

News - 5-15-41

# Huge Crowds Attend Three-Day Festivities

## MILE-LONG PARADE TUESDAY SEEN BY ESTIMATED 30,000

Russell's Prairiesta come to a close late last night after three days of celebrating the 70th anniversary of the town.

Huge crowds jammed the blocked-off streets of the business district all three days. Chief of Police Ed. Mohl, estimated that over 25,000 people witnessed the 1½ mile parade here Tuesday afternoon.

In addition to the Anderson and Srader carnival which did a roaring business during the celebration, a three day program ran continuously from 8:00 o'clock each morning until almost midnight each night.

The highlight of Monday morning's program was the beard judging contest. Approximately 30 "old timers" who had been cultivating beards, mustaches, side-burns and what-have-you for as long as since early last February competed in the several-class contest. "Rudy" Motzner won first in the length class with a beard three inches long. His brother, Clarence, was close on his heels to win second. In the best natural beard class Gordon Peterson won first. Howard Welch's beard was judged the best trimmed, and Ralph Reece had the reddest beard according to the judges.

At 12:45 Monday afternoon Foster May, news commentator over station WOW Omaha, conducted his Man-On-the-Street program from corner of 8th and Main. In a short talk before the broadcast May said that the program was eight years old and estimated that it was heard by some 14 million people the middle states. Among the local officials and some 14 million people of the middle the broadcast were Mayor Dean Landon of Russell, Dale Danielson, chairman of the executive committee in charge of Prairiesta preparations, and Cliff Pangburn, secretary of the Russell Chamber of Commerce. Also three early day settlers, Mrs. Nellie Tate of Luray, Mr. Wm. Harbaugh and his sister, Mrs. Mary Missimer of Russell, lent color to the program with stories of their experiences with buffalo and Indians when they helped settle this country in the 1870's. Mr. Harbaugh, 88 years old, said he came to this country from Ohio in 1871. Mrs. Tate, past 70, came here about the same time, and told Mr. May that she was one of a family of 14 children, had reared eight of her own in addition to two others and was now taking care of her grandchildren.

Following the broadcast the group of Cheyene Indians imported from Oklahoma especially for the Prairiesta performed their tribal snake dance at their camp site, at Indian Village. The dance was performed each day of the three days as were many of the events on the program.

One of the main events Monday afternoon was the donkey race in which eight or ten of the Russell business men coaxed and prodded their donkey mounts over a two block course from 6th to 8th on Main. Bob Monroe went so far as to dangle a carrot enticingly in front of his donkey's nose, but apparently the animal wasn't a vegetarian be-

cause Bob finished out of the money. Dr. W. H. Morris finished in first place by half a length.

"Wagons West" historical pageant of Russell's progress which was written by A. John B. Rogers was a splendid production with a cast of five hundred. Mr. Richard Mahar, director and the committees in charge are to be highly complimented upon the success of the show. Huge crowds witnessed the event each night and praised it greatly.

Sixteen scenes were used in revealing historical occasions from the year of 1541. The makeup, costumes and arrangements were colorful and cleverly presented. Mr. Tom Kelly read the descriptive parts of the pageant, the Russell High School Band and Community choir also assisted.

### 70 Year Club

With Mrs. Margaret Ruppenthal as Master of Ceremonies the 70 club was called to order Tuesday morning at 10:15 in the Mecca Theatre.

Judge Ruppenthal gave out 70 Gold Seal Certificates of membership though five names were added later. Group singing led by Mrs. Heman Opdycke, including the song "Come to the Prairiesta" words written by Mary Butler and a number by the Cow Boy Band as well as the presenting of the Pioneer Mother, "Mrs. Ella Schurr Tate", who has lived in Luray, Russell county since 1871 and the Pioneer father, "Mr. William Harbaugh", who lived in Russell county since coming to Bunker Hill in 1871, a talk by Mr. A. J. Francis of Lucas, who gave his age at 94 years, five months and six days, and a poem read and written by Mrs. Lillie Harbaugh completed the morning program.

The poem is as follows:

**"Pioneer Fathers and Mothers"**  
You speak of the wonderful progress  
Through the past seventy years!  
Do you ever stop to remember  
What it cost in suffering and tears?

Coming from homes of comfort  
To a land so wild and strange  
Where the coyotes howl in the night  
And heads of buffalo range.

Oh! there were hours of terrors  
When "Indians" was the cry,  
And the children were called inside  
And the men with guns stood by.

But the brave Pioneers undaunted  
With courage strong and true  
Still laboured on an made this land  
A home for me and you.

The Pioneer Fathers and Mothers  
We remember them proudly today  
As we recall together  
Thoughts of the early day.

The Pioneer Fathers and Mothers  
May their spirits hover near  
And know that today we gather  
To honor their memories dear.

—Mrs. Lillie D. Harbaugh

The colorful and spectacular parade Tuesday afternoon was acclaimed by many as one of the finest ever witnessed in Russell. The Wm. Roe Post No. 99 of the American Legion and Auxiliary led with a guard of honor. Among the many beautifully decorated floats were Duckwall's, with Anna Mae Cummings; J. C. Penney with Mrs. Chester Dawson; Home State Bank with Miss Wilma Shaffer; Russell

(Continued to page four)

## THURSDAY, MAY 15, 1941.

Fay Roy, Gorham; Mary Zane Mills, Bunker Hill and Vera Reinhardt, Fairport; 4-H Club Old Sod House with 4-H Club members; and the L. Banker Mercantile Co. with an artificial cake, also celebrating their 60th anniversary of continuous business in Russell and the Dream and Mecca Theatres float with mountaineer characters. Carriages and wagons of ancient vintage and carrying local people dressed in early day costumes were sponsored by the Russell Farmers State Bank and others.

Several out of town bands in addition to the Russell High School band participated in the parade. Among them were the Ellis High School band who won the title of National Marching Champions last year; Cadet drill team from St. Joseph Military Academy, Hays; the Union Pacific band from Salina made up of sons of employees of the Union Pacific Railway Co., and dressed in white engineers' coveralls and caps; the Natoma High School band; the Luray High School band; the Wilson High School band; the Agra band with 6 baton twirlers and a majorette; and the Russell Cowby band which accompanied the Prairiesta boosters on all their recent trips. The Russell Kindergarten band accompanied by the kindergarten pirate and old timer groups. These little tots, about 60 in all, caused quite a sensation.

In addition to the floats and bands there were dozens of riders on horse back, old buggies of all models and coaches, several of the earliest cars that were produced, and one bicycle-built-for-two.

An old time wagon and team of horses was driven by Fred J. Hartman of the Russell Lumber Co. The wagon was loaded with lumber on which "Prince", their mascot sat. An inscription was along the side which read "Dog On" Good Lumber.

Among the outstanding individuals who were not sponsored by any particular organization or business house were Mrs. Fred Shaffer riding

her beautiful sorrel mare, said by horse fanciers to be one of the finest horses in the county. Mrs. Shaffer was attired in an old time riding habit—black derby and all—and was riding side saddle. W. D. Phillips, of the Phillips ranch near Hays, was an excellent impersonation of Buffalo Bill. His costume was complete in every detail, even to the long, flowing yellow hair. C. C. Butcher was prominent with his prospect-or's outfit, which included two pack horses with their packs led by Mr. Butcher on his own horse. Many of the out-of-town professional entertainers also participated in the parade.

State Highway patrolmen and motorcycle patrolmen from the Hutchinson Police Dept. escorted the paraders and helped clear the streets and maintain order along the parade route.

The Prairiesta is the largest celebration ever staged in Russell, its success denotes much effort on the part of many persons. Dale Danielson, Executive Chairman expressed his appreciation of the splendid co-operation of the various committees. Mr. Joe Sealey, parade chairman is also to be commended for the success of the parade, in fact every man, woman and child of Russell seemed to join whole-heartedly in the spirit of the Prairiesta.

## Prairiesta a Success

(Continued from page 1)

Municipal with Betty Jane Branson, daughter of City Engineer Frank Branson; Prairiesta Queen float with Queen of the Prairiesta, Miss Mae Rogg and County Queen, Miss Leona Keil and their attendants, who were the Misses Kathleen Ball, Phyllis Marsh, Lois Wagner, Elma Strecker, Betty Poland of Russell; Arleta Shurr, Luray; Kathryn Elliott, Paradise; Shirley Wyckoff, Luray; Donna Lee Torrence, Lucas;