



1411

Recalls Day Rockne Died

(Continued From Page 1A.)

anything like Pat O'Brien, the actor who played the coach in the movie, "Knut Rockne—All American," smiled back at Lyle and said, "Sure, son, my boys are eating too much anyway, and we can all stand a breath of cold air."

Experienced the Man

"Then, Lyle said, "he roused them all out of there and I got my pictures, and I thought to myself that he was a fine man to take time to help an inexperienced and frozen kid like me."

Rockne and Notre Dame had gained another fan. Lyle was like a lot of others—nuns, truck drivers, scientists—who became Notre Dame fans just because of Rockne, the quality of his players, and the caliber of their play.

March 21, 1931, Lyle came into the Eagle office early. The teletype had a brief story about Rockne leaving Kansas City on a Transcontinental & Western Air, Inc., plane for Wichita.

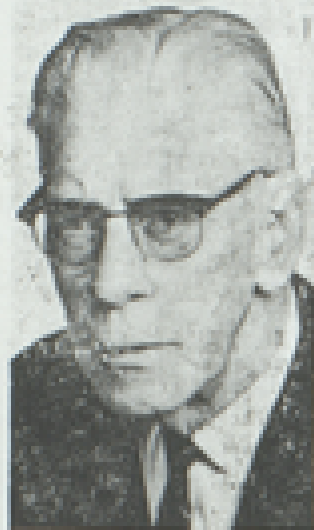
From there, passengers would take a Pullman sleeper to Albuquerque, N. M., for the final leg of the flight to Los Angeles. Rockne had a speaking engagement there.

"Then, the bulletin bell on the machine starting ringing and there was a story about a plane going down in Chase County, Kansas," Lyle said, "and, of course, we all thought

Chartered a Plane

Bill Cunningham, the paper's sports editor, and Lyle went to the airport and chartered a plane. Taking off right behind them was a plane chartered by the Wichita Beacon, then a rival newspaper.

"We couldn't find the wreck, once we got up in Chase County," said Lyle. "But finally we saw the ground and there was a cowboy on a horse waving a



Harold V. Lyle

rod bandana toward the southeast and we followed his sign. In a couple of minutes, we saw the plane.

"I knew then, by the size of the airplane, it was the Transcontinental and Western. I knew Rockne was dead. I took the aerial photographs then. I hated to. But it was my job."

The plane Lyle was in landed, almost crashed into a gully, finally turned, and stopped.

Lyle took more pictures and looked at the wreckage. The right wing was about a half a mile away. It was only slightly damaged.

Icing on Wings

Pilots at the scene and company officials later agreed the probable cause of the crash was heavy icing on the wings which made the pilot fly lower. When he realized he was too close to the ground, he wrenched the ship back, snapping off the wooden wing.

Rockne, 43 years old, and seven others, Spencer Goldswaiter, Waide R. Miller, H. J. Christen, John Happer, C. A. Rotrecht, Herman J.

Mathias, and the pilot, Robert Fry, were dead. The plane had gone straight into the ground. Fry was not related to Jack Fry, the T. W. A. executive.

By midafternoon, it was colder, 23 degrees. More planes had arrived. Hundreds of other persons had either driven across the muddy fields in their high-axled black cars, walked, or ridden horseback.

The wreckage of the plane was stripped, Lyle remembered, by some of those who came. But that was just an incident.

What was incised into Lyle's memory, were the contrasts—the Flint Hills, old as time; the riders on horseback, only a few years from days when "il

men rode; a helmeted aviator talking to a booted cowboy, and, of course, the old black cars and the airplanes, all gathered on a field where a man named Rockne, who teamed with Gus Dorais in 1913 to help perfect the forward pass, had died.

"Every time I see Union or Star or Dawson pass, or see an airplane, even the new jets, or come back to the hills, I think of that day," Lyle said.

"I don't know what it all means, but I just think back to that miserable day."

Lyle is the father of Wes Lyle, a member of The Star's photographic staff.

TOTEM POLES IN PARK

University Students Carving Display in Tokyo

Nikko, Japan (AP)—Totem poles engraved with bears, crows, eagles and monkeys are sprouting in a Nikko park that city officials say will be the largest of its kind in the world. The exhibits for the totem pole park are being carved by students of the Tokyo university of art.

ON April 2, 1931 my father, Herbert Henshaw, picked up these 2 bulbs and 2 pieces of metal from the site where the plane carrying Knute Rockney had crashed. It was a Fokker plane and Tony Foker was at the site trying to pinpoint the trouble that caused the crash.

Also enclosing a Newspaper Article he, my father, had saved in the same box published in the Kansas City Star on Thursday March 28, 1968 recalling the death of Knute Rockney at Matfield Green, Kansas

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Recalls Day Knute Rockne Died in Crash

By James J. Fisher

(The Star's Journal Editor)

MATFIELD GREEN, KAN.—H. V. Lyle went back into the Flint Hills west of K-177 north of here the other day. He climbed through barbed wire fence and walked across the hills.

It was warm. Soon Lyle took off his coat.

"It was pretty bad," Lyle said. "The bodies were in bad shape. It was rainy and muddy and cold. It was pretty bad."

Lyle pointed toward the west.

"It was over there," he said. "That's where the plane crashed. That's where Rockne died."

Then it came back, as he stood there in the warm sun and the big sky of the Flint Hills, where the grass is starting to turn green. It was a long time ago—27 years this Sunday—that a trimotor Fokker cartwheelled out of the sky, killing Knute Rockne, a legend even the day he died, and seven other men.

Lyle remembered the first time he ever met Rockne. It was in Newton, Kas., where the Notre Dame coach and his football team were eating breakfast while waiting for a train. It was cold, so cold that Lyle, a rookie photographer for the Wichita Eagle, forgot about standing in awe of Rockne. He told the coach what kind of pictures he needed.

And Rockne, who didn't look

(Continued on Page 14A)



PATTERNS OF CAR TRACKS SURROUNDED A PATTERN OF DEATH 37 years ago this Sunday north of Matfield Green, Kas., south and west of Emporia, Kas., where Knute Rockne, the Notre Dame football coach, and seven other persons were killed in the crash of a Transcontinental and Western Air, Inc., Fokker trimotor. This aerial photograph was taken by H. V. Lyle, then a photographer for the Wichita Eagle and now a free-lancer.