

# Early settler’s diary describes life, politics of 1886

In the May 12 edition of *The Goodland-Star News*, I reprinted excerpts from the diary of William Sylvester, one of the early settlers of Sherman County, coming in April 1886 from Nebraska.

A copy of his diary, started 120 years ago, was placed in the cornerstone of the new Sherman County courthouse under construction in the spring of 1931. His son, Frank Sylvester of Goodland, was present.

More of Mr. Sylvester’s diary follows, beginning May 29, 1886, with William and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Rowe (Mrs. Sylvester’s niece), and Mr. Mead, a hired hand, traveling with four wagons from Haigler, Neb., to their claim east of Ruleton. Weather, politics and some county “firsts” were recorded.

“On May 29th, we arrived home before noon, all very tired. A very heavy rain and wind storm in the night and rain drove through our shanty and wet us.

“On June 28th, since above date, we have bought lumber and built a barn, 32x32. The lumber bought at



**marcia smith**  
• from the vault

Leonard (Itasca). We put down the pump, planted 20 acres of corn, and sowed 15 acres of millet. There was a heavy rain in the night.

“On November 5th, I have been nominated by the mass convention at Center (located at the “center” of Sherman County) as their candidate for Representative and there is a good show for my election.

“On November 16th, there was a howling blizzard all day and far into the night.

“On November 18th, three people froze to death in the storm.

“On December 11th, there is a blizzard today from the northwest, and the range cattle drifted down and ate farmers’ feed.

“On January 26th (1887), the weather is good. The R.& M.R.R.

surveyors are running a line through the county nearly a mile north of us. “On April 9th, I went to Wallace (end of rail line) for the trees from Sarcovie, Mo.

“On April 11th, I planted the trees, two Chestnuts, 10 Crab-apples, 10 cherries, and 20 grapes. I also put out maple, Russian mulberry, walnuts, peaches, catalpas, honey locusts and box elder seeds. This was our Arbor Day.

“On April 16th, we had a school meeting. Six inches of snow fell.

“On April 30th, I planted corn. On May 3rd, I have been sowing flax and millet. It is warm and dry.

“On May 16th, I went over to Eustis to attend court as a Grand juror, but they did not want us as such, so they put us on the petit jury. I acted as jurymen in the case of State vs. Bus. This was the first jury that was ever impaneled in the county. A colored man was on the jury.

“On June 27th, there was a high south wind and more than 12 inches of rain fell during that rainy period. Water was more than 10 feet deep in the Sappa west of the Center.

“On October 7th, it is cold and raw. I have got potatoes dug. I had about 18 bushels. I had corn cut up and the buckwheat trashed out and had nine bushels.

“On November 22nd, the county election was held (dispute between Eustis and Goodland), and Goodland got 179 majority over all.

“On January 15th (1888), a crowd of people from Goodland went over to Eustis and took the county records to Goodland by force.

“On January 28th, Brig. Gen. Dickinson of the State Militia is here to see to the truth of the story told by the Eustis people who had represented to the governor that bloodshed was imminent here.

“February 18th, I have been at work for the U.P.R. Co. canvassing for signatures to a petition to call a meeting to vote bonds.

“April 14th, The Rock Island

right of way man, Mr. Hovey, came to see me, but we made no bargain, so we have the road through our pasture.

“May 2nd, I finished planting corn. There was a very heavy hail-storm.

“May 18th, there was a very heavy frost this morning.

“July 7th, the track layers reached here today.

“August 15th, there were heavy winds and rain from the west. Two box cars were blown from Ruleton into Goodland with the wind and were stopped with the switch engine there....”

Seventy-five years ago this month other events, besides the new court house, made the paper in *The Goodland News-Republic*. Ironically, colored gasoline made the front page.

**SELL A NEW GAS Now Three Grades and Low Price**

In a rather speedy change to meet the present economic condition, with surplus oil and lower prices,

the oil industry has adopted a third grade of commercial gasoline, and in the last two weeks bulk stations and retail oil stations have installed additional pumps and tanks to handle the new product.

The color idea, which has been going strong in many other lines of merchandising, may now be said to have struck the oil industry. The time was when all gasoline was clear. Then the oil companies thought a higher grade of gas would better suit patroller buyers, so the new gas was given a red coloring to distinguish it from the common. Now the lower grade gas is being colored blue, and the oil industry has become patriotic in its color scheme, with red, white and blue gas.

The new gas is retailing at a few cents lower price than the middle grade, which was once the “common” gasoline. It is expected to meet with favor among the people of reduced buying power, who have not yet been reduced to the extreme poverty of doing without an automobile.

## Bible’s accurate records number man’s years

The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles list the genealogies and history of the nation of Israel. Why is that important?

At the time the books were written, the nation had been released from captivity in Babylon about 77 years before to return to its homeland to rebuild and establish true worship there. The history and genealogy of the nation served as reminders of the Israelites’ dedicated relationship with God, their obligations and privileges and the faith and the failures of their forefathers.

The genealogies were necessary to confirm tribal inheritances from which the priesthood received support. It also gave a record of the lineage of Judah and of David, the line from which the Messiah was to come.

These genealogies proved valuable also to the first century gospel writers in showing that Jesus came from that family line. Matthew 1:1-16 lists Joseph’s family line, and Luke 3:23-38 lists Mary’s.

The genealogies in 1 Chronicles begin with mankind’s early history, the 10 generations from Adam to Noah and the 10 generations down to Abraham in chapter 1, verses 1-27. These years are counted out in Genesis 5:3-29, Genesis 7:6, 11, Genesis 11:10-12:4.

By adding the years from these



**sharon corcoran**  
• use it or lose it

verses and others, you can calculate the number of years of mankind’s history. If you start with the year that God’s worship was restored in Jerusalem, 537 B.C.E. (Before Our Common Era), the Bible counts the years back to Adam’s creation, which when added to the years of mankind’s history to today gives the number of years of humans on earth as 6,031.

Speaking of the year of Cyrus’s overthrow of the Babylonian dynasty, 539 B.C.E., Daniel 5:30, 31 says, “In that very night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was killed and Darius the Mede himself received the kingdom, being about 62 years old.”

Two years after that overthrow, 537 B.C.E., the Jews returned to their homeland to restore God’s worship. That was the end of the prophesied 70 years that Jerusalem was to be a devastated place. Those 70 years began in 607 B.C.E.

Calculating back to the division of the kingdom after Solomon’s death, the reigns of kings of Israel and Judah listed in the First and Sec-

ond books of Kings, takes you back 390 years to 997 B.C.E.

Ezekiel 4:5, 6 confirms that number: “And I myself must give to you the years of their error to the number of 390 days, and you must carry the error of the house of Israel. And you must complete them. And you must lie upon your right side in the second case, and you must carry the error of the house of Judah 40 days. A day for a year, a day for a year, is what I have given you.”

The last of Solomon’s 40 full reign years ended in the spring of 997; the first was 1,037 B.C.E. The temple building began in 1,034 B.C.E., about the 480th year after Israel came out of Egypt. Adding 479 complete years to 1,034 gives 1513 B.C.E. as the year they came out of Egypt.

Exodus 12:40, 41 tells us the years of the “dwelling of the sons of Israel, who had dwelt in Egypt” was 430 years. They were not all years in Egypt but began with Abraham’s crossing the Euphrates River on his way to Canaan. The first 215 were in Canaan, then equal time in Egypt. That takes us back to 1943 B.C.E., when Abraham was 75 years old.

Using years listed in the chapters and verses of Genesis mentioned

above, we can count from the great deluge of Noah’s day to Arpachshad’s birth, two years; then the birth of Shalah, 35 years; the birth of Eber, 30 years; birth of Peleg, 34; birth of Reu, 30; birth of Serug, 32; birth of Nahor, 30; birth of Terah, 29; and the death of Terah when Abraham was 75, 205 years. Add those, and you get 427 years. Add that to 1943 B.C.E., and you are at 2,370 B.C.E., when the deluge began.

Now, count from Adam’s creation to the birth of Seth, 130 years; to the birth of Enosh, 105; birth of Kenan, 90; birth of Mahalalel, 70 years; Jared, 65; Enoch, 162; Methusaleh, 65; Lamech, 187; Noah, 182; to the deluge, 600. That’s 1,656 years; add to 2,370 B.C.E., and you are at 4,026 B.C.E. for Adam’s creation.

Now, to bring it to our day, add 2006 and get 6,032. Subtract one because there is no zero year, and you have 6,031 years of mankind’s history.

The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles may seem like boring lists, but they confirm historical events, dates and family lines. Such accurate records having been kept in the Bible help us to calculate how long it has been since man was created and that prophecies were fulfilled in their time, including the Messiah appearing in the year he was expected.

## Pride of Prairie Orchestra to end season Saturday in Colby

The Pride of the Prairie Orchestra will have its season finale performance this weekend, featuring several student members.

The orchestra will perform “The Young People’s Concert” at 6:30 p.m. (Mountain Time) Saturday in the Colby High School auditorium.

Admission will be by Friends of the Orchestra membership or at the

door. During intermission, there will be dessert in the high school commons.

Performers from Goodland include Renea Reasoner, a Goodland High School student, and Dr. David Younger.

Emily Cox will perform a French horn concerto by Strauss. Reed Shoaff will perform a trumpet con-

certo by Hummel. Andrew Vrbas and Stanton Nelson will each perform a movement of “Concerto in A Minor for Violin.”

The Double Violin Concerto will be performed by student orchestra members Maleen Michel, Haley Kistler, Vrbas and Mary Beth Myers.

## student of the week



**Name:** Andrew Pettibone

**Parents:** Jay and Janell Pettibone

**Grade:** Junior

**Age:** 17

**We’ve nominated this student because:** of his conscientious attitude, productive efforts in the classroom and “A”-quality assignments, with a cheerful countenance.

**Student Comment:** My favorite part of school is the sporting events. After graduation I will remember all the

trips I’ve taken for various things and all the baseball games.

**Activities involved in at school:** baseball, jazz band, band, Science Olympiad and National Honor Society.

**My choice of movies, books, and games:** My favorite movies are comedies and The Sandlot. I listen to just about any music. My favorite book is The Hatchet.

**After I leave Goodland High School I intend to:** attend a university, maybe in Colorado and major in wild-life biology.

**And 10 years from now, I think I’ll be:** living a successful life, doing something I enjoy.

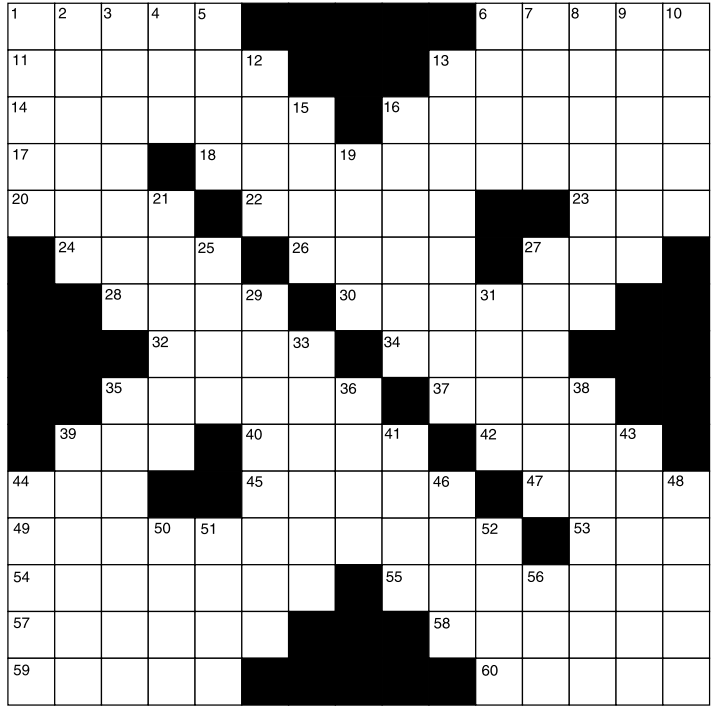
**Favorite Quote:** “Success isn’t measured by the position you reach in life: it’s measured by the obstacles you overcome.”

Booker T. Washington

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## Crossword Puzzle



### CLUES ACROSS

- Illegal escapade
- Sets in oldr
- Heist
- Russian elected council
- Bladder channel
- Tongue protuberance
- British thermal unit
- NYC Center
- Beget
- Iowa or Florida
- Belonging to a thing
- Has two wheels
- Card game
- Ball holding device
- Asian country
- Gets up
- Disparaging remark
- \_\_\_calate: decrease scope
- More costly
- Poses
- Foot (Latin)
- Send out
- Divisions of a tennis match
- \_\_\_ophile: mushroom hunter
- Fired clay pieces
- Drains
- NYC immigration monument
- Monetary unit
- Syncophants
- Small canned fish
- Mistakes
- Hurt
- Cambodian money
- Drum rhythms

### CLUES DOWN

- Cyprinids
- Of a main artery
- About pleura
- Sun up in New York
- German river
- A strong cord
- Morally reprehensible
- Are remarkable (slang)
- Erase
- Sky bodies
- Professionals
- Preventives
- Performs in a play
- An explosive device
- New Zealand parrot
- removes marks
- Unit of weight (India)
- Male reproductive glands
- Guarantors
- Six (Spanish)
- Neglectful
- Make known
- Rivulet
- Endurance
- Bacteria
- Potables
- Upright piano
- Instrument for measuring
- Clothing fastener
- Winter vehicles
- Object of devotion
- Gentlemen
- Not colorful
- Molten metal molder

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## Brewster All-Star Booster Club

### Calendar for May 17 - May 22

**Wednesday:** Half day of school, final semester exams, last day of school.

**Thursday:** Work day for teachers.

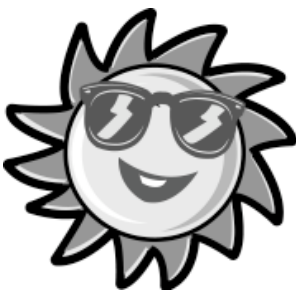
**Friday:** Regional track Meet.

**Monday:** State golf in Goodland.

**The Goodland Star-News**

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