

Oberlin phone company worked on expansion

By Evelyn Ward

Sherman County Historical Society
Jan. 8, 1904: Extending Telephone — Oberlin Company Purchase the Colby System and Will Connect with Goodland — The Central State Telephone company of Oberlin with a capital stock of \$60,000 is the company that last week purchased the Colby telephone system from John Connelly and J.M. Donelan, of that place.

Concerning this company, the *Colby Tribune* says: "It has made a phenomenal growth since its organization less than a year ago when it commenced operation with short toll line connecting Norton and Norcatur. Since then the company has acquired the Oberlin, Norton, Long Island and several other exchanges besides putting in a network of toll and party lines connecting all points in Decatur and Norton counties.

"They also connect with St. Francis, Atwood, Phillipsburg, Danbury and Woodruff, Neb., making their holding now worth \$40,000.

The company will make extensive improvements in the Colby exchange and will build toll lines to Goodland, Oakley, Gem, Rexford, Selden, Jennings and Hoxie, and before many months will give direct

today in history

connection with Topeka and Kansas City."

Jan. 9, 1904: Sent to the Reform School — Willie Stein, Adopted by Jacob Lemmer, Tried for Incurrigibility — The Boy's Father Is in Colorado's Penitentiary and Wrote to Goodland Some Time Ago Tracing the Whereabouts of His Son — Willie Stein, 12, taken from an orphan home in Colorado about two years ago and adopted by Jacob Lemmer of Sherman County, was tried for incurrigibility before Probate Judge Calvert and sent to the reform school at Topeka.

The complaint was brought by County Attorney E.F. Murphy at the instance of several parties who have been annoyed by the lad. Sheriff Bradley took Master Stein in charge last week. Since the boy was adopted by Jacob Lemmer, he developed a sort of a happy-go-lucky disposition, and the limits of Mr. Lemmer's ranch in the north part of the county was altogether too small for Willie.

He would leave home if he felt that way and would visit the neighbors whether they wanted him to or not. And so through a series of

events of this kind the boy found himself in the arms of the law.

Mr. Lemmer, like a good many other people, has his peculiarities, too. He had his ideas of things and Willie also had his. Mr. Lemmer thought that it wasn't the right thing for a boy 12 years old to play with fire, but his adopted son thought differently.

So one day Willie was playing with some matches out on the prairie, and the first thing he knew he had a prairie fire started, which burned over a good many acres before it could be put out.

All the neighbors turned out and fought the fire to a successful finish. This occurred in the afternoon, and the boy said Mr. Lemmer didn't say anything to him that day, but the next morning in thinking of the fire he used a lot of expletives that wouldn't be used on ordinary occasions.

This spirited opposition to the boy's mischievousness in and outside of his home, finally paving the way for his sentence in the reform school. And when one sees and talks with the little fellow, he feels that it ought to have been otherwise.

Willie Stein's mother is dead, and his father is serving a term in the Colorado penitentiary for killing a man. Not long ago, his father, however strange it may seem, is still solicitous for the welfare of his child while behind prison bars.

Some months ago, having found out that his son had been adopted by a ranchman in western Kansas, Stein wrote a letter to the postmaster of Goodland to ascertain the name and the post office address of the man who had adopted Willie Stein, and at that time the boy had not begun to make a reputation for himself and consequently his whereabouts were unknown.

Jan. 10, 1904: 591 Die In Chicago Theater — Failure of Fire Protection Ends in Human Slaughter — Flames Started on Stage by Flash Light Appliance — Absence of Fire Escape Seals Doom — The horror of the burning of the Iroquois Theater in Chicago, Dec. 30, surpasses any similar catastrophe in the history of the United States.

The complete list of the dead is now fixed at 591, of which only four bodies remain unidentified. The slightly burned and injured number 103, making a total of 694 casualties.

The fire broke out at a matinee performance of Blue Beard, which

has been billed and advertised extensively as to the many novel accessories, and people from nearby towns and many strangers stopping in Chicago were at the play.

It is estimated that 2,000 people were in attendance, of which a very large percent were women and children.

The theater was an elegant new structure and was supposed to be thoroughly fire proof Its seating capacity is given at 1,600, and with 2,000 being present, it is evident that the building was crowded.

About 3 o'clock a fire was started. An attempt was made to lower the asbestos curtain, but owing to an obstruction, it could not be lowered.

On account of a draft from the rear of the stage, the flames shot out over the vast audience, asphyxiating some, burning others to death in their seats.

A panic followed and hundreds were trodden to death in the mad rush to escape from the burning building. It was a scene that beggars description.

The owners of the theater and employees and the theatrical troupe have been placed under arrest for criminal negligence and a searching investigation ordered. On account of the investigation, all the theaters

in the city have been closed up for failing to comply the law as to fire escapes.

Jan. 11, 1904: The New Year's greeting in the Purvis home was in the form of an eight pound baby boy. Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Purvis have been living in Goodland more than a year, coming here from Denver. Mr. Purvis is a machinist in the railroad shops.

Jan. 12, 1904: F.L. Ball, superintendent of the Oak Ranch in Rawlins county, is quoted as saying in Abilene recently concerning the published reports that the Dewey holdings in northwest Kansas are for sale: "It is news to me that the Dewey ranch is for sale. Mr. Dewey has sent a list of quarter sections that are on the outskirts of the ranch and which can be spared better profitably, and they are for sale, but the ranch as a whole is not in the market any more than any man's property is — if he gets his price."

Jan. 13, 1904: All persons knowing themselves indebted to me will please settle before Jan. 25 as I must have the money. F.H. Smith, M.D.

From weekly issues of The Goodland News, provided by the Sherman County Historical Society. Since the paper was published weekly, some items were arbitrarily assigned a date.



SGT Lillich pointed out on a world map where he has spend the past eight months with the Army Reserve's 129th Transportation Company which is on a year-long deployment to Iraq.

Photo by Greg Stover/The Goodland Star-News

Army sergeant visits Goodland

Sgt. Timothy Lillich returned to Iraq late last month after a short leave in Goodland visiting his parents, Eugene and Amy Lillich.

Lillich, a 1983 graduate of Goodland High School, is a motor transport operator with the Army Reserve's 129th Transportation Company, which is on a one-year deployment to Iraq. The unit is based in Gardner.

The 129th has been in Iraq since

April, Lillich said, and is expected to return next April. He said his primary duty there is driving a heavy equipment transporter hauling equipment as part of a convoy.

Lillith said although he stays busy and is on the road a lot, he has not seen any hostile action yet. Some places he has been included Al Kut, Baghdad, Faluja, Ramadi and Kuwait City.

Lillich has been in the Army Re-

serve more than four years and was promoted to sergeant in June. He completed basic training and the motor transport operator course at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. His decorations include the National Defense Service Medal and the Army Service Ribbon.

People can write to him at 129 TC/2 PLT/1 SQD, APO AE 09366-0129.

Goodland library has new books, tapes

The Goodland Public Library has the following new books, cassettes and compact disks as of Jan. 1:

In adult fiction: "Hollywood Divorces," by Jackie Collins; "Stranded in Paradise," by Lori Copeland (large print).

"Trojan Odyssey," by Clive Cussler; "Pompeii," by Robert Harris; "The Murder Room," by P.D. Egan; "The Conspiracy Club," by Jonathan Kellerman; "Texas Vendetta," by Elmer Kelton; "Odd Thomas," by Dean Koontz; "The Fruminous Bandersnatch," by Ed McBain.

"Dragon's Kin," by Anne McCaffrey; "The Tough," by Colleen McCullough; "Hide and Seek," by Catherine Palmer (large print); "The Big, Bad Wolf," by James Patterson; and "Shadows of the Canyon," by Tracie Peterson (large print).

In adult non-fiction: "The Illustrated Guide to World Religions;" "Congressional Directory, 2003-2004 Edition;" "The Everything Father-to-be Book," by Kevin Nelson.

"Heart Full of Lies," by Ann Rule; "Peterson's Annual Guide to Graduate and Professional Studies — 2004 edition;" "Webster's New World Concise Spanish Dictionary."

"Nutrition for Dummies," by Carol Ann Rinzler; "Hot Line Farm Equipment Guide — 2004 edition;"

"Chilton Ford Service Manual — 2004 edition;" "Chilton General Motors Service Manual — 2004 edition;" "What to Expect the First Year," by Heidi Murkoff; "ESPN Sports Almanac — 2004 edition;" and "Mysteries of History," by Robert Stewart.

In children's books: "Peter Pan — the Movie Storybook," by Kate Egan; "Knight for a Day," by Kate McMullan (Dragon Slayers' Academy no. 5); "Dora in the Deep Sea," by Christine Ricci.

"The Slippery Slope," by Lemony Snicket; "My Shadow," by Robert Louis Stevenson; "I Got a "D" in Salami," by Henry Winkler; "A Fire Station," by Jill Kalz; "The Gila Monster," by Jake Miller; "The Green Iguana," by Jake Miller; "Butterfly — Watch it Grow," by Barrie Watts; "Frog — Watch it Grow," by Barrie Watts; "Mouse — Watch it Grow," by Barrie Watts; and "Sunflower — Watch it Grow," by Barrie Watts.

In audio books: "O Pioneers!" by Willa Cather (AC); "Hollywood Divorces," by Jackie Collins (CD); "Firefly," by P.T. Deuterman (CD); "Triumph on the Land," by Terry C. Johnston (AC); "The Conspiracy Club," by Jonathan Kellerman (CD).

"A Separate Peace," by John Knowles (CD); "The Touch," by Colleen McCullough (CD); "The Big, Bad Wolf," by James Patterson

(CD); "Heart Full of Lies," by Ann Rule (CD); "The Terrible Times," by Philip Ardagh (CD JF); "Granny Torrelli Makes Soup," by Sharon Creech (AC JF); "Mr. Tucket," by Gary Paulsen (AC JF); "The Slippery Slope," by Lemony Snicket (AC JF); and "Outlaw Princess of Sherwood," by Nancy Springer (AC JF).

4-H news

Prairie Dale

The Prairie Dale 4-H Club had its annual Christmas party Wednesday, Dec. 21, at Bowladium Lanes.

The party was packed with fun-filled games: left-handed bowling, between the legs bowling, one-legged bowling, etc.

The club provided snacks for 4-H members and parents. There were 14 members and two leaders present.

The club's next meeting was scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 12.

Sunflower

November meeting

The November meeting of the Sunflower 4-H club was held Monday, Nov. 17, at the United Methodist Church. The meeting was called

to order by President Samantha Raymer.

The flag salute and 4-H pledge were led by Raymer. Roll call was "How many pillows do you need when you sleep?" It was answered by 18 members, 12 parents, two leaders and no guests.

The song "Over the River" was led by Dusti Chadwick.

New members, Jessica Johnson and John Hendrich, were welcomed into the club during an induction ceremony conducted by the officers and leaders.

The program was called to order by Vice President Jason Krayca. Kathy Wood gave a project talk on stitchery. Kendra Promise gave a project talk on how to make a grapevine wreath.

Internet tonight! Call 899-2338.

Columnist back but has little news

Well, I'm back but really have no news. When one is out of touch for almost four months, news is hard to come by.

I would like to extend my sympathy to all of the families that lost a family member or friend in the past 12 weeks.

I lost three friends that I made special attachment to while at the rehab center. One was Mary Ellen, who befriended me at my first meal taken in the dining hall three weeks into rehab.

I shared a table with her and visits from three daughters until health prevented her from being able to come to the dining room.

They would come, wheel me to her room, and we would visit more times than I can count. She indicated she would like to have me as her fourth daughter. All of my uses, walker, canes, reacher and bath-



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• goodland gazette

room things were a gift to me from her. Her two daughters delivered them to my room about two hours before she died.

Judy said she came out of her coma for a few seconds, and they told her they had delivered them to me. She said thanks and got a smile on her face and slipped into the coma even deeper.

Two hours later, they came to tell me she was gone. It's not a pleasant thing at any time, but especially the day before Thanksgiving. They are a wonderful family and think about her so often. May she rest in peace.

Tough to get used to start of new year

The holidays are over, and we need to get used to writing 2004 instead of 2003.

That is always a little hard for me, so I got in the checkbook and wrote "Jan. 2004" on several checks, which sounds like a good idea, right?

It's also a good idea to leave a little room for the date also, so it will be known what day the check was written. Who looks anyway?

Herman and Karen Dierks of Round Rock, Texas, stopped by the senior center the other morning. They were visiting Herman's mother Lore Depe. They said it is dry down in Texas but not as dry as it is here.

Judy and Ivan Samuelson of LaSalle, Colo., were here to visit her mother, Marge Westover, and other relatives. Ivan said they were able to have a long visit with their son Carl, who is stationed in the Mediterranean area with the Air Force.

He commented on the difference between communications now and during the Vietnam War. Carl reported that he is fine, but things are quite busy for the service people.

Several family members and friends were here for the services for Bill Medford Wednesday, Dec. 31. Helen and Merle Metzler were



**sally
michael**

• brewster beacon

home for a time due to Bill's death also.

We are all saddened this week because of Bill's death and the death of Kerrie Aschenbrenner Bevington, who died early in the morning Sunday, Dec. 28. The memorial for Kerrie will be for her children's education. The services were held at the Catholic Church in Colby Monday with the burial in the Brewster Cemetery.

I want to thank the Prairie Gem 4-H Club for not only decorating the senior center for Christmas but also for taking the decorations down.

This time of year there are always so many ways for time to be spent that removing decorations is something that is hard to get around to. We appreciate the time this club has given to helping the senior center.

A potluck annual meeting for the Heritage Center will be held at noon Saturday, Jan. 10, at Hunter Hall.

Recreation was led by Christy Studer. Those present played a relay game. Refreshments were served by the Chadwick and Wood families. The next meeting was set for Dec. 13.

Sunflower December meeting

The month of December was a month of community service and fun. Members of the Sunflower 4-H club participated in the Genesis food drive on Dec. 6. They collected food donations people had left on their porches and delivered them to the United Methodist Church. All who helped enjoyed hot chocolate and doughnuts afterwards.

On Dec. 13, the club met at the Sherman Theatre to watch "Ice Age." Admission was a donation to

Genesis. Snacks were provided by the club. Thanks go out to the Krayca, Pettibone and Johnson families, who planned the Christmas party.

Ruleton Eager Beavers

Keeping with the spirit of Christmas, the Ruleton Eager Beavers participated in community activities in December. The leaders and members helped pick up donations of food for Genesis, and then later in December, they were able to box the food for the needy families. The box filling was at the Methodist Church.

The next monthly meeting of the Ruleton Eager Beavers was set for Saturday, Jan. 3, for the club's Christmas/New Years Party at the bowling ally.

Ham, turkey and drinks will be provided, and the Red Barn Gang of Rexford will furnish the entertainment.

L a V e l l e

Michael finished his radiation on the 31st, and we hope he has a really good winter without any further treatment needed. We will be going to Hays on Sunday for Roger's checkup with the Veteran's Administration clinic on Monday.

It surely doesn't seem like a year since the last trip there, but it doesn't seem like my youngest child should have been 33 years old today either. We called Barry to wish him Happy Birthday, and he said he didn't feel he ought to be that old either.

It is good to hear that Willard Moore will soon be home after a lengthy stay in the Colby hospital. He is recovering nicely from pneumonia, and I know he will be glad to be home again. Lorraine Bear will be spending some time at the Lantern Park Manor so that she will be able to come home again soon.

We wish all that are ailing a speeding recovery, and we'll see you all next time.