

PONTIAC BILL POSTER

NOV 14 Obituary-Bannigan 1883

Almost simultaneously with the news that the last spike has been driven completing the Northern Pacific railroad comes the additional information that Mr. Peter Bannigan, one of the pioneers of the northwest, and a man who took unbound interest in the road, has departed this life at his late residence, Mandan, D. T., where he was widely known and generally respected. Mr. Bannigan was one of the last of the connecting links between the old frontier times and the new civilization. A Rhode Islander by birth, a Michigander by choice, and a Dakotan by force of circumstances, he played an active part in all three bailiwicks, accomplishing a career in the latter which has not heretofore attracted the attention of the historian.

It was early in the discovery of the great northwest as a vantage ground for the acquiring of sudden and abnormal wealth that Mr. Bannigan determined to make that country the theater of his exploits. A few tents, with here and there a wooden shed, constituted the domiciliary attainments of a Dakota city, but business activity had already become a characteristic of the territory, and into the vortex Mr. Bannigan plunged himself with a boldness and industry that marked him a leading citizen even in that land where every man was more or less a leader. His faro bank was one of the most popular in that section, and his saloon and kindred enterprises were held in high repute by the populace and the traveler from all parts. No man was more highly regarded than

Mr. Bannigan for the excellence of his game and rum, or for the alacrity with which he downed the enemy or two who, careless of results, took the liberty of affronting him. But in an evil day Mr. Bannigan unwound the mortal coil of a neighbor in a manner which appeared unfair to the bystanders, and to the disgust of himself and friends he was subjected to the inconvenience of an arrest and trial, of which the latter is spoken of respectfully in the northern part of Dakota to this day.

Such an entertainment as a murder trial was a novelty in those parts at that time, and far and wide came the pioneers, to watch the proceedings and enjoy the results. It seemed a little cold-blooded to these gentlemen, who conducted their law business theretofore without any waste of time and unnecessary preliminaries, but they refrained from interference, and when the verdict of guilty was rendered took it in good part, and joined the procession to the nearest bar with the firm conviction that the end might have been accomplished without any of the expense incurred, had the court adhered to the honored customs of the land and people. Even Mr. Bannigan held that too much had already been said, when called on for what he might have to say why the sentence of death should not be pronounced on him, and the general feeling was that the new system might work in cases of murder but it could not be expected to become popular in instances of stocktheft or similar crimes, where the example lay in the swiftness with which the exe-

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