

The Unsettled Years

Randolph 1936-1960



Randolph City Auditorium

The Beginning of the last half of our community's history found it still in the clutches of the Great Depression, but the following year was celebrated with great hope for better times.

This hope was reflected in the early announcement by the Work Projects Administration (WPA), that the long awaited Randolph Community Auditorium had been approved by President Roosevelt. The new plan for the facility provided for a forty-five percent WPA grant and a vote of the people. However, the community voted against the project. The project was again put to the vote of people in 1938; it carried and work was begun that year under the WPA. In the summer of 1939 construction stopped because funds had been exhausted. Not until April of 1941 did work begin again with a crew of seventeen men and was finished at a cost of \$35,000.00. On November 7th, the auditorium was formally dedicated with a dance attended by five hundred people.

The weather was to dash the hopes for a better year in 1936. It began with many days below zero and huge amounts of snow that brought much suffering. Appeals were made for warm clothing for school children and in February a coal famine panic hit Randolph only to be followed by the worst blizzard in years. There were twenty-seven days below zero and coal was handed out in small lots. The schools had to close because they did not have enough coal for heat.

In March warm weather finally came causing another problem, floods. The melting snows caused the M & O railroad tracks to wash out near Magnet, Sholes, Carroll and Wayne. Mother Nature sent another four inches of snow on April 1.

These perils were survived and summer came. June was filled with many hot and dry days, and by the first of July the continued heat had ruined the small grain crop. The area then saw clouds of grasshoppers appear against the sun. There was little hope for a corn crop, and that hope was destroyed on July 17 when 116 degrees and strong

winds hit. By the end of July, Randolph citizens had used nine million gallons of water in thirty days, and the Randolph ice plant had made 180 tons of ice for the month.

Finally, on September 14, the area received 2.25 inches of rain. It was too late and the farmers, besides receiving no crops, were faced with severe feed shortages for the coming winter. The depression continued.

The people found ways to momentarily put these hardships aside. Miss Bernie Wintz was chosen as "Miss Randolph" in a beauty pageant held on the Orpheum stage. This was followed by a "beauty pageant" for the young men, and the judges were instructed that "curves" as well as facial beauty were to be considered in the judging. J.M. Liewer was declared the handsomest. The Junior Fair and Farmers' Picnic drew a crowd of 2000 people, and the usual arrival of Santa Claus saw the delivery of 1000 bags of candy, nuts and fruit in December.

Everyone was ready for 1937. However, on January 2, a fierce blizzard hit blocking the highway and rails. Another storm followed several days later cutting off the community. A yeast shortage occurred at the Havorka Baking Company because of the blocked transportation system, and a plane from Sioux City finally flew over the north edge of town and dropped a thirty pound package of yeast. Again appeals were announced for items of clothing, shoes, warm blankets, and coal to be distributed to prevent suffering.



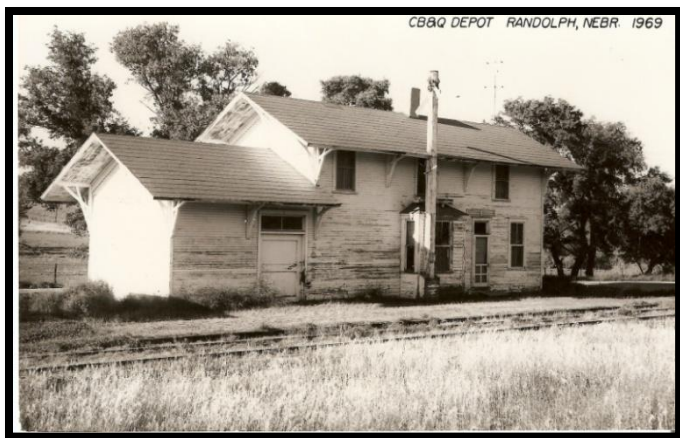
A Fun Day at the Old Swimming Pool

Because of the continued drifted roads, neighbors of Mr. and Mrs. Orval Dowling and the Randolph businessmen undertook the gigantic task of scooping the deep snow from a four mile stretch of road, making it possible for the funeral for two-year-old Gaylord Dowling to proceed. Twenty Randolph citizens engaged in the work of shoveling on Sunday, January 24, and fifteen men were again on hand Monday, January 25.

More snow fell in February and it was cold with strong winds. But spring brought renewed hope even though a number of vicinity farms north of town were without

tenants because of the inability to finance seed and other operating costs. As spring progressed and summer arrived it appeared that the cycle of drought had been broken.

The adversities of the weather on the community had not yet ceased. On June 18, 1937, the most devastating cyclone to hit the Randolph area struck northwest of Randolph. It began at the William Monson farm and continued southeasterly to the William Rolfs farm where every building was destroyed. All of the buildings on the Elmer Peterson farm were swept away and a sled runner was driven firmly into a tree. The fine residence on the Jack (Ernest) Strathman farm was completely gone and only one cattle shed remained standing. A horn was torn from the head of a bull on the Henry E. Korth farm, and an auto missing from the Fred Kraemeier farm was later found in the Strathman grove a half mile away. Amazingly, no human life was lost.



CB & Q Depot

The rest of that summer saw less heat and better crops even though the grasshoppers were back in force. In the fall Harold Korth, 20, son of Mr. and Mrs. P.H. Korth, husked 20.1 bushels of corn to win the 1937 Cedar County husking contest. Harold then became the runner-up in the State Husking Contest and went on to the National Contest at Marshall, Missouri, where he placed ninth. He continued in competition for several years winning more contests. Nearly fifty years later, in 1983, he won runner-up honors in the National Corn Husking Contest in Sandborn, Minnesota, where he picked 487 pounds of corn in thirty minutes and was timed picking twenty-four to forty-nine ears a minute.

The Depression was still here but progress was being made. A WPA project in Randolph in 1937 employed fifteen men constructing cement culverts for use on the permanent roads of Cedar County

Twister damages farm building, May 9, 1935

By Arnie Bauer

A twister of tornadic proportions struck an area six to seven miles south of Randolph about 9 pm Saturday evening, heavily damaging buildings on the Ed Bauer,



Pearl Bauer milking a cow after the tornado

Louie Bauer farms and the place farmed by Harold Bauer.

Torrential rains accompanied by strong winds, early in the evening; a brief hailstorm with other hard rains; and some wind during the night was the weather fare dished out to Randolph. Tornado warnings had been announced throughout Saturday afternoon as conditions possibly to develop in an area stretching from Hutchinson, Kansas to 50 miles north of Norfolk. The weather conditions did not settle until late Sunday afternoon.

Worst hit by the twister was the Ed Bauer farm where the barn and chicken house were badly damaged and also the porch of the house. Several windows were broken in the house and other damage inflicted. Mr. Bauer placed his loss at between \$3,000 and \$4,000. Trees in the house yard at the Bauer place were uprooted.

At the Louie Bauer place, a small barn was lifted and twisted by the storm and one end of the cattle shed damaged. At the place farmed by Harold Bauer across the road and a little south, the chicken house, the brooder house and granary were all blown down. Only the house escaped damage at that farm. Other farmers in the vicinity reported minor damage to farm buildings.



In Randolph, the rain gauge at the light plant recorded a total of 2.67 inches of rain from the time the rain began Saturday evening until it ended Sunday afternoon. The hail fell briskly for a few minutes and did damage to gardens and early vegetation but did not fall long enough to create extensive loss. There was no great electrical storm here.

The rain, hail and windstorms came after a day of strong winds which roared out of the south sending the mercury into the 80-s and clouds of dust scurrying across field and roads. The day was most unpleasant and was what is commonly known here as a "storm brewer".

Exhibition boxing was popular during these years and drew large crowds. There were intramural matches between the Randolph high school's boys and other schools which were usually held at the Legion Pavillion. Golden Gloves Tournaments were also held annually. Six Randolph boys competed in the elimination round of the fifth Golden Gloves meet in Norfolk in 1938. They were Duane Van Auker, weight 112; Duane Dion, 112; Darrel Heiderman, 112; Bert Reed, 118; Don Dion, 127; and Lawrence Fox, 175. Duane Van Auker, Duane Dion, and Darrel Heiderman won their elimination bouts.



Randolph High School student's band practice- 1960's

Four thousand baby chicks were hatched at the Randolph Hatchery in the spring' of 1938. The resulting clucking caught on. On March 15, Randolph witnessed about one hundred thirty Randolph High students with a few band instruments march down town yelling "WE want Evans" and carrying banners. A student strike at school followed. It was all about the action of the school board who attempted to disqualify Coach Dallas Evans from his position, from which he then voluntarily resigned. The next day the strike ended with a demonstration at school and the pupils going back to the building where they staged a sit down strike refusing to go to their classes. The affair ended when Mr. Evans persuaded the students to resume their normal school activities.

Perhaps this unheard-of rebellion among our youth was just a sign of changing times. Randolph's first air mail pickup was to be made on May 18, 1938 at 12:02 on the Carl Thaden pasture just east of town. Postmaster LeClair received the new two color air-mail stamps printed especially for ail mail week. But fog caused much delay in the air-mail pick up. F.E. Blakeman of Norfolk, flyer on the route, was forced to land his plane in the George Breeding pasture two-and-one-half miles west of town. That was after three o'clock. In the meantime Postmaster LeClair and Mail Messenger Mike Hosch waited with the mail pouch two miles east of town. Blakeman walked to

the John Meyer home but failed to get a phone call through to the Postmaster. He then flagged a passing truck who took the message to the Postmaster. They quickly brought the mail west to the waiting plane. Blakeman took off at 3:55 on his way to Omaha.

Another innovation was "Rooster Day", an event that survived for several years in the community. Roosters themselves proclaimed the day on June 4, 1938, with about 500 roosters brought to town, some from as far away as 125 miles. Jake Backer brought the largest number of roosters at twenty-nine, Bill Lewis had the heaviest at nine pounds, and J.H. Ostrander was awarded \$2.50 on his six year rooster that had a spur of four and a half inches. Caroline Schrad's estimate of how many kernels of corn a hungry rooster would eat in four minutes was exactly correct at 310 kernels. The FFA boys were in charge of the affair.

The farming community saw another sign of progress arrive with the first combines being used for harvest in this area that season. It was generally agreed that in fields where grain was uneven in ripening, the combine should not be used, but in evenly ripened fields the combine was a wonderful time and labor saver which really got the grain.

Farm families also saw the construction of rural electric lines by the Cedar Knox REA project completed. They were instructed in meter reading and read their own meters in most districts.



Threshing on Keith Huwaldt's farm during the 1960's

Another change involved the Randolph Legion Pavilion. This facility had been built fifteen years before by the American Legion Post and was located on the site of the present baseball diamond in the Veteran's Park. It had hosted the Lawrence Welk Band in 1936 and many other dances and functions. In 1938 it was dismantled, in sections, by William Munter and reconstructed on U.S. 20 just west of the county line. This continued an era of many great dances and dance bands at the Ballroom including the nationally known Six Fat Dutchman and the locally popular Paul Moorehead Band. It was renamed the "West Randolph Ballroom."



Green Gable Cottages, Eppie Moore Owner on west side of Randolph

The Forty's arrived with the community well aware of the threat of war, but the people continued in their daily work.

The new Randolph Creamery, owned and operated by Harold Sherwood, announced in January of 1940 that it had produced 5,220 pounds of butter. This business continued under various ownerships in the community until the late 1970's when it was closed. It employed several people and in 1970 produced 1,875,904 pounds of butter.

"A large time was had by all" was the report of those who attended the Hard Time skating party held at the West Randolph Ballroom on February 29, 1940. Skaters appeared in a wide variety of "hard time" costumes, including patched pants, ripped sweaters, and old hats. Verlin Adams and Art LeClair acted as skate cops and were kept busy the entire evening imposing fines on different persons who they considered as "not keeping with the hard time idea." Girls wearing lipstick and jewelry and boys appearing in clothes "too good looking" for a hard time costume, were nabbed by the cops and sent off the floor, where they appeared in Skate Court before E.M. Schager and Glen Starkey, who acted as judges.

Another interesting event that year involved twenty-five school children gathered at the local ball park in April for the Randolph Marble Tournament sponsored by the local Lions Club. Matt Kuhl was the winner of the senior division with Paul Dittman as runner-up. Clifford Barker was the winner of the junior division with Jack Claybaugh as runner-up. These winners attended the Four County Marble Tournament at Hartington. Matt Kuhl placed second in the senior division and Jack Claybaugh placed fourth in the junior division at the county meet.

Signs of impending war were evident. In July a new defense tax went into effect on such items as cigarettes, liquor, toilet preparations, automobiles, refrigerators, matches, electrical energy, gasoline and lubricating oil to name a few. President Roosevelt announced that a compulsory government service for all young American

men would be proposed and a nation-wide registration of aliens was conducted from August to December of 1940.

The community moved ahead. The Lions Club was disbanded because of lack of interest and the Randolph Community Club was formed in its place. A large delegation of Randolph businessmen met in the basement of Kessler's Cafe on November 19, 1940, to form the organization. The first officers were Wm. Eike, president; Joe Rogers, vice president and J.F. Atwood, secretary treasurer. This group is active today and sponsors various annual civic activities such as the Junior Fair, Pancake Day and Santa Claus day.

The Junior Fair was held for the tenth straight year in August of 1941, and was called one of the most successful. The grand champion baby beef was exhibited by Marvin Storm of Laurel and the reserve champion by Dick Munter. Forty-eight baby beeves, one hundred pigs, and thirty colts made up the largest divisions of the stock show. In the afternoon and evening free acts were presented on stage in front of the grandstand. Another highlight of the day was the ball game between Pierce and Randolph. In the evening a good crowd attended the dance at the West Randolph Ballroom when Hank Winder and his orchestra played. The Junior Fair has continued to 2011 and was a major part of the Centennial Celebration. In 1985 it was a three day event with a stock show, antique tractor pull, crafts show, carnival, softball and horseshoe tournaments, square dancing, and community barbeque.



Al Sauser, John Pock, Hank Walz, Roy Gibson, Marvin Weyhrich

The year 1941 brought the Philco air conditioning unit to the Cottage Beauty Shop operated by Mrs. Drea Chapman. This was the first air conditioning unit of this type to be installed in a Randolph residence.

But 1941 was remembered most in the community for the December 7 attack on Pearl Harbor and the resulting declarations of war both in the Pacific and in Europe. The war dominated the life of the Randolph community for the next several years. Even before the end of 1941 the government restrictions on the sale of items made of

rubber caught the attention of the Randolph citizens especially the banning of the sale of tires.

In January of 1942 Cedar County was allocated thirteen passenger cars, motorcycle, and light truck tires and eleven tubes, twenty-one truck and bus tires, and eighteen truck and bus tubes, for distribution during the month of January. A.E. LeClair, county chairman of the allocation board, pointed out that the only ones in Randolph eligible would be physicians, mail carriers, ambulance owners, those in charge of fire-fighting equipment, truck operators operating exclusively to haul material to markets, and fuel carriers.

The Cedar County Sheriffs' office was to immediately collect radio transmitters, shortwave receiving sets, and cameras from Japanese, German and Italian aliens residing in the County. This order was given by the United States Department of Justice.



Major William Dwyer and Company standing by their aircraft

Many war time projects were begun. The Red Cross began intensive work by local women knitting, cutting and sewing various items, including surgical dressings to be used in the war effort. Waste paper was collected by children as part of Uncle Sam's conservation program. The national garden program was proclaimed in February and called "Victory Home and Garden Enrollment Week". Drives for the sale of War Bonds were held periodically, and the citizens settled into the reality of rationing sugar, coffee, shoes, and gasoline. Travel restrictions were also imposed. Minting of the traditional copper penny was discontinued and the zinc-coated steel was substituted. Between October 23 and November 9 the two schools were closed due to the emergency of a labor shortage, allowing the students to pick corn and assist with other work at home. A nine state blackout was ordered for the area for December 14, between 10:00 p.m. and 10:20 p.m. The war had touched the lives of all in the community.

It was in 1942 that the building of the new St. John's Lutheran church began. Workers tore down the church school and the new church was built on the site. Services

for the congregation during construction were held in the Sons of Herman Hall. The new church was dedicated the next summer.

The community received word ever more frequently in 1943 of the heroic deeds and calamities of its men on the war fronts. Captain Wm. P. Dwyer was decorated the second time on January 12 when he was one of four hundred eighty five flying officers awarded the air medal. He had received the Distinguished Flying Cross on January 4, which signified that he had more than two hundred hours of operational duty. Aviation Cadet Thomas J. Abts was killed July 9 in a crash of his twin-engine advanced trainer plane near Altus, Oklahoma, and was the first Randolph casualty of the War. Petty Officer Eugene Kaiser, veteran of fourteen major sea battles, escaped unharmed as a survivor of the sinkings of the USS Benham and USS Helena. Aviation Cadet Earl C.

Holmes was killed October 6, when his twin engine advanced training plane crashed at the base at Blytheville, Arkansas. S/Sgt. Robert Otterpohl was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action, and later the Distinguished Flying Cross, as a rear gunner in a heavy bomber based in the South Pacific. This was just the beginning of many more messages, too many to repeat here, to come home before the War was over.

Changes, however, continued to occur on the main street. By 1943 McLean's Cash Store had quit after twenty-eight years of business conducted by W.M. McLean and his sister Miss Margaret McLean. The Randolph Shoppe, a millinery and ladies ready-to-wear store, operated by Miss Lottie Ostrander, closed after thirteen years of operation. A.A. Ulm, Randolph theater

operator for thirty-one years, sold the Rand Theater to Leonard J. Leise.

The return of prosperity to farms in this community was reflected in the biggest boom of building of brooder houses, hog houses, granaries, and larger farm buildings that had been seen since 1929. Hand in hand with the bumper crops and increased livestock raising of 1941 and 1942 the world was crying for more and more food in 1943. A threatened shortage of labor in the harvest fields around Randolph was forestalled by crews of townspeople who had gone to the grain fields many nights. The crews included business men, boys, and some women.

Randolph remembered her servicemen overseas with Yuletide gifts in October. No Randolph boys were forgotten and the delivery of a little Nebraska Christmas was in store for local boys in Europe, North Africa, Australia, New Guinea, Southwest Pacific, Alaska, and India. Sixty-six cartons of cigarettes were also sent along by the Community Club.

The War continued to be ever present in the life of the community in 1944 and 1945. Five brothers, the sons of

Henry Broer, Sr. of Randolph were serving in the United States Army. They were Sgt. Alfred Broer, Cpl. Richard Broer, Pfc. Edward Broer, Pfc. Martin Broer, and Staff Sergeant Bill Broer. 1944 saw the death of Pfc. Alvin J. Kessler, the first man from Randolph to die on foreign soil during the war, and the report that S/Sgt. Frank C. Graham was a German Prisoner of War. Reports of wounded boys and the award of medals to the community's sons reached home constantly. The news of D-Day, on June 6, brought concerns for the safety of the Randolph men involved. By the end of 1944 the town had lost a total of eight men to the war. May 8, 1945 brought V.E. Day, the end of the war in Europe, and August 14, 1945, the surrender of Japan. No war, either before or to this day, had so affected the life of this community. We found that sadly it was not the "war to end all wars" with the Korean Conflict and Vietnam Wars which later left their scars on the community.



Snow on Broadway- 1948

But peace had arrived and the men began to return home. Life began to return to normal with the community's concerns for the weather conditions and markets coming to the forefront even though sugar was rationed until June of 1947.

A long-time tradition in the community came to an end in the summer of 1947 with the closing of the local stores on Wednesday evenings. They remained open on Saturday nights.

The winter of 1948 and 1949 brought weather back to the center stage of attention. It began with a blizzard in mid November which isolated the town. Farmers traveled to town by horses and tractors. Fifteen inches with forty mile per hour wind had hit leaving a wake of destruction and hardship. More snow came after the New Year and business men formed a brigade to clean snow from the streets. An M & O locomotive was derailed due to the snow at the Highway #20 crossing in Randolph. Rail traffic was at a standstill and communications to the town were cut off. Rotary snow plows attached to engines made

slow progress opening the railroad and creating deep canyons of snow. Crowds of people went out to the tracks to watch the geysers of snow created by the powerful machines. Flash floods followed that spring inundating part of the residential areas of town.

The local meat market advertised pork steak at fifty cents a pound, bacon at forty-five cents a pound and wieners at forty cents a pound in 1949. The corn loan rate for Cedar County was set at \$1.31 per bushel and a "medium grade farm" was advertised for sale at \$85.00 per acre. You could dance to the music of Cliff Kyes at the West Randolph Ballroom for eighty-three cents admission.

The Korean Conflict brought the memory of war and the concern for the safety of its men back to the community in 1950. The news of the first casualty reached home in 1951 with the news of the death of Master Sergeant Charles R. Sohler, the son of Frank and Esther Sohler.

M.M. Glasscock ushered into the community the greatest revolution since the car, the community's first television set. The sixteen inch set was installed in his shop about February 1, 1951.

The car was not forgotten and the community began plans for its first major concrete paving project in April of 1951. By the end of May 1952 twenty blocks of concrete paving had been laid at a cost of \$153,000.00.

A longtime land mark in the area was destroyed by fire on August 10, 1951. The Wareham elevator was completely destroyed along with seven thousand bushels of corn and oats. The structure had been built forty-six years before by the Atlas Elev. Company, later operated by C.J. Ronan, and finally by Isidor Kuhl. The building was leveled in an hour and a half.

Soil Conservation was a top priority in the rural areas during these years. Paul Nordhues was named 4-H Champion in Soil Conservation and won an all expense paid trip to Chicago. Elmer Huwaldt was one of forty-one farmers in a four state area cited for making the most progress in soil



Mary Pock standing on train tracks- 1949

conservation for 1951. The Tri-County Use But Save banquet was held at the city auditorium on October 10, 1951, with four hundred persons attending. Governor Val Peterson gave an address praising soil conservation.

The healing arts also saw an influx of new blood into the community. In the spring of 1951 Dr. Leland J. Peebles joined his father, Dr. L.T. Peebles, in the practice of dentistry; Dr. R.E. Rodgers joined Dr. J.O. Black in June in the practice of veterinary medicine, and Dr. H.J. Billerbeck set up his practice of medicine in July of 1952.

Kansas-Nebraska Gas Company announced in the spring of 1953 that they planned to lay gas pipe lines to the community by November. The residents could expect service by that date. In July about one hundred men arrived in town to establish our community as headquarters for the installation of the pipe lines in this and surrounding communities. The Jensen Trailer Court in west Randolph was turned into a small village with all the workers' trailers. On October 6 a flare-lighting ceremony was held at the intersection of Broadway and Main marking the official arrival of natural gas service. Dr. L.T. Peebles, serving as master of ceremonies, introduced the general sales manager of Kansas-Nebraska and the Randolph High Band played several selections.



Randolph Main Street looking east

An event, which had become an annual affair, was repeated that summer. The softball game between the "City Slickers" and the "Farmers" was held June 5. It was dubbed the "Summer Classic". Harold Paulson directed the "Farmers" and Dallas Phillips organized the "City Slickers." The proceeds of the game went to help fund the Randolph Junior Legion ball team.

Anyone who has been a part of the Randolph Community can testify to the many accomplishments which were the result of community wide cooperation. A fine example of that cooperation occurred in the construction of the combination tennis court and skating rink at the city park in 1953. The City agreed to provide the materials, James Krieger agreed to direct the work crews, and the labor was all done by volunteers. The work was done in various stages by both town and country people. On June 25, a Thursday, the business houses

closed from 1 to 5 P.M. for the purpose of delivering a "Sunday Punch" to the project. On that day cement mixers, wheel barrows and shovels had been gathered as well as businessmen and local farmers. The "blitz" was termed a grand success with many volunteers taking part to nearly complete the project. The young people in the community enjoyed its use that summer for tennis and it was flooded that winter for ice skating.

Not such a success was the two years of work put into an invention in an ultrasonic dry cleaning process by Gale Bleasdale and Dr. G.E. Peters. During the summer of 1953 many dry cleaners, engineers and manufacturers came to Randolph to observe the process. It was acknowledged that many problems remained to be worked out, however, they never were.

Polio was a disease that had the attention of everyone during the 1950's. There were annual fund raising drives locally and on a national level to provide funds to both treat the illness and find a cure for it. Many events were scheduled each year to draw funds for the March of Dimes. In 1954 the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis announced a financial crisis and called for an Emergency March of Dimes. The problem was brought about by the large expenditure in conducting the polio vaccine trials and in procuring increased supplies of gamma globulin to fight the disease. Vernon Viergutz was the local fund drive chairman that year and eventually the efforts of all the volunteers paid off with the successful development of the various polio vaccines.

Randolph tradition was begun in 1954. At 12:30 P.M. on a Saturday afternoon in October the gala arrival of

Aunt Jemima was heralded and the first Pancake Day began. Smiling and attired in her famous cap and apron, and red checkered dress, she arrived aboard Randolph's red fire truck with siren wailing. Out ahead of the entourage was the Randolph High band and corps of baton twirlers furnishing lively music. More than two thousand five hundred people were served steaming hot cakes with melted butter and syrup or honey and country style sausage. Aunt Jemima worked right beside the men in the kitchen and on several occasions she went out to the tables and mingled with the people. That evening the WNAX Missouri Valley Barn Dance troupe with twenty entertainers provided a stage show followed by a dance.

Another milestone was recorded in October of 1955. Frank S. Stegge noted his fifty years as a banker in Randolph beginning his duties as assistant cashier of the old First National Bank and concluding as president of the

First State Bank. In those years he saw the introduction of electricity and the adding machine.



1959 Fire on Broadway above Roxy Theater

Water was the focus of 1957. The Gavins Point dam on the Missouri River at Yankton was almost complete after several years of construction. This facility was to provide the community with good access to additional water sports. The City Council also took bids for the construction of a new 200,000 gallon overhead water storage tank. The bid was given to Chicago Bridge and Iron Co. for \$46,498.00 with work to be completed in 1958. By the summer of 1958 it was completed and the old "tin silo" or standpipe was pulled down. The old standpipe had been built just after the turn of the century.

An era begun before the turn of the century came to an end in April of 1958. The wrecking crews began tearing up the rails of the Minneapolis and Omaha Railroad from Wayne to Randolph. Since the summer of 1956, the M & O Depot had been closed and the local operation

consolidated with the Burlington depot. In 1953, floods had washed out a section of the track between Sholes and Wayne, and it was never rebuilt. In 1954 an L was built north of town to connect the Burlington with the M & O tracks going north out of Randolph. The Depot had been built in about 1918 and considered one of the best on the branch line. The introduction of cars and trucks, and paved highways, were blamed for the demise of the rail system.

Fire was still a threat. On May 3, 1959, the largest fire in the town's history swept three buildings at a loss of over \$125,000.00. Complete losses were sustained by the Cornhusker Cafe and Bakery, the Roxy Theater, and Miller's Grocery store, including the apartments above the firms. Within four hours fire raged through the three brick buildings apparently starting in the rear of the café building. Firefighters from five nearby towns joined to fight the blaze. The following week volunteers from town and country, totaling two hundred men, equipped with tractor and loaders staged "Operation Clean Up". By September plans were underway to rebuild the buildings; the cafe was the first to "rise from the ashes" and reopen in November.

A history of our area includes many instances of cooperation between its residents, all of which cannot be listed here. One example has been the various "bees" held in the rural area when adversity has struck its residents. Perhaps this custom began with the old barn raising parties. An example of such an event occurred in October of 1960 when Eugene F. Gubbels, a young farmer, lost part of his right arm in a silage cutter accident. Neighboring farmers gathered together with their equipment to finish his harvest on a designated day with the ladies providing mounds of food for the workers. We not only see planting bees, plowing bees, and other work activities but we find the whole community coming together on the occasions to raise funds for those struck misfortune.



Aerial View of Downtown 1959 Fire