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Article Summary: Sadie B Smith's letters of a schoolteacher to her future husband, Rollin A Trail, cover seventeen years from 1889-1906. The letters presented in this article cover the years 1900 to 1905 when she served as principal of the Holdrege high school. [Earlier letters were published in *Nebraska History*, Winter 1977]

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A HOLDREGE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, 1900-1905: THE LETTERS OF SADIE B. SMITH

Edited by Rosalie Trail Fuller

INTRODUCTION

The letters of schoolteacher Sadie B. Smith to her admirer and future husband, Rollin A. Trail, cover a courtship of seventeen years, from 1889 to 1906. They form a collection of her memorabilia which includes letters from her suitor, general correspondence, photographs, two diaries, and other records of those decades.

The editor of these letters, the daughter of Sadie Smith Trail, discovered the collection in 1934 in a small trunk that had for years been stored separately from other family effects. Reading the contents gave her the opportunity to know her parents as young adults. Only a part of the letters from Miss Smith to Trail were preserved. She apparently treasured and saved everything he wrote to her, even the notes he slipped under the door during their quarrels when both lived at the "Atwater Hotel," a Crete board-and-room establishment operated by the wife of Jerry Atwater, town marshal.

Sadie B. Smith was born December 24, 1873, to Oren Sylvester Smith and Sarah Frances Thompson Smith in a sod house north of Western in Saline County. Her mother died when Sadie was 14 months old¹ and Sadie was "adopted" without legal formalities by James and Jane Ann Lewis of Western. Following the death of Lewis in 1884, Sadie was sent by her father to high school in Crete, where she boarded with Atwaters. Two other boarders at the Atwater Hotel were Lillian and Rollin Trail, children of J.S. Trail of rural Otoe County, who attended Doane Academy.²

Well-meaning friends warned Sadie that graduation from high school would jeopardize her prospects of becoming a successful rural teacher. Supposedly, with a diploma she would be

labeled "stuck-up" and would be hampered in establishing communication with pupils and parents. Because suspicion of high school-educated teachers was so widespread, Sadie felt that she must learn a trade to support herself if her teaching plans failed. She apprenticed herself to a Crete dressmaker, Marge Grewell, and worked after school, Saturdays, and holidays.

During her senior year Sadie had substituted in a rural school where the Atwaters' daughter Belle taught. After graduation Sadie attended the county institute at Wilbur before gaining her teachers' certificate.³ She secured the Coplin School, four miles from Western, for a two-month term at \$25 per month. For graduation her father presented her a horse and cart for transportation from Western, the home of her foster mother, Mrs. Jane Ann Lewis, to her school. Later she secured another school farther from Western at \$30 per month for a two-month term. Sadie, however, was not rehired. A local girl, not a high school graduate, who had passed the teachers' examination but had no teaching experience, underbid her by \$5 for the spring term, when the older boys would be working in the field and teaching presumably was less arduous.

After failing to secure a school for the spring term in Saline County, Sadie was employed by a Crete dressmaking shop before joining her father and new stepmother, Hester Ada Smith, in Colorado Springs.⁴ There she did more sewing while studying to take the teachers' examination in El Paso County. Upon receiving a third-grade certificate,⁵ she went to the ranching country west of Colorado Springs to teach a summer term at Summit Park (now Woodland Park), a rural district, at \$45 per month—better pay than she could have hoped to receive in a small Nebraska town.⁶ But living conditions were almost intolerable, and she had no companionship with young people. A more difficult examination on August 27, 1892, made her eligible to teach in better, higher-paying schools. She then secured a village school at Eastonville.

After two years of teaching in Colorado, Sadie returned to Nebraska, enrolled in the Peru State Normal School as a senior, and was graduated in 1895. The next year she taught at Dunbar and attended the Normal School in Lincoln during the summer. In September, 1896, she went to North Bend in Dodge County as high school assistant. At that time Rollin, who was studying civil engineering at the University of Nebraska, began saving her

letters. A selection of her letters describing her experiences in North Bend, "A Nebraska High School Teacher in the 1890s: The Letters of Sadie B. Smith," was published in *Nebraska History* (Winter, 1977).

The following letters were selected from those Sadie wrote to Rollin during the five years (1900-1905) she served as principal of the Holdrege high school. Rollin, who had been graduated from Nebraska University in 1897, was employed during this period as a civil engineer by various railroads. His rough outdoor life in railroad construction camps and frequent transfers—Colorado, Utah, Iowa, Virginia—necessitated short, infrequent replies to Sadie's letters,⁷ which illuminate her teaching and administrative experiences in a small-town Nebraska high school of the early 1900s.

THE LETTERS

North Bend, May 9, 1900

Dear Rollin,

Now for the news I know you are so anxious to hear. I have been elected principal of the high school in Holdrege at \$60 a month. A unanimous ballot was made in an informal meeting last Thursday night and they sent me word Friday. Then our board came to ask if I would stay for a raise here [North Bend] and they called a meeting for the purpose of doing so.⁸ It would have been done if it were possible, but the resources have been decreased by \$4,000. I am glad I was not so tempted, because there would have been no chance of another raise here and if my work suits in Holdrege there is a chance for more, should I wish to remain another year.

Monday night I was regularly elected and contracts came today, so they are pushing the matter. There are three teachers in the high school. Mr. Conner, my former superintendent [at North Bend], will be superintendent there and the assistant is a Miss Reesor whom I knew at Peru [State Normal School]. One of the girls who formerly taught in North Bend in grade work is teaching there, too.⁹ You can see I am quite puffed up over it but you will forgive me this once, won't you? About the first month of school will doubtless take all the conceit out of me.

Mr. Sherman [superintendent of schools] is quite worried about filling the place here and seems to feel bad about my leaving. He told me there was no need for me to go and he tried to get my salary raised here. I am glad that I am going while my credit is good. School closes June 8 and begins in Holdrege September 3. The summer is undecided, as I do not know what subjects I am to teach. It may be spent in Lincoln at the State University, though I had hoped to see some of my friends this vacation. I have always liked North Bend so that I am truly sorry to leave but I must not miss the opportunity to advance.

Yours sincerely, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, September 30, 1900

Dear Rollin,

I *have* been somewhat more on the move than is usual for me, but in a different way from you. As you know, I came a week before school began in order to have plenty of time to find a boarding place and look over my work. Supt. Connor and wife very kindly invited me to their home until I could find a place to suit me. It took almost a week to settle the question and it was late Saturday night before I had finished unpacking. There are plenty of places to board but the rooms are no larger than mite boxes and I hunted until I found a room large enough to live in with comparative comfort. Less than a week had passed when it became evident that I must move or educate my landlady or starve. I tried to teach her that I must have my meals on time, but supper continued to be a snatched up lunch anywhere from half past six to eight. Dinner was sometimes cooked, sometimes a similar lunch, when she was hurried. In less than two weeks I moved, which was a little work, considering that I had three hundred pounds of books beside my other traps. Now I have a nice cozy room at Mr. Harbaugh's and take my meals two doors away at Mrs. Hathaway's. Both families are very good to me and I have all I could ask in the way of board, though of course I miss my Dion home.¹⁰ I pay \$3 a week for meals and \$4 per month for a room. Fuel I will have to furnish, but everything else is given and Mrs. H. does the room work.

Now, relative to school work. We have enrolled ninety-seven pupils in the high school, which is about twenty-five more than there have been in preceding years.¹¹ The assembly room seats

only seventy, so the others have to be placed in a recitation room. I teach Latin and algebra and I enjoy my work ever so much. However, the work here will be hard because it has been done in a slipshod manner so long that the pupils do not know how to do good, thorough work.

Then, too, Mr. Warren, the former principal, could not govern and there was anarchy most of last year. During the last three months the discipline was put upon the assistant and he was given recitation room work. Of course, it is hard for these pupils to come under, but the most of them are submitting gracefully. . . .

When we are fairly well under way, my work will not be quite so hard as at North Bend, because there is a man at the head who not only does his own work but very materially assists me. The assistant is very pleasant, too, and she does all of her part.¹² Our buildings are much more pleasant and comfortable than at North Bend and we have an excellent janitor. I am very glad for the change, though, of course, being a stranger is not quite so pleasant as going back to friends. . . .

I am fortunate in having a friend of my childhood here, I find. Mrs. Cowgill was my teacher when I was about nine years old and now her daughter is one of my pupils. I have been invited there for dinner each Sunday since I came, and she comes to see me once a week. She keeps eight to ten boarders all the time and would gladly have taken me but she had no room and then her boarders are all gentlemen. She is so good, almost like a mother, and she wants me to come as freely as I would go home. Please tell me how it chances I am always so lucky. I am on the program for a paper in the Grammar School Section of the State Teachers' Association at Lincoln during the holidays. This will break into my vacation somewhat, but I am told we are to have two weeks this year. . . .

The same, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, December 2, 1900

Dear Rollin,

It comes to me that I had better answer your letter tonight as you contemplate a change of address this month. I think I am getting on quite well in my work for me. People say I am strict

Nebraska Junior State Normal School

Holdrege, June 13 to August 19, 1904

Program

Subject to minor change

	MR. REED	MR. SPARKS	MR. MERCER	MISS SMITH	MISS SCHLEE	MISS HENDERSON
8:00	Office	Arithmetic	Physiology	Book-keeping	Model School	
8:40	Reading	Arithmetic	Study Room	Botany	Model School	
9:20	Study Room	Physics		Grammar	Model School	
10:00	CHAPEL EXERCISES					
10:40	School Management		Geometry	History		
11:20		Algebra	History			
NOON INTERMISSION						
1:30	Office		Geography	Study Room		
2:00						
2:30	Pedagogy	Study Room	Geography	Study Room		
3:00		Civics	Agriculture	English		
3:30	CONFERENCE PERIOD					

CUPID CATCHES MANY THIS WEEK

Miss Sadie Smith Weds Rollin A. Trail of Nebraska City

A Number of Other Quist Marital Unions Have Been Consummated During the Past Week.

Mr. Rollin A. Trail of Nebraska City and Miss Sadie B. Smith of Holdrege, were married Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock at the home of Mrs. J. T. Lewis, foster mother of the bride, Dr. C. C. Wilson performing the ceremony. The ring service was used, making the marriage rite both solemn and impressive.

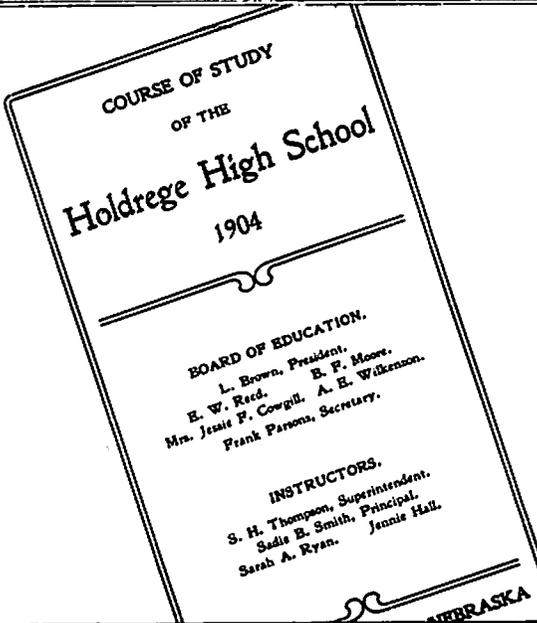
The room was decorated with lovely white carnations and smilax. The bride was beautifully gowned in white chiffon trimmed with embroidery. Both the bride and groom were unattended.

After the ceremony a delectable 8-course luncheon was served by Misses Huston, Johnson, Schwerty and Mrs. W. C. Hunt. Only the immediate friends and relatives of the bride and groom were present. Among the out of town guests were Mrs. Anna Reynolds and Miss Little Trail of Nebraska City, Mr. J. T. Thompson of Oxford, Mr. Percy Hall of Cambridge, Miss Rosalie Dron of North Bend, and Miss Tillie Munson of Axtell.

Mr. and Mrs. Trail left on No. 8 for Oxford where they took No. 6 for Omaha. A number of friends were at the depot to see the newly married couple off, and a great quantity of rice and many old shoes were thrown at them. Their trunks were also decorated with ancient sandals, white ribbons and placards.

The bride is well known to the people of Holdrege and vicinity, having held the position of principal of the Holdrege high school for five years, and by her efficient work and social qualities has made a host of friends.

The groom is a civil engineer and has been located in Virginia for the past few years. Mr. and Mrs. Trail are as yet undecided where they will make their future home.



Sadie B. Smith.

but a good teacher, especially in Latin. It pleases me to be called a moderate success even in that subject, for Supt. Stevens has always taught the Latin here, and whatever people had to say against him, they always ended with, "Well, he was a fine Latin teacher." His scholarship in that subject I have no doubt was excellent, but I have had quite a struggle, for the work was far from thorough. I have not been without my hills to climb, though, however much I may have disliked or enjoyed the exercise. The pupils have never showed the slightest disobedience or friction when reproved for misconduct. I have secured good order in this school easier than elsewhere. . . .

I am enjoying my work and my associations, but I nearly starve to death. I cannot get good board and I believe I never had such an appetite in all my life before. I am so hungry for every meal and almost as hungry when I leave the table. Miss Fraser¹³ and I have to eat all alone and we call ourselves Crusoe and Friday. She and I have such good times together. She has been rooming with me the last few days. I had a feast Thanksgiving Day at Mrs. Cowgill's, my former teacher whom I have already mentioned. Whenever I grow unbearably hungry I go down there. I am sure I should starve if it were not for her kindness. . . .

Ever the same, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, January 10, 1901

Dear Rollin,

I had a delightful time all [Christmas] vacation and now I have nearly finished a week's work. The Association was quite a success. There were more than 1,300 pedagogues enrolled; all seemed quite interested in the work. Dr. Hillis' lecture was just as good as one could readily master, and I wish you might have heard it. I think I have the *Journal* with extracts from it and I'll look it up and send it.¹⁴ I met Miss Clary and Miss Willie and took dinner with them at Mrs. Skinner's. It seemed like good old times to be there again.

I met Supt. E. B. Sherman [of Schuyler], and now, Rollin, you will excuse me if I boast a little, won't you? He said, "Miss Smith, I have been sadly in need of a principal since you left, and from what I hear, North Bend has, too. They are quite sick over the fact that they did not raise your salary and keep you.

You are fitted for principalship and you just hold on to it, for teachers who can hold it down are rare. We pay \$67.50 so if you want more wages and we have to get a new principal, I'll let you hear from me." How much is true, I cannot say, but I would appreciate an offer of that kind as a lever for a raise here next year. He is at Schuyler.

Mrs. Lewis [Sadie's foster mother] seems to hate to see me leave home worse every time I go back [to Western] until I fairly dread to go home at all. She says dreadful things about my leaving her alone, and yet what else can I do, since she will not come with me?

There has been good sleighing here for two days and I haven't had a sign of a ride. Our Secretary asked me to go tonight, but he is a married man and rather too much accustomed to taking other than his wife, so I did not care to risk comment by accepting. He thinks he is quite privileged to take any or all teachers driving, etc., so we fight shy of such characters. I am just within sight of such fun, as usual. . . .

Same, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, Feb. 24, 1901

Dear Rollin,

Did I understand you to say that I am not a roamer? I have just moved again, which makes about the third time this year. I have begun to consider the feasibility of procuring a tent and pitching it in the school yard. Lately it has come to me that a balloon would not be a bad venture, provided one did not find it necessary to experiment too much. . . . First, you remember, I boarded and roomed in the same house. After trying for two weeks to convince my landlady that I ought to have meals on time, I moved, finding a room on one corner of a block and board on the other. Several weeks afterward I moved from a northeast room to a southeast one, across the hall. Last week the people where I took my meals sold their property and decided to move to Boise City. Two days I walked about six blocks to Mrs. Cowgill's, then Mrs. Harbaugh, the lady where I room, took pity on Miss Fraser and me and took us both to board. Since I have been teaching in town, I have never found a place so hard to find suitable board as Holdrege. While I like the place and enjoy school more than any previous year, and I feel

in many ways that it would be wise for me to return next year, I am not at all sure that I shall do so. Most emphatically not if this year's experience is to be repeated. I think I will try to persuade Mrs. Lewis to keep house for me. . . .

No, I cannot go east next summer, as I must go to school. Did I not outline somewhat my design to go to school in Denver or Colorado Springs? If I do so, you had better let Ethel [Rollin's sister] come with me. As I shall spend not more than three hours per day in laboratory work, there would be considerable time left and I think I could show her an interesting bit of country and bring her in contact with a few people. I would very much enjoy having her with me, and I believe she would like it, too.

This is an elegant day for a drive, but that doesn't help me any. I use Mrs. Conner's horse whenever I choose after school or on Saturdays, but not on Sunday, for then Mr. Conner can go. Let me hear soon again, please.

As ever, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, May 17, 1901

Dear Rollin,

As it is scarcely more than two weeks, I must tell you of my summer plans, especially if Ethel should decide to go. I hope to leave Holdrege about June 5, as the school I attend in Denver begins June 10. I shall be in school five weeks. The rest of the time is not definitely settled. School closes May 31,¹⁵ and opens again September 1. I was reelected at the same salary and given one week in which to file acceptance. I asked for more time because I had out some applications from which I wished to hear. The board held conference and decided to offer me more salary if I would abandon all effort to leave. I have now accepted and will be here next year at \$65 [per month]. . . .

Good night, Sadie B. Smith

[Sadie, Sue Fraser, Ethel Trail, and Rosalie Dion of North Bend rented furnished rooms in Denver and did light housekeeping there while Sadie and Sue took classes for five weeks. Later in the summer Sadie visited her widowed foster mother, Mrs. Lewis, in Western and

persuaded her to move to Holdrege. For the next several years Mrs. Lewis cooked and kept house for Sadie and a number of other boarders—mostly local teachers.]

Western, Nebraska, July 26, 1901

Dear Rollin,

Western is the same slow place. Mamma and I will pack and move to Holdrege in about three weeks. Possibly the circumstance may induce the clouds to give us a downpour. I am looking forward to the new arrangement with a great deal of pleasure. I have boarded just about as long as I can and no one will appreciate a home more. Mama, too, declares that she can no longer stay alone. So I think it the best arrangement for us both.

Just, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, August 26, 1901

Dear Rollin,

We began packing last Monday and finished Wednesday morning. I came to Holdrege Wednesday afternoon and the goods came Thursday night. I found a new six-room house two blocks from town (business part) and the same distance from the school house. We have three rooms above and the same number below. All the rooms are large and nicely finished, those below in hard oil and above nicely painted. All are newly hard-plastered, and I think I shall enjoy the beautiful white walls. We have a good cellar and city water. House hunting is not quite so bad as getting board in this place, but it is hard enough. We have to pay \$12 and several were anxious to get a house at that. There are almost no rooms here not occupied. . . .

I am going to try to be fairly straightened before Mama comes Wednesday night. Don't these last two pages sound decidedly domestic? Several who do not understand the affair have asked if I am married, or where my husband is, etc. Perhaps my letters may be less sloppy and assume more of a domestic air from now on. You will think decidedly so when you listen to the woes of a fire builder this winter. New experiences bring new developments, so I should be a somewhat bigger woman when you see me again. . . .¹⁶

Goodnight, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, October 6, 1901

Dear Rollin,

Last Tuesday night we went to see *Quo Vadis* played by Carpenter and it was equal in every way to my ideal formed from reading the book. This is a good play town and seems to be about the only place on the B. and M. [Burlington and Missouri] that catches the troupes enroute from Omaha to Denver.¹⁷

The eighth grade teacher, Miss Gilchrist, formerly of North Bend, and Miss Warren, a primary teacher, board with Mrs. Lewis, besides me. So far we have fared sumptuously and agreed as well. We have added a cat to the household and so far no man has been permitted to cross the threshold (married men excepted, of course). . . .

Yes, it is nice to be a little more free at last, but it seems I have so little time to enjoy my home. There are one hundred five pupils in high school this year, in spite of the fact that the board raised the tuition in order to keep many country pupils out. It is not the number that is so bad, but we are so crowded with the assembly room full and thirty in a little recitation room. I hope it will grow enough so that they will be compelled to give us more room. There is no change in my work, except an extra English class. Most of the classes are large so we are compelled to hear them in two divisions. Our buildings were thoroughly cleaned this summer, papered, desks painted and varnished, and all wood work varnished new. It is so nice to have a clean place to work when most of our lives are spent in the school room.

Since my vacation, I have not caught up with my correspondence, so have not heard from Ethel. Truly, my time seems so occupied that I get an opportunity to write about once a week, a few hours on Sunday afternoon. . . . I must say Good Night and go to my dreams. What and when and from whence shall I hear from you next?

Yours sincerely, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, December 8, 1901

Dear Rollin,

We had a high school contest and I hunted pieces and drilled pupils until I began to think of equipping myself for a chair in

some oratorical college. Holdrege entertained the district teachers' association last week¹⁸ and the president informed me two weeks before the affair that I had been placed on the program. The primary teacher takes beginner's Latin of me in the evening and a young man who wishes to enter University in February so besought me to give him lessons in Vergil that I found no way to refuse. With a grammar class and another English added to my regularly heavy work in school this year. I found the extra work rather difficult to manage. But I am still alive and very well, though a little less chunky than I have sometimes been at this season of the year. Still, of course, I insist that I am fleshy.

Now I will confess that during these busy weeks there were a few hours on Sunday when I might have written you, but I was too lazy, Rollin. I slept them all away. But then if you don't think I am too old to mend my ways, I will try to do better next time. . . .

Only, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, January 19, 1902

Dear Rollin,

My plans for summer are rather vague; there are all sorts of schemes in my head. I wanted some institute work but did not succeed in obtaining it. There are plans afoot for a summer school here and if they pan out, I am to have a month's work here. I can hardly afford to idle away the entire vacation and thought to work rather than attend school this year. I don't just know how fate will play with me yet. As for hard work, I fear I shall not catch up before school closes. Much of my work comes from overcrowding of school and I had hoped they might thin out, but they stay remarkably well. Soon commencement must be planned for, with the regular work. Then, too, Monday I must take up a new subject to teach, bookkeeping. I work pretty hard here at home, too, and I am a little too close to the building to get needed exercise. Notwithstanding this, I rather think this is the most successful year in school in some respects I have ever had. . . .

Since I came back [from spending Christmas vacation at Rollin's home] Mama has been sick and numerous duties have kept me so closely occupied that I am ashamed to say I have not

yet written Ethel. In fact, I have not yet acknowledged all my Christmas presents. I am trying to catch up, but I start the week with all the second-quarter examination papers before me. They ought to have been done yesterday, but there were callers all afternoon. After this week, I shall have more leisure, I feel sure. The young man who takes private lessons in Vergil will finish and leave for the University about the 28th. He has done well, I think. He aims to complete Book III. I gave him an examination on Book II Friday. . . . Please consider in quantity what this lacks in quality. May I hear from you soon and that you are coming ere the year is very old?

Same, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, March 30, 1902

Dear Rollin,

How I wish you might come in this evening and every week, as you wish. I assure you company is a welcome change for busy people, so there would be little danger of being a bore. . . . Yes, I rather feel that the question of a vacation that rests me is not a debatable one. The fact is, I am reluctantly reaching a very disagreeable conclusion in regard to the matter. At no very distant date, at any rate within the next decade, it will be necessary for me to stop teaching for a time to gather my forces for a new attack upon the young idea. There is no cause for worry on my part, and I do not do so at all, only I must plan at least for a change of work after next year. My work has steadily grown heavier and with its increase I become lazier. My hands and arms grow numb, as do also my feet. I thought it lack of exercise, but asked the doctor for something to tone me up. He says there is nothing serious, only poor circulation and overwork. He seems to be helping me, so I feel pretty well and am confident I shall reach July 4 fatter than ever before. So I am resolved to play just as hard as I can during my six weeks vacation. Then I rather think I will try to plan to enter school, rather than to teach next year. . . .

Election of teachers has not come yet. A large number will leave next year. Miss Gilchrist wishes to be nearer home; Miss Fraser is to go out of the profession, and Miss Nelson, larger salary, etc. . . .¹⁹

Same, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, April 30, 1902

Dear Rollin,

When you read this I am afraid you will never believe me again. When I went to bed Sunday night, I *was* just as well as I wrote you. Monday morning brought me quite a different state of affairs. However, I went to school and dragged through the day. At noon I saw the doctor. After supper, Mrs. Lewis called him and he has been here twice a day since. It is only a *mild* attack of appendicitis. I do not suffer much now, and I wanted to go to school tomorrow, but in some way that doctor of mine is the hardest man to please I ever saw. I've been just as good as pie, taken all his old medicine, and eat just as he dictates, *only* a glass of milk every two or three hours, and now he says I can not get up this week. He won't even let them take me up to make the bed. Not that I am at all dangerous, only if the least mistake is made and I have another spell, it will be both dangerous and expensive. He threatens me by saying I could not go back to school this year. I've coaxed and coaxed, but it doesn't do any good, so I have to mind. It is not pleasant to have all those commencement orations staring me in the face. I'll make things talk when I do get up.

Very same, Sadie B. Smith

P. S. Please excuse pencil. The doctor says the trouble is caused by my rundown condition. Remember me to the folks when you write.

Holdrege, May 5, 1902

Dear Rollin,

Yes, I am better. I was allowed to leave the bed for the first time last evening. I wanted to go to school this morning, the doctor said I could, but the superintendent called yesterday after I was up and he said the doctor did not know anything about it, that I am not to come back until I am a little stronger. He did say I could go this afternoon if I was pretty well. Now it is raining and I expect he will send orders to stay at home until tomorrow. You see I have so many bosses I could not go astray Now I am up and I am not half so smart as I thought I would be. Of course, I understand that a relapse means Omaha and the hospital, so I am careful. I did not rest very well last



West Ward School (left), Holdrege, used for elementary and high school instruction until the completion of the adjacent high school in 1906. Courtesy of Phelps County Historical Society. . .(Below) Fourth Street, Holdrege, about 1909.



night, but that is natural. I am sure I will feel better than ever in just a day or so.

It is only three weeks now until school closes, so I have to get well. I have corrected most of the orations in bed.²⁰ There is so much I wanted to get done so I would not be rushed at the close. Everyone is so good to me I am thoroughly spoiled. The children have kept me supplied with carnations and while they are anxious to have me back, they keep saying they would rather have me wait than to be out again. I have good help, too. Miss Nelson has taken charge and gets along well. . . .

This letter is rather detached and scrappy. I have taken time enough but a part of it has been written sitting up and a part while I have been lying down to rest. Just bring over some violets and strawberries. Excuse the scrawl. I'll do better next time.

Very same, Sadie B. Smith

[Sadie experienced several more appendicitis attacks during the late spring and early summer of 1902. Finally in August she arranged to borrow \$90 from Rollin for an operation to remove her appendix at St. Joseph's Hospital, Omaha. She returned to Holdrege shortly afterward, hoping to be well enough to teach in September.]

Holdrege, September 1, 1902

Dear Rollin,

I will scribble you a little scrawl tonight because I know you are wondering if I am here and how I stood the trip [from Omaha to Holdrege]. I feel quite well tonight, considering that I made a journey, lost half a night's rest, and entertained callers most of the day. I can feel myself grow stronger every day. I am very anxious for my back to get stronger, for I am very much stooped, and should not like to acquire a bad habit. . . .

I have a substitute [Lillie Anderson] and can keep her for two weeks, if it is necessary.²¹ She is a University girl and will start to school after two weeks. I think I shall not go to work before the first of next week, anyway, as both doctors and nurses cautioned me again and again to be careful. They say I will be well and strong shortly if I can only keep out until I am able. I am pretty anxious to go back now I am here where the children

come to see me. Dr. Jonas and Mr. Conner, it seems, had a private correspondence about me and Dr. J. did not tell me until they had it all arranged that I was not to go to work. So you can surely know I am safe, when medical men and professors combine to thwart my ambitious intentions. My poor assistant is getting experience, though. If you will be patient, you shall have a letter written with ink some day and with no word of ailment or complaint in it. Good night, for it is far past the curfew.

Sadie

Tuesday, September 16, 1902

Dear Rollin,

My substitute worked until last Friday. We had school only until the [circus] parade so I did the work on that day. Since then I work whole days. Miss Anderson goes to University Thursday. Last night I went over to see what her bill is. She surprised me by the smallness of her charge. Ten dollars is all she consents to take. I did so much for her brother Frank that she really prefers to take less pay, but I insisted that she ask so much. She is a very sweet young lady and has done the work very well. I'll remember her and help her to a school when she gets ready. So the bread we cast upon the water returns. Work has piled up on me, though, so I must buckle in to begin to see over. I have not even made out my roll, and almost three weeks have passed.

Miss Ritchie, eighth grade teacher, takes meals here [at Mrs. Lewis' boarding house]. Miss Warren and Miss Palmer board and room here. Miss Youngquist takes dinner here but intends to board and room all the while a little later.²² Mrs. Lewis has done all the work so far. She sends washing and ironing out. We are kind of a noisy, jolly crowd. . . . I have to crowd to find space for name and date, so I must say,

Good night, Sadie

Holdrege, October 5, 1902

Dear Rollin,

Work? Yes, it seems to me more than ever. One hundred five now crowded into two small rooms. Each evening I have to spend more than an hour tutoring the three new pupils so that they can catch up in Latin. I hope to finish that extra this week;

then I am safe, I think, for no more can enter; every seat is full and no space left to put in extra seats. I told Mr. Conner the other night that I count this my last year in the Holdrege High School in its present crowded condition at \$65 per month. The work is entirely too heavy for three teachers and we have no room to make use of a fourth teacher. Our school is large, energetic, and enthusiastic, and in many ways it's pleasant to work with them. But one cannot afford to keep it up too long.

Just as soon as the roads are good, I mean to try my wheel for a short spin. Exercise outside helps me more than anything. We talk of a basketball team among the teachers and high school girls. I am quite anxious that it should pan out for I think I can play by the time it is organized.

Vale, mi amice, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, October 26, 1902

Dear Rollin,

I went to school several days on my wheel and I did enjoy it. It rests me to ride when I must stand all day. Unfortunately, one day I met Dr. Miller and he said, "Are you riding that wheel? That is hazardous for more than a month yet. I suppose they never dreamed of your doing such a thing or they would have cautioned you at the hospital." . . . When I get my liberty again I will be sure to appreciate it. Basketball is in full swing, too, and they say I can't play until after January 1; then it will be too cold. The doctor would have me take outdoor exercise too, but the trouble is he wants me to walk, something I am too weary to do after I have taught all day. Then he says, "Come home and lie down half an hour; then go." Pshaw! It is not on an average one night a week I can leave the school house half an hour before suppertime. Anyway, I am getting well and strong and I will do just what I like before this school year closes. Yes, I am taller than you are now? So well can I straighten up, that is, if you are feeling the weight of years.

This week comes the first quarterly examination and I feel quite like being an invalid again when I think of the stacks of papers and reports. Then, to round up the failures and drop them back so they must work in other subjects. You, too, have your trials, those [engineering] estimations; every profession has its dishwashing.

Just the same, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, January 5, 1903

Dear Rollin,

My first letter this year! May the new year be a happy and prosperous one for you. I was sorry you could not get home for Christmas, for I know how disappointed the folks were, especially Ethel. Tell her, please, that I was hurried when I sent that card. She must not feel that I did not appreciate both the letter and the invitation to visit her at Christmas time. If my vacation would but lengthen somewhat, I could get around. How can I fail to disappoint someone when so many think I should come? Four urgent invitations to spend the vacation made the choice somewhat difficult this year. . . .

Last week I spent in Lincoln [at State Teachers Association meetings] intending to return to Holdrege Saturday night, but I came in Saturday morning in order to get some sleep. Each night I was up until one o'clock. It goes without saying I was having a fine time. Lectures, receptions, plays, etc. I was invited to Supt. Fowler's for dinner New Year's, but could not go because of previous engagements. The *Taming of the Shrew* was fine; you would have enjoyed it. I would have liked to have seen *Much Ado About Nothing* Saturday night but as before said, was too sleepy. All my friends say I never looked better in my life and I believe it. I did not hunt summer school work for next vacation, though, let me state. Sometimes I think I was never before so tired of hard work. . . .²³ Please give my love to the girls [Rollin's sisters] and ask John [Rollin's brother] how his sleigh runs. Tell him we have plenty of snow here.

Just, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, April 26, 1903

Dear Rollin,

I have just wakened from a daydream which occupied the entire afternoon. And this is what it is all about. Today brought word that I was elected principal of the Brookings High School last Thursday evening. It is a county seat in one of the extreme eastern counties of South Dakota [Brookings County]. The salary offered is not sufficiently large to tempt me, \$70, so that is not the question. I have been hunting information about the place to ascertain if even a larger salary would pay.

The board here have had an informal election to be ratified at

their official meeting the first week in May. They raised salaries all the way through, so mine will be \$70 here next year. It may be possible to get \$75 at Brookings, but I rather think it is not worthwhile. Mr. Conner thinks it unwise for me to leave the state because of my acquaintance, unless there were more of an inducement. Then the course has the disadvantage of being one year behind ours. As it is a college town, no Latin at all is taught. A letter from Norfolk sounds rather encouraging, so I think I shall file an application this week. But I rather think I shall work in Holdrege next year for \$70. There are very many points to consider in leaving. . . .

Do not fear I shall hurt myself with work. I am nearly through orations and Mama and I have cleaned house these last two Saturdays and I am able to write so much after beating carpets. Please write soon.

Just, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, May 17, 1903

Dear Rollin,

'Tis Baccalaureate Sunday and I took my family to the opera house to church this morning, but have decided to spend the evening with you rather than go this evening. The wind blows so hard and I have one of the hardest weeks of the year before me. If you don't object to a chat with a weary one, I will devote my energy to converse with you. By the time this reaches you I shall almost have earned a vacation. School closes May 22; commencement comes next Thursday night. . . .²⁴

By the way, I am to come back here at \$70 next year. Lexington and Norfolk both asked for applications, but as yet I have heard nothing and I had to contract yesterday. Little Warren takes second primary at Alliance next year at \$50 per month. I am in hopes there may be a chance for Annie, but one can never quite count on what a school board may do.²⁵

I do not know when I shall leave for home, but I doubt not I shall hear from you again before I change my address. I know, Rollin, that you deserve a better letter than this, and you shall have it, I trust, next time.

Sadie B.

[Sadie spent the summer of 1903 with her father Oren S. Smith near Codell, Kansas. That fall she returned to Holdrege to teach, again boarding with her foster mother, Mrs. Lewis.]

Holdrege, September 20, 1903

Dear Rollin,

I must answer your inquiries about those teachers lest I forget. Miss Sweeney and Miss Ryan and myself board here regularly. Miss Henderson takes meals here for the present and Miss Youngquist comes for dinner on school days. Besides these, a high school girl stays here and partly pays, partly works her board. We are a pretty nice crowd, as you would find if you would visit us often enough. But we are school teachers, and hence genuine "Old Maids," not because of our dress or age, but simply because of occupation. People here exclude us from most social organizations because our hours are not such that we can be included. There is quite a movement to have a Woman's Club here to meet on Saturday afternoons. If it pans out, we will have an opportunity to become acquainted with people on other grounds than that which belongs to our profession. If the movement does not culminate in a club, we shall organize a small circle of our own for culture studies. We think seriously of reading Emerson or some of Shakespeare's plays.

I have 105 pupils enrolled so far and they are bright and anxious to learn. All things point to a very successful year's work. There are some annoyances, as always, but I am much better able to cope with heavy work in much overcrowded rooms than ever before since I have been in Holdrege. . . I wish you were here to hear my plans, for I have so far become myself again that I plan again.

Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, November 29, 1903

Dear Rollin,

Are you looking for a letter along with your Thanksgiving turkey? Mama says to invite you here for dinner and say that we are to have turkey, potatoes, celery, cranberry sauce, and mince pie. Now wouldn't you like to spend your holiday with the schoolmarms? . . .

In some respects this is a very hard year for me in school and I am sincerely grateful that I have a somewhat larger supply of strength than usual. To you I may talk freely and say what in Holdrege I dare not even think, for it would be decidedly unprofessional. Miss Henderson hates school and everything connected with it. To her there is not the slightest pleasure in it, only unending slavery. She loves music and even has several pupils in voice culture. But a \$500 debt hangs over her head and she feels compelled to endure the hardship of teaching. Of course, I understand how very hard it is for her with such a spirit to enter the school room. She bears none of her trouble alone, nor does she even make a heroic struggle to do so. Her face looks wan and pinched and I have sometimes found her at her desk in tears after the children have gone. My sympathy for her perhaps would not use up my reserve power so much were it not for the fact that those youngsters are perverse enough to dislike her and to manifest the spirit of ill will. While I can find no fault in their attitude toward me, I am sensible of the friction that exists. Miss H. is certainly a talented girl and a fine teacher, but somehow she antagonizes pupils. I like her so much I cannot understand those children's attitude. It is a trouble I am powerless to help and for that very reason it annoys me. This is a problem no educator so far has solved. How can one teacher, principal or superintendent make pupils obey some other teacher? The actions of pupils can always be controlled, but you cannot control their spirits. But this can have little interest for you and I should not bother you with my difficulties. . . .

Ever the same, Sadie B. Smith

Lincoln, December 29, 1903

Dear Rollin,

I had intended to stay in Holdrege until today to finish a number of little leftovers that had been accumulating many weeks, for the [Christmas] vacation. But I received a very urgent letter from Jennie Hall²⁶ saying I was to spend Christmas in Lincoln with not a chance even to decline. So I came last Thursday and have been enjoying every minute of the time.

Now I may tell you a few of the plans I have in mind, mind only, and I doubt not something will tip them over before they are realized. State Superintendent Fowler offered me work in

the Holdrege Junior Normal June 13 to August 19, inclusive, at \$200 for the term. I have accepted and will keep the contract, provided my present abundant supply of good health does not desert. There will be three weeks of vacation before the term begins, and some days after it. If I go in not feeling strong, I'll take your scolding good naturedly.

I have written the Chancellor and will see him Saturday with regard to entering the State University next year. I wish to enter in such a way that I can finish in two years and have perhaps one class to teach enroute. Unless I can do so, I rather think I will teach another year. Perhaps I shall see what I can do at Wesleyan if I can not get credit sufficient to enter the State University, for I am rather set upon a change of work next year. There is little doubt I shall write more coherently when some of these many plans have matured. This afternoon I must go to the State Superintendent's office to find what my work for next summer is to be. As this is my last letter this year, let me wish you a most happy and prosperous New Year. Shall I hear from you soon?

Same, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, February 21, 1904

Dear Rollin,

Today I have nothing in the world to do but write letters. Are you surprised that I should make such a statement? February 15 we were closed down because diphtheria is making its rounds in Holdrege.²⁷ We hoped we could begin tomorrow, but Friday the City Board of Health closed the Business College, the churches, and all public gatherings, so we are closed until February 29, anyway. If conditions improve, we will open at that time; otherwise, it may be some time. So far but two deaths have occurred. Two weeks' vacation now is jolly, only we are on half pay and the time to accomplish our work is shortened by so much. I am making the most of my holiday and have turned from the schoolmarm into a seamstress. Last week I made a dress, an apron, and got a shirt waist well on the way. Besides, I took two painting lessons and used one day in cleaning up the house. . . .

Unless my plans fail, I shall be a student next year, and I am looking forward to the change. Not that I have fallen out with my trade, but I always enjoyed a student life. You think I can

stop teaching when I have my degree? Have you considered that my purse will be empty and that a return to the ranks will be my only means of replenishing it? I am not going to school to learn a different occupation, only to increase my efficiency in the one I am in. Are you, like Father, averse to my occupation? He always wanted me to do work on books in a bank, but I was not ambitious in any clerical line. If I had not been a teacher, I am sure I would have preferred to do housework. I like it and it agrees with me and I see no disgrace in the occupation, only it doesn't pay enough salary. . . . Well, Rollin, I realize that this is a long tiresome letter, but this is a long lonesome day, every church closed, and I guess you will bear the punishment this once. . . . Next time I'll try to give you less of school, for I am sure it is uninteresting except to other teachers. Will you write soon?

Sincerely, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, May 8, 1904

Dear Rollin,

For the past three weeks I have been doing so much extra work for commencement that I begin to feel just a wee bit weary, though I am perfectly well. This year we are to give a Shakespearean entertainment instead of the regular orations. I had the orations written, but they will not be delivered. I hope it will be no disappointment to the people. We are renting costumes from Omaha. The last part of the program is a burlesque in one act. Three of the girls have to take boys' parts, which makes drilling doubly hard. Poor Miss Henderson puts in more hours than I do and looks so worn out. Mr. Connor is not very well and Mrs. Conner just came back from Omaha last week, where she had been for another operation. Commencement comes May 19 and school closes May 20. Then I'll have *nothing* to do until June 13. Don't you envy me? . . .²⁸

Strange as it may appear to you, I have been trying for a position in the Nebraska City High School, but I have no hopes of getting it now. Mr. Sinclair is very favorable, but a Miss Livingston from the Lexington High School has a fine chance for it, because her home is in the City. Besides, they wish to cut the salary of a \$75 position to \$70 for the first year. I will not accept a cut, because I do not feel I am an experiment after eight years

of such work. Miss Tynon, one of the ward principals, is also an applicant. Election takes place tomorrow night and I will accept in Holdrege on Tuesday. I am quite sure it is best to teach next year, though I must confess to you I am doing so decidedly against my inclination and I sometimes doubt if I am wise in doing so. Did I tell you I resigned in Holdrege and the Board refused to accept my resignation, but raised the salary to \$75 instead? The only point in the Nebraska City position I consider an advantage is that it is lighter work because it is not the principalship. Then, too, there might be a better opportunity to work up. I'll be content and happy one more year here and then I will stop teaching at least for a time. I want to change and I really think I shall need it then. . . .

Only the same, Sadie B. Smith

Holdrege, July 6, 1904

Dear Rollin,

How did I spend my vacation? One week closing records, handling books, and putting things in shape after the year's work. The next, cleaning house. Beating carpets, painting, etc. The last I spent in preparing lessons for summer school and interviewing the new superintendent, who stopped on his way to teach in an institute to look over the field. . . . I am really enjoying my work and it is very easy because I have mostly small classes. It's easier than regular work and better pay. I am afraid I am not exerting myself enough. The weather has been delightfully cool so far. We Normal people went five miles in the country to a picnic July 4, in hayracks. We took dinner and supper and spent the day in races, games, a program, and a good time generally. Miss Schlee, the primary instructor, and two young men are boarding here now. A very pleasant family we have, too. . . .

I am sure this has been the busiest year of my life. I am hoping the next will be less full of work, for they are thinking of adding another year to the course and another teacher to the high school faculty. Sometimes I have felt I did the unwise thing to stay, but I am beginning to feel differently now. I am looking forward to a year's rest soon.

Truly yours, Sadie B. Smith

Wedding picture of Rollin and Sadie Smith Trail, March, 1906.



Kearney, August 20, 1904

Dear Rollin,

My work was finished last night and I am now on my way to North Platte to visit Mrs. Lucas²⁹ and take a ten days' rest. I would perhaps have preferred remaining in Holdrege, as the vacation is so short, but wisdom forbade it. There it is easy for school work to knock at my room door, so I am running away where it can't find me. Mrs. Lucas has promised that I am to have my own sweet will and can eat as much and sleep as long as I choose. So the prospect is alluring and I have tarried not but have taken the very first train. I have enjoyed the work very much, but I have been so lazy in doing it. I am sure no more Junior Normals will open their doors to me in the future. I am just tired enough now not to care, but I've no doubt I'll be sorry for it in the future.

I've so much good *shop* news to tell you that I scarce know where to begin. By the way, my residence in Holdrege while the Board was trying to transact Board business without a superintendent caused my otherwise idle moments to become fully occupied. Already I have begun to feel the added work of being the *oldest* member of the high school faculty. But when once we are in fair running order, I think my work will be lighter. They have added another year to the course and employed another teacher in the high school. Much elective work has been put in, so we carry now two courses.

Now the nice feature is that they have hired Jennie Hall for first assistant principal. I am very glad for personal reasons and fully as much so for professional ones. For the first time since I have been in Holdrege I am to have experienced help, that is a

ready-made high school teacher. Can you hear me cheer? Mr. Thompson³⁰ is, I feel sure, to be a very agreeable man to work with, despite my prejudice against his state of single blessedness. My father and family have promised to visit me the first of September. So you see I have more pleasure ahead than the ten-day rest. I shall return to Holdrege August 31, 1904.

Yours truly, Sadie B. Smith

Sadie taught her last term at Holdrege in 1904-1905. She refused a contract for the following year, since she and Rollin had planned to be married in September of 1905. Unexpected difficulties with Rollin's railroad job in Virginia and his subsequent bout with typhoid fever delayed the marriage until March 7, 1906.

After a wedding trip to Omaha and visits in Kansas with relatives, Rollin and Sadie moved to Montana where Rollin had been assigned by the Great Northern Railroad to construct a tunnel on its branch line between Billings and Great Falls. They had three children: Rosalie, born in a construction camp 60 miles from Billings on the Great Northern line between Billings and Great Falls, Montana; Doane, born in an apple-picker's shack at Sunnyside, Washington; and Rollin A. Trail, Jr., born in Omak, Washington.

Because a severe illness required Sadie's hospitalization in Lincoln for a number of months, the family returned from the state of Washington to Otoe County, Nebraska, and moved on to a farm near Rollin's father, where they lived until Rollin's death on December 15, 1916. As a widow, Sadie returned to teaching to support her children and her foster mother, Mrs. Jane Ann Lewis. She was principal of the high school at Waco, 1917-1919; superintendent of schools at Carleton, 1919-1920; and high school principal at Castana, Iowa, 1920-1922. Then she moved her family to Lincoln with its accredited high school, learned to drive a Model T Ford, and drove out to teach at Malcolm, 1922-1923. After that for several years she was a substitute teacher in the Lincoln schools. She died in Lincoln after a long illness on May 24, 1942.

NOTES

Source material used in preparation of this article is found in the Sadie B. Smith Archives Collection, MS 3738, Nebraska State Historical Society.

1. An obituary which appeared in the March 12, 1875, *Muscatine [Iowa] Journal* gives Sarah's age at the time of death as 25 years and 2 days. Her parents, Gustavus and Love S. Matthews Thompson were former residents of Muscatine.

2. Crete Academy (also called Doane Academy) was established in 1871 at Crete. After Doane College was founded in 1872, the academy prepared students for entrance to Doane. Thomas Doane Perry, *History of Doane College* (Crete, 1957), 117-120.

3. Teachers' institutes, generally held on a county-wide basis under the oversight of the county superintendent, provided inspiration and instruction for local teachers. In the days before most educators had the advantage of college training, the institutes were an important means of improving the quality of common school instruction.

4. Hester was the third wife of Sadie's father, Oren. Following the 1875 death of Sarah, his first wife, Oren had married Elizabeth Queer. According to the April 30, 1885, *Western Wave*, Elizabeth died at 16 from "an attack of lung fever."

5. A third-grade certificate entitled the certificate holder to teach the least advanced schools. A second- or first-grade certificate, secured by passing more difficult examinations, entitled the bearer to teach in larger, better schools.

6. Rollin congratulated Sadie in a June 15, 1892, letter: "It takes a good teacher to draw \$45 per month in Nebraska. You must get on the good side of your superintendent and [then] maybe you will have a real good place offered you in the fall."

7. Sadie's good-natured acceptance of the situation is reflected in a December 13, 1900, letter to Rollin: "I realize that you have neither time nor opportunity to sit down and compose a very fine epistle often. . . . I am content for you to let me do most of the talking."

8. Sadie was earning at North Bend \$495 per year, paid in nine monthly installments of \$55.

9. Alice C. Gilchrist, a lifelong friend of Sadie, had taught with her at North Bend.

10. Sadie boarded at the Jerry Dion home during much of her teaching career in North Bend.

11. The number had decreased to 77 by the following April. *Holdrege Citizen*, April 12, 1901.

12. E. Florence Nelson served as assistant principal for the 1900-1901 term. *Ibid.*

13. Sue Fraser, daughter of one of Sadie's North Bend landladies, had formerly taught at North Bend with Sadie. She served in Holdrege as 6th grade teacher (*Holdrege Citizen*, April 12, 1901) and principal of the Holdrege east ward school (*Holdrege Citizen*, May 23, 1902).

14. *Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln), December 28, 1900.

15. The May 31, 1901, *Holdrege Citizen* includes a report of "the graduating exercises."

16. Correspondence between Rollin and Sadie indicates that each was trying to gain weight.

17. The October 4, 1901, *Holdrege Citizen* complemented the "large audience that greeted Carpenter's 'Quo Vadis' company" and remarked, "The patronage showed that the people are willing to patronize that class of plays."

18. The Southwestern Teachers Association was hosted by the Holdrege schools in December of 1901. *Holdrege Citizen*, December 6, 1901.

19. The May 23, 1902, *Holdrege Citizen* reported that a number of Holdrege teachers would leave at the end of the term: "Miss Alice Gilchrist, the eighth grade teacher for the past year, severs her connection with our schools and plans to remain at her home in Omaha for a time and rest. . . . Miss Florence Nelson, who has been assistant principal of our high school, has accepted a similar position at Valentic. . . . Miss Sue Fraser

...contemplates remaining at her home in Kearney the coming year and taking a needed rest."

20. The May 23, 1902, *Holdrege Citizen*, which reported the commencement proceedings, praised the "thoughtful orations" delivered by the Holdrege senior class of 1902. "The only fault to be found was that some of them spoke so low that they could not be heard distinctly by those who were back."

21. The September 5, 1902, *Holdrege Citizen* took special note of Sadie's absence from school: "Owing to poor health Miss Sadie Smith was unable to be here at the beginning of the month. . . . Miss Lillie Anderson has most satisfactorily taken charge of Miss Smith's Latin classes while Superintendent Conner and Miss Henderson have looked after her other work."

22. Misses Warren, Palmer, and Youngquist were all Holdrege teachers.

23. The January 2, 1902, *Nebraska State Journal* (Lincoln), reported activities connected with the State Teachers Association meetings in Lincoln, as well as notices of the Shakespearean plays *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, starring Charles B. Hanford and performed at the Oliver Theater in Lincoln.

24. Those attending Holdrege commencement ceremonies in 1904 were treated to a number of musical presentations, "class yells and responses," and "eighteen thoughtful orations" [*Holdrege Citizen*, May 22, 1903].

25. Miss Warren, nicknamed "Little" Warren, was a Holdrege teacher who boarded with Mrs. Lewis during the 1902-1903 school term. Annie Trail, Rollin's sister, had applied for a teaching job at Holdrege.

26. Jennie Hall was Sadie's schoolmate in Western and Crete and Rollin's classmate at the University of Nebraska, from which she was graduated in 1897. She taught at the Blair high school before coming to Holdrege as assistant principal in the fall of 1904.

27. The February 19, 1904, *Holdrege Citizen* reported four local cases of diphtheria. "All the cases have been promptly quarantined and the authorities are taking every precaution to avoid a spread of the disease."

28. Each member of the Holdrege graduating class of 1904 was assigned a character from Shakespeare to portray in one of two presentations, "The Shades of Shakespeare's Women," and "A Shakespearean Conference" [*Holdrege Citizen*, May 20, 1904].

29. Sadie refers to former Holdrege teacher Sue Fraser (footnotes 13, 19) who had married a Dr. Lucas of North Platte.

30. S. E. Thompson served as superintendent of schools in Holdrege, 1904-1905.