

From the archives of Liberal's hometown newspaper since 1886.

Researched and compiled by A.J. Coleman, L&T Reporter



1963

Crimes small and large fill news

School was out, but a group of older elementary and junior-high age girls just could not stay away. This was a problem reported to the newspaper by juvenile officer Kenneth Franzen, who said the sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade girls were climbing to the roof of Lincoln School. Their activities were not just a crime, he said, listing trespassing and damaging public property. They were also dangerous. At least one girl had fallen and broken her wrist.

Meanwhile, drivers in Liberal had more pavement to cover. The city had expanded Pershing

Avenue south, all the way to U.S. Hwy. 54. The blacktop street from Second Street to the highway was still narrow, but city commissioner Lloyd Hill said the street would be widened "if traffic warrants it." The new road was meant to relieve traffic congestion at the Kansas Ave. train crossing. Rock Island Railroad had installed crossing equipment to help the city with the project.

Two traffic collisions involving younger drivers made front-page news in Liberal, with a dramatic photo of a car tilted into a steep ditch at the corner of Second Street and Western Ave. "Another typical Second and Western wreck," the caption read.

Occupants of both cars escaped injury after a 1953 DeSoto driven by Mrs. Murry M. Wilkins, 27, hit the side of a 1956 Ford station wagon driven by Linda K. Nine, 19, and her mother, Mrs. Raymond Nine. Both vehicles were heavily damaged.

Two rear-end crashes on U.S. Hwy. 54 also made the front page. A 1961 Cadillac driven by C.W. Walker, 32, was struck by a 1963 Chevrolet driven by Richard Williams, 19. All the people involved in the accidents lived in Liberal.

South of Liberal, police in Stratford, Texas, arrested a man for killing the woman he had married just eight hours earlier. Earl Brown and Alma Geneva Duke, both of Guymon, Okla., had been married in Boca Raton, N.M. less than a day when she issued an ultimatum: he had to stop drinking.

"I'm going to wear the pants in this family. I'll show you," he confessed to saying, and then he beat her to death. Brown was caught when he backed into a gas pump at a service station. His dead bride was propped in the front seat of the car.

Brown and his bride, both from Snyder, Texas, had recently moved north. She worked at a Guymon restaurant, and he was a farm laborer in Elkhart.

Outrage burst out on the editorial page as the newspaper spoke out against a new atheist colony being established in Stockton, near Hays.

“Kansans as a whole are a self-made, sturdy and God-fearing people,” the editorial comment began, “and as a result have made great strides in all endeavors. Now comes word that our favorite state has been picked to become the site of an atheist colony in the area of Stockton, a small city north of Hays.”

If the so-called atheists got organized, the paper wrote, “you may see their efforts pushed to form some sort of national organization which always is the second step in such off-brand tacts. We hope they all go down the drain.”