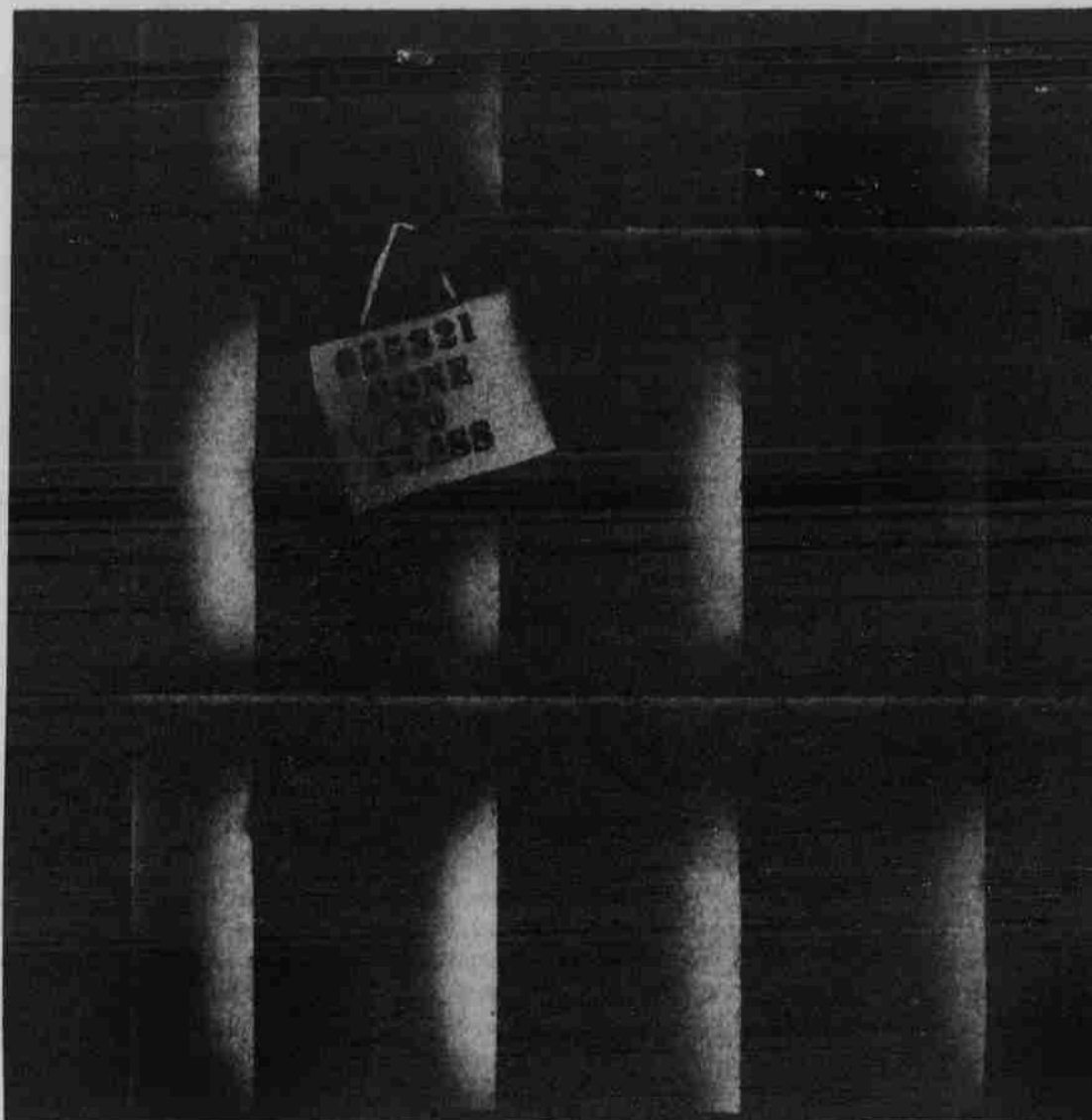


convicts in college



by Bart Becker

The average UNL student probably has spent the last couple of years exercising some basic freedoms. He's probably been able to say pretty much what he wanted, been able to go where he wanted, with whomever he pleased, whenever he chose.

Most students have spent the last couple years going on dates or fixing their cars or getting drunk for Saturday football games. In short, they've led average lives.

No so for five students currently walking the UNL campus. The five are convicts who attend classes as participants in a prisoner rehabilitation program. The program, called the Prisoner Educational Release Program (PERP), is an innovative step in prisoner rehabilitation.

Of course, programs designed to get prisoners outside the walls have been the trend in recent years. Work-release programs have grown and the Nebraska Penal Complex has operated its program for about a year.

The work-release program began Oct. 1, 1971. Under it, prisoners who meet certain qualifications live in a halfway house near the University campus. They go to work, daily returning to the halfway house in the evenings. There are