March of Marches. Four Marches in Griggs County History.

It seems that March of 2013 has turned out to be a snowy extension of winter especially compared to the pleasant spring weather of March 2012. However our county’s high school basketball teams were an outstanding bright spot of March 2013. That got me wondering what other Marches were like in our county’s history. Let’s look back -- jumping by 25-year intervals -- at what the Griggs County newspapers were reporting in March.

One hundred years ago, March 1913. The Binford Times editor, Carl Peterson notes the merger of the two Cooperstown newspapers, the Sentinel and the Courier. Peterson praises the Courier editor, Percy Trubshaw, as a pioneer of the county having arrived in the county 27 years prior to 1913 He claims that the Courier is the best weekly newspaper in the state and is an “untiring champion for the upbuilding of Cooperstown and Griggs County.” He continues saying that the Courier has “done inestimable service toward advancing the moral condition of this community.” There are hints of spring in the clothing advertisements in the Courier but the editor in the March 13, 1913 warns of the “hard days of winter lie ahead.”

Seventy-five years ago, March 1938. The March 6 newspaper reports that the high school basketball team advances to the semi finals in the district tournament. It seems that grasshoppers are a major concern even in March and these pesky insects are a topic of a town meeting. The March 24 newspaper reports of the passing away of R. C. Cooper, Cooperstown’s founder, in St. Petersburg, Florida. The paper reports that farmers are preparing for their “annual gamble” planting and for fighting grasshoppers.

Fifty years ago, March 1963. The major head line of March 14th is that the Cooperstown basketball team is going the Class B state tournament in Minot after placing second in the regionals. In order to attend the state tournament many organizations are postponing their meeting until the following weeks. The 4H club in Griggs County is very active and the newspaper publishes many ads from local businesses honoring the county’s 4H clubs. The newspaper of March 14 also announces the preparation being made for housing the temporary workers arriving in the county to begin construction of the Minuteman missile installations. In addition the newspaper reports of plans being made for a new grain elevator in Sutton.

Twenty-five years ago, March 1988. School activities dominate in the headlines with pictures of the Binford, Hannaford and Cooper spelling bee winners, and the several winners of the science fairs held in county towns. A blizzard of the first March week closed the county schools. Duna Frigaard in her weekly column discusses the typical March events such as the Winter Show in Valley City and basket ball championships. She reflects on when the first meadowlarks will sing and when people will spot the first robin. The March 25 edition announces a “Civil War of Basket Ball” where the North plays against the South of Cooperstown as divided by Main Street. The event planners want to have ‘old timer’, ladies and mixed teams. This event is to raise funds for the high school’s teams to go to basket ball camp.

Marching through the Griggs County Marches reveal many common themes through the years, mainly basket ball and thawing but variable weather for the month!