

At Home

For six years Room 88 on the second floor in the Main Building of Bethany College was my headquarters. It was a lovely room with a large window full of flowers and flooded with cheerful sunshine. It was here I first met Ernst Pihlblad. Doctor Swensson came to introduce him and explained in his delightful, informal way that Ernst was a bright young man, that we would become very good friends and have a good time working together.

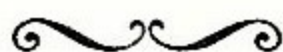
Carl Swensson was right. Ernst and I became very good friends and worked together for many years without even the slightest misunderstanding.

Ernst grew up in a pioneer home, was trained in the pioneer school of Carl Swensson and achieved a splendid life work. He was a kindhearted man and helped hundreds of young men and women to get a start in life. The Pihlblad home in Lindsborg was cheerful and hospitable. Ernst Pihlblad was a highly gifted man and used his gifts in faithful service. He worked like a true pioneer. For several years he was Carl Swensson's assistant in the Bethany church. After teaching Latin hour after hour at the college he often had to go out into the country to visit sick people, to speak in a school house or to conduct a meeting. Ernst was an able and conscientious teacher. He loved his Greek and Latin Classics and knew them intimately. He was a great reader, using every spare moment to familiarize himself with the latest books in various lines, philosophy, history, social sciences, education and fiction. His broad, general culture and deep understanding of human life in all its expressions helped to make him an interesting speaker. He prepared his College Chapel meditations as carefully as his more formal lectures or sermons. His addresses were always new, fresh and inspiring. He was an able College president, because he loved his college and the young people, and because he had a broad understanding of the problems of modern education.

But it is a kind, generous and gifted man and as a dear friend that we especially remember him.

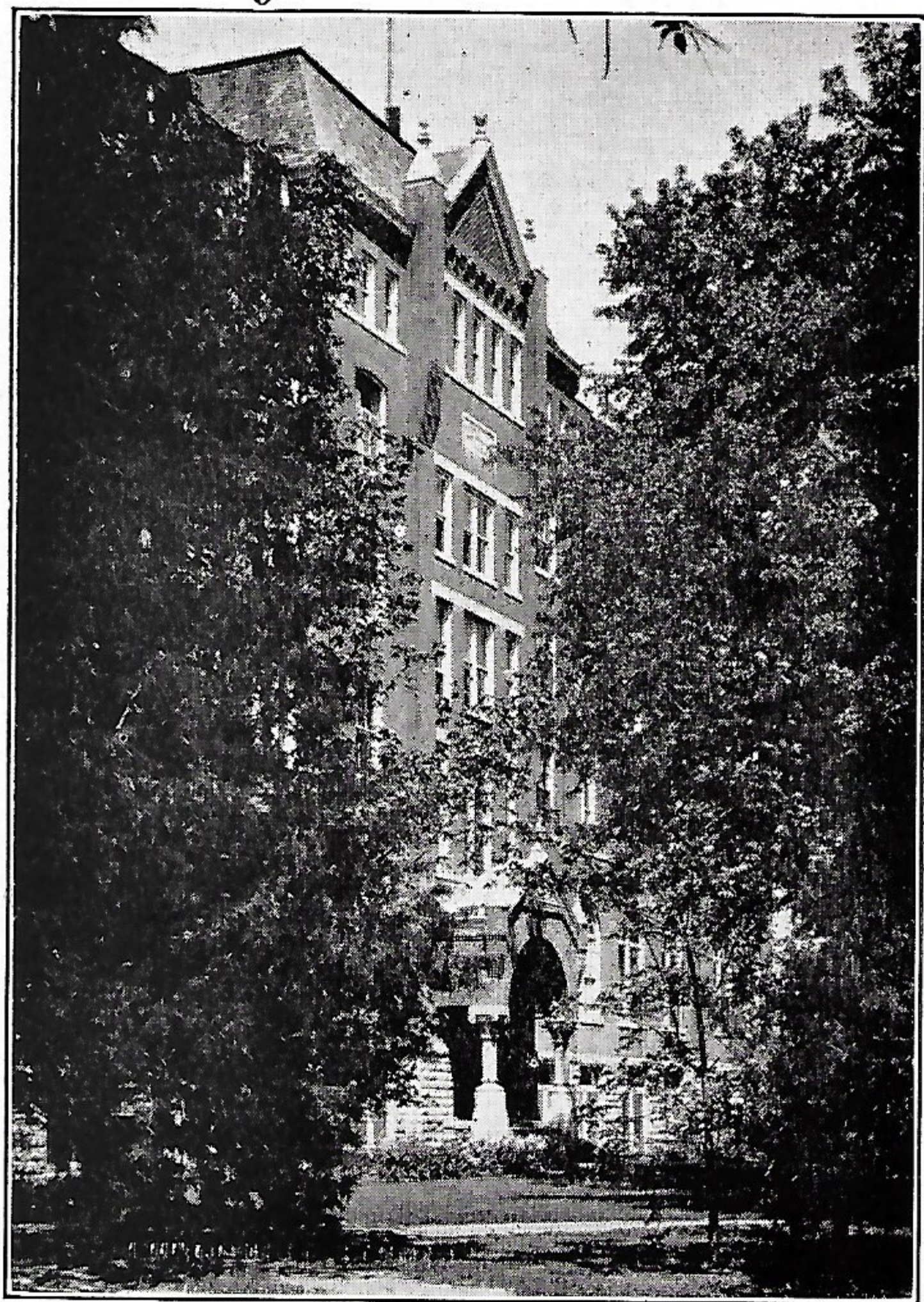
BIRGER SANDZEN.

(Professor of Art, Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas.)



As a friend and admirer of the late Dr. Ernst F. Pihlblad I want to say that he was an outstanding personality, with knowledge and understanding of religious and civic problems.

I have known Dr. Pihlblad for many years while serving on the Bethany College Board of Directors. Whenever problems arose, he was always ready and willing to labor for their solution, with one aim in view, namely a bigger and better Bethany.



Old Main
On the Campus of Bethany College.

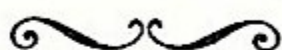
He was a true Christian and his understanding of the problems of the common people made him a welcome visitor wherever he went. My many visits with Dr. Pihlblad will always be a cherished memory of a true and trusted friend.

He has inspired thousands by his example of friendliness, and the will to do the things that made for a better world.

He will live long in our memory.

G. E. BENGTON.

(Smolan, Kansas, Member, Board of Directors, Bethany College.)



All who knew Dr. Pihlblad, realize the loss Bethany College has suffered as the result of his death.

His passing brings to mind the words of David, who exclaimed in his sorrow, "Know Ye not that there is a Prince and a great man fallen this day?"

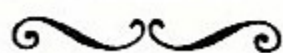
In the many years I was privileged to know him, it seemed to me that his every thought, word and deed was directed toward doing something of permanent value for his beloved College. He has left the imprint of a life of service, not only on the entire community around Bethany, but on all who came in contact with him.

The following incident illustrates this quality of "Service above Self". While in the hospital, recuperating from his serious automobile accident, I recall his telephoning and asking me to come to see him. We had visited a short time when several of his friends, active in various organizations, entered his room. Thinking our interview was ended, I arose to go. Whereupon, to my surprise and the amusement of us all, he admitted, with a twinkle in his eye, that he had planned to have us meet there. Then he explained that he needed our assistance in arranging a benefit program for Trinity Lutheran Hospital. Realizing his physical condition prevented his usual participation in such activities, he had arranged what was apparently a chance meeting. Needless to say, a concert for Trinity was successfully given in a very short while.

And so it was, at all times and under all circumstances, his heart and soul and mind were ever at work for the good of mankind.

GLADYS HAVENS DANIELS.

(Kansas City, Missouri, Soloist, Bethany Oratorio Society.)



Your letter excites no new line of thought. I have been trying to figure it out ever since Dr. Pihlblad's passing. Our relation from the very beginning was that of pals, the kind where two just sit in the

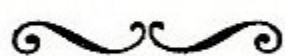
presence of each other saying not a word and having a perfectly fine time. I cannot explain such things. A scientist is always uncomfortable in the presence of a minister because he is constantly afraid he will make some remark which will be resented.

So far as I can figure it out he was a minister of the living and not of the dead. Why I felt that on the first contact is beyond my ken. One never felt that he was the head of a denominational school. Lindsborg somehow always impressed me as being a unit. Wetterstrom made the music but it breathed the spirit of the President. He taught boys to play instruments marvelously well, but they were the President's boys. Birger Sandzen and his wonderful daughter overshadowed the whole school perhaps but the President liked it. Whether he had influence in keeping it a notable art center I do not know.

Whatever the interpretation the world looks on Bethany not as a denominational school but as a mid-western institution, the influence of which we all share and are as prideful of it as though we were a part of it although all we contribute is just Kansas.

Though he never mentioned it I believe his faith in God was such that he believed that if he did his best that when his Saturday night came he would be paid his just dues. It is clear that he did in fact achieve immortality; his influence will never die. That, in my opinion, is the pinnacle of human achievement.

ARTHUR E. HERTZLER, M. D.
(Halstead, Kansas.)



Ernst Pihlblad was a many sided personality, but every facet itself shone in such excellence as to deserve being called the real man.

Whether as the stern and astute college administrator, driving home the need now to strengthen the foundations of the future, or through the scintillating way he had of telling youth the intricacies of life, whether unloosing high aspirations and noble philosophy in commencement address or bringing hope to sorrowing hearts in a memorial service, whether preaching a Sunday sermon or exhorting party members to loyalty for election, whether raising money for a good cause or adding zest to an evening's gathering of friends about the festive board, Ernst was always the peer, easily the leader and the inspirer.

As varied as mankind and touching all degrees, no wonder those who knew him love to count personal contacts as among life's most cherished memories.

W. J. KREHBIEL.

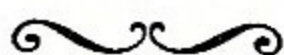
(Editor, McPherson Republican, McPherson, Kansas.)

Dr. E. F. Pihlblad was a friend of mine since 1889 when we were students together at Bethany College, a friendship of 55 years standing. Dr. Pihlblad had so many admirable qualities. Other friends will pay tribute to his long and distinguished public career as an educator and man of public affairs, but I would like to pay tribute to him as the royal friend, the devoted husband and father, the generous and entertaining host. After all, these good qualities with their endearing memories will be longest treasured and appreciated by his sons and their families as well as by his many friends and associates.

The Pihlblad home in Lindsborg where Dr. and Mrs. Pihlblad so graciously presided as host and hostess to hundreds of students, faculty members and a host of friends for so many years, now seems lonely and deserted reminding us all that here we have no abiding city. Only a very few of us are left of that early group of Bethany students. Memory loves to linger in the pleasant lanes of youth. We miss the genial spirit, the warm comradeship of former happy years and sigh for them in vain. But we are not as those without hope, for we look forward to a reunion in that home not made by hands, eternal in the heavens.

MRS. F. O. JOHNSON.

(McPherson, Kansas, Member Board of Directors, Bethany College.)



Dr. Ernst F. Pihlblad was first an Educator and Minister of the Gospel. In addition to these duties he took his citizenship seriously; was deeply interested in all of the problems and concerns of men. Busy as he was he always championed any cause that to him seemed right even if it at times appeared to others a hopeless task.

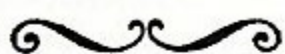
While he was highly educated and well informed he sought the opinions and accepted advice from his associates always looking with an open mind on the questions involved. He had the fine gift of drawing to himself people to whom he could delegate responsibility. This enabled him to accomplish much that it would have been impossible to do except through his ability to inspire others with enthusiasm and faith that the job could be done.

Over a period of time extending from youth till the time of his death I knew him well. We served together in public matters. He was a staunch friend; loyal at all times; the first to appear in times of sorrow and stress and also present to rejoice when joy and success was experienced. He possessed to a marked degree the quality of being able to believe well of everyone, never looking for evil and always eager to place the most charitable constructions on the words and actions of men.

We already have realized, and as time goes on the American people will learn to value, citizens who gladly and efficiently serve

their church, their school, their community and country as unselfishly and well as did Dr. Pihlblad.

LUDVIG NELSON.
(Wichita, Kansas.)



The influence of Dr. Ernst F. Pihlblad lives on in the lives of all who knew him. His fine Christian spirit, his broad vision, the flash of his keen mind, and his humanity to his fellow man are self-perpetuating.

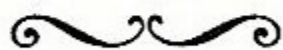
Bethany College and Dr. Pihlblad will always be linked together. His was the living force providing Bethany with strong and aggressive leadership. His were the high ideals by which its course was charted. He helped make the Bethany Messiah a world-famous institution.

Dr. Pihlblad was also a civic leader, contributing his time and creative energy freely to the community in which he lived, as well as to the State and Nation. He championed worthy causes and worthy people, and his gifts as a public speaker were employed in their behalf. His aim was a clean and law-abiding community and a progressive and forward-looking State and Nation.

Dr. Pihlblad was a close friend of the Kansas farmer. He knew his problems first hand, and the struggle, sacrifice and hardship in making a living from the soil. Dr. Pihlblad worked for fair prices for farm products and encouraged the use of modern methods and equipment on the farm. He was proud of the fact that most of Bethany's students came from the farm.

Educator, statesman, Christian leader, and friend — so shall Dr. Pihlblad be remembered. The inspiration and influence of his life will carry on.

KARL A. PEARSON.
(Lt. U. S. N. R.)



Fortunately, for me, my association with Dr. Pihlblad covered one of the most important and critical periods of my life.

Our acquaintanceship ripened into friendship when we were both members of the Kansas State Senate in January, 1937, at the beginning of the 1937 session of the Legislature. We served together throughout that session and during the special session in February, 1938.

I was extremely fortunate in that Dr. Pihlblad took me into his heart, as he did so many people, at the beginning of our association in the Kansas State Senate. From that time on until his passing we had a very close friendship and association.

During my first term as governor, Dr. Pihlblad was still a mem-

ber of the State Senate. We could always depend upon his support of the useful and constructive measures for the benefit of the people of Kansas. His leadership in the Legislature was a tower of strength to us in the ambitious program we had in the 1939 session of the Legislature for the advancement and improvement of our state government. That was his last session of the Legislature. He refused to permit his re-election.

The 1939 session of the Legislature submitted to the people of Kansas to be voted on at the general election in 1940 an amendment to our State Constitution providing for a merit civil service system for state employees for the purpose of taking state employment out of partisan politics and putting it on a business, efficiency, non-partisan basis in line with modern industry and the enlightened trend in government. With the help of Dr. Pihlblad and a few other outstanding state leaders such as William Allen White we convinced the people of Kansas of the advantages of adopting this constitutional amendment. They did so by an overwhelming majority.

The machinery for the new State Civil Service System was set up by the 1941 Session of the Legislature. It was then my honor and privilege to appoint Dr. Pihlblad chairman of the first board for the management and administration of the new law. He served the people of Kansas in that important capacity with the same devotion and competence with which he had filled so many other positions of trust and importance during his life time.

During our two years together in the State Senate and our four years of association during my two terms as governor, Dr. Pihlblad was one of my chief advisers. He was a real inspiration to me.

No tribute can be paid to Dr. Pihlblad without giving acknowledgment to the great contribution made to Dr. Pihlblad's life and to his friends by his charming wife. She was a great lady. It was the high privilege of Mrs. Ratner and myself to have known her well, to have enjoyed her companionship and hospitality. During our years at Topeka, whenever I was making a trip to or near Lindsborg Mrs. Ratner always tried to accompany me so we could have at least a few minutes in the Pihlblad home. They had always told us if they were not home to go in and make coffee for ourselves. It wasn't long until Mrs. Ratner learned where the coffee and the coffee pot were and she always felt as much at home in the Pihlblad kitchen as she did in their parlor.

Kansas is fortunate to have had a citizen like Dr. Pihlblad. He was truly a man who could

"Talk with crowds and keep his virtue,

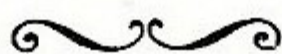
"Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch."

I wish I had the gift of expression to do him justice. All I can say is that he was my friend. I admired him and I loved him. He has

left a place in the hearts of all of his friends and in the Kansas Hall of Fame that can never be filled.

PAYNE H. RATNER.

(Wichita, Kansas, Former Governor of Kansas.)



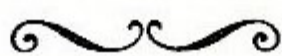
The sudden taking away of Lindsborg's First Lady is a severe shock to the county and to the world of students who for forty years have felt the touch of her gracious and inspiring personality.

Cast early on a sea of trouble, her indomitable will produced a spirit that matched the best qualities of the pioneers who subdued the prairies. In Bethany's darkest hour, when death laid low its founder, she valiantly stood beside the new young president, Ernst Pihlblad, and together they tackled the long and hard task, through unending hours and poignant sacrifice, of building on the prairies a distinctive culture and a college that has attained world acclaim.

Bethany and its aims and aspirations is the personification of the Pihlblads, Ernst and Marie. Its buildings, equipment and endowment are literally their life blood willingly given that youth might live a fuller life. Together they struggled, they sacrificed, and they conquered. In all this she gave as much as he. No one will ever know nor can record the full meaning of such an estimable life as she gave to posterity.

W. J. KREHBIEL.

(Editorial in *The McPherson Daily Republican*, June 9, 1941.)



The Home Town is proud of Dr. Ernst F. Pihlblad as a citizen, nationally known educator and statesman, but it is as a Friend, Civic Leader and Neighbor that the community mourns him and feels the great loss of his passing.

As a Friend, Dr. Pihlblad, although burdened by heavy responsibilities and multitudenous duties and cares, was never too busy to aid and comfort those in sorrow or trouble, or to respond sympathetically when counsel or advice were sought. Many persons through his interest and influence have been helped to positions of trust and honor where they have made good, a service he was happy to render.

Friends from far and near sought him out in their joys and in their sorrows. He was asked to officiate at more weddings and conduct more funerals than fall to the lot of the average pastor of a church.

As a Civic Leader he headed movements looking toward the progress and betterment of the community. Bethany college, of course, was his first interest, but to him college and community were

closely knit. Always he found time to help sponsor a worthwhile cause. He was the first man thought of in the facing of civic problems and new adventures in community building, and usually he found himself drafted to direct the work.

He knew people and had the ability and resourcefulness of delegating responsibilities to the right aids and securing the maximum of co-operation.

He was a good neighbor, whose open hearted wholesome interest in his neighbors reached out far beyond the immediate environs of a circumscribed section of a town. He liked people and he loved the home town folk. Tempting calls to larger fields of endeavor came to him, but he preferred Bethany college and its environs, and the friendships and fellowships in a small cultural community. This preference also found expression in his pastorate of the small Falun Lutheran church, where he served many years as a pastor in addition to his duties as president of a great institution of learning. He preferred the little church and the people he loved to advantages offered by larger city churches which sought his service.

Dr. Pihlblad's influence will live until time shall be no more. Generations to come will feel that influence through the heritage passed on to them from those whose lives he touched as educator, friend and neighbor. The Lord called him in the fullness of time, while his powers were yet undimmed and he "Crossed the Bar" to join his beloved companion, who had gone before.

He is gone, but his influence and the power of his dynamic spirit lives on. In the words of Lord Lytton's "There Are No Dead:"

*"There is no death! The stars go down
To rise upon some fairer shore;
And bright in heaven's jewelled crown
They shine forever more*

*"There is no death! An Angel form
Walks o'er the earth with silent tread
He bears our best loved things away;
And then we call them 'Dead'.*

*"But ever near us though unseen
The dear immortal spirits tread;
For all the boundless universe
Is Life, there are no dead."*

ANNA M. CARLSON.

(Press Correspondent, Lindsborg, Kansas.)