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Proverbs, Prophecies, Signs and Sayings (Part Two) - Nebraska Folklore

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Proverbs, prophecies, signs, and sayings
Editor's Note:
The following pages conclude the work on signs, sayings, omens, etc., begun in our Pamphlet Nine. In these two issues, we have attempted simply to list the proverbs, metaphorical phrases and omens in current use in the State, leaving the task of definition or description to the larger work in preparation on Nebraska folklore.

PROVERBS OF ADVICE

Hitch your wagon to a star.
Salt the cow to catch the calf.
If the shoe fits, wear it.
Strike while the iron is hot.
Let a sleeping dog lie.
Paddle your own canoe.
Love me, love my dog.
Don't holler before you are hurt.
Don't cut off your nose to spite your face.
Don't stick your nose into other folks' business.
Speak when you are spoken to.
Don't judge others by yourself.
Stick to your bush.
Don't count your chickens before they are hatched.
Don't bite off more than you can chew.

Never look a gift horse in the mouth.

Take care of the pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves.

Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.

Don't cross the bridge before you get to it.

Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you.

Leave well enough alone.

**EXPRESSIONS OF COMPARISON**

*(Concluded from Pamphlet Nine)*

As light as a feather
As like as two peas in a pod
As mad as a hornet
As mad as a wet hen
As mad as hops
As mad as a March hare
As many lives as a cat
As mean as a miser
As meek as a lamb
As mun as a clam
As nervous as a cat
As neat as a pin
As old as the hills
As old as Methuselah
As plain as the nose on your face
As plump as a partridge
As poor as a church mouse
As poor as Job's turkey
As proud as a peacock
As pure as an angel
As quick as a wink
As red as a boot
As regular as clockwork
As rich as Croesus
As right as rain
As rough as a gale
As round as an apple
As scared as a rabbit
As sharp as a tack

As sick as a dog
As slippery as an eel
As slow as molasses in January
As sly as a fox
As slow as a snail
As smart as a whip
As snug as a bug in a rug
As slow as the seven years itch
As sober as a judge
As spry as a cat
As sweet as a rose
As sweet as honey
As soft as putty
As slick as a whistle
As scarce as honeys' tooth
As stiff as a poker
As stiff as a ramrod
As strong as an ox
As thick as two thieves
As thick as fleas on a dog
As thin as a nail
As tough as a boiled owl
As tight as the bark on a tree
As ugly as sin
As ugly as a mud fence
As weak as a rat
As white as a ghost
As white as snow
As warm as toast
As welcome as the flowers in May
As white as a sheet
As young as you feel
A cat may look at a king.

What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

He can who thinks he can.

Where there is a will there is a way.

It is better to be an old man's darling than a poor man's slave.

There is no fool like an old fool.

You are a long time dead.

Two heads are better than one.

Blood is thicker than water.

A new broom sweeps clean.

When poverty comes in the door, love flies out of the window.

The early bird catches the worm.

Paddle your own canoe.

It takes like a prairie fire in March.

A dog that will bring a bone will carry one.

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

Early to bed, early to rise,
Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.

You might as well have the gaco as the name.

Anything worth doing at all is worth doing well.

If wishes were fishes, we'd have some fried.
If wishes were horses, beggars might rise.

All is well that ends well.

There are just as good fish in the sea as ever were caught.

Beauty is only skin deep.

Uglliness runs clear to the bone.

Beauty is as beauty does.

Lost time is never found again.
Faint heart never won fair lady.

It never rains but it pours.

You can't have your cake and eat it.

A man convinced against his will, is of the same opinion still.

A burnt child dreads the fire.

There is more than one way to skin a cat.

Show me a liar and I'll show you a thief.

Honesty is the best policy.

A bad penny always returns.

Still water runs deep.

Every cloud has a silver lining.

Charity begins at home.

Curiosity killed a cat.

It's a long lane that has no turning.

Oil and water won't mix.

It is darkest just before dawn.

There's nothing new under the sun.

Where there is smoke there is fire.

You never miss the water till the well runs dry.

You can't get blood from a turnip.

You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink.

Every dog has his day.

Give a dog a bad name and you might as well hang him.

You can't judge a man by the coat he wears.

People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.

Strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

A still tongue makes a wise head.
Time and tide wait for no man.
His bark is worse than his bite.
Everything is grist for the mill.
A rolling stone gathers no moss.
Constant dripping wears away stones.
The good die young.
The worn will turn.
Fine feathers do not make fine birds.
A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
Birds of a feather flock together.
All that glitters is not gold.
Give him an inch and he'll take a mile.
It takes a rogue to catch a rogue.
April showers bring May flowers.
It takes two to make a quarrel.
Beauty is as beauty does.
Children should be seen and not heard.
Little pitchers have big ears.
All signs fail in dry weather.
No news is good news.
Chickens come home to roost.
It's useless to lock the barn door after the horse has gone.
Fool's names, like fool's faces, always appear in public places.
Murder will out.
He who laughs last laughs best.
An empty wagon makes the most noise.
Hell is paved with good intentions.
You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.
If you sleep on a recently extracted tooth it will be transformed into a nickel.

If you plant potatoes on Good Friday you will have a good crop.

Carrying a rabbit's foot brings good luck.

Beasting of good luck will break the spell unless you knock on wood.

To break a spell of bad luck at cards get up and walk around your chair.

If a (black) cat crosses your path it is a sign of bad luck.

It is bad luck to walk under a ladder.

Seeing a spider brings good luck.

If two persons walking together pass on opposite sides of a tree or post, they must say "Bread and butter," or they will have a falling out.

If two persons say the same thing simultaneously they may have a wish granted by hooking the little fingers of their right hands together while they make the wish, after which one says, "noodles," and the other says "pins." Then, placing their thumbs together both say "thumbs."

Seeing the noon over the right shoulder is a sign of good luck.

If your left palm itches you will receive money.

Snooze on Monday, snooze for news,
Snooze on Tuesday, new pair of shoes,
Snooze on Wednesday, snooze for danger,
Snooze on Thursday, meet a stranger,
Snooze on Friday, snooze for sorrow,
Snooze on Saturday, see your sweetheart tomorrow.

If you get the bubbles from your tea or coffee with your spoon before they reach the edge of the cup you will receive money.

See a pin, pick it up,
All the day you'll have good luck.

Lose a hairpin, lose a friend,
Find a hairpin, find a friend.

If you do not put your tongue in the hole from which a tooth has been pulled, a gold tooth will grow in that place.

Breaking a mirror brings seven years of bad luck.

Sing before breakfast, you'll cry before night.

Carrying a raw potato in one's pocket cures rheumatism.
To find a four-leaf clover is a sign of good luck.

Starting a journey on Friday brings bad luck.

Number 13 is unlucky; Friday the 13th is very unlucky.

If it rains into an open grave there will be another death in the family within a year.

It is bad luck to open an umbrella in the house.

It is bad luck to give a person anything sharp unless he gives a penny for it, for it may cut the friendship.

If one passes the salt and pepper without placing them on the table bad luck will come.

To pass a person on the stairway is a sign of a death.

Thirteen at table brings bad luck to all present; or one will die within a year.

To dream of muddy water is a sign of trouble.

To dream of fire is a sign of danger.

If a person's ears burn, it is a sign someone is talking about him.

It is bad luck to take off another person's ring.

If you tell the wish you make it will not come true.

Blow on a ladybug and say,

Ladybug, ladybug, fly away home,
Your house is on fire, your children will burn.

If the bug flies away you will have good luck.

If you cross your fingers you can keep away impending trouble.

When you go back into the house for something you have forgotten, you will have bad luck unless you sit down before going out again.

Snooze on: Monday for health,
Tuesday for wealth,
Wednesday the best day of all;
Thursday for losses,
Friday for crosses,
Saturday no luck at all.

It is customary to have as many candles on a birthday cake as the person is years old. The person celebrating his birthday tries to blow out all the candles with one breath. It will be as many years before the person marries as there are candles left burning.
If each person at table makes a wish before a person celebrating his birthday blows out the candles on his cake, all wishes will be granted within a year if all the candles are blow out at one breath, otherwise as many years must elapse as there are candles left burning.

If you stamp 100 white horses, say, "Give, give me good luck," and make a wish, your wish will come true.

If you stamp 100 model T Fords and make a wish, your wish will come true.

If you spill salt you will have bad luck unless you throw some over your left shoulder.

MISCELLANEOUS SAYINGS

The race is run.
Stick around.
An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
His nose is out of joint.
He doesn't know enough to pound sand into a rat hole.
He doesn't know enough to come in out of the rain.
Ask me no questions and I'll tell you no lies.
I have a bone to pick with you.
Your fingers are all thumbs.
You would lose your head if it wasn't fastened on.
Put on the soft pedal.
Keep it dark.
I'm from Missouri.
Keep it under your hat.
The world is my oyster.
A little bird told me.
"Because" is a woman's excuse.
If it were a bear it would bite you.
He would steal pennies from a dead man's eyes.
Every Jack has his Jill.
Nothing is sure but death and taxes.
Two heads are better than one.
He would cheat his grandmother.
Keep your shirt on.
Cross your heart.
The best of friends must part.
I've got my fingers crossed.

MISCELLANEOUS METAPHORICAL PHRASES

Honor among thieves
A fool's paradise
A different breed of cats
Let the cat out of the bag
Spill the beans
To be a cat's paw
One horse town
Quake like an aspen leaf
Skating on thin ice
Splitting hairs
Steal his thunder
Pull the wool over one's eyes
Steal candy from a kid
Spring fever
Lay away for a rainy day
Which way the wind blows
Set the world on fire
Grow like a weed
Goes against the grain
Like a bump on a log
The only pebble on the beach
One foot in the grave
Diamond in the rough
A hard nut to crack
Between the devil and the deep blue sea
Be in clover
Botton to the core
The apple of his eye
After my own heart
Break the ice
Call it a day
Gild the lily
Go to seed
A pretty kettle of fish
The backbone of a jellyfish

Make no bones about it
Work like a dog
Go through fire
Leave no stone unturned
Drawn through a hoop
Like two burned holes in a blanket
Last rose of summer
The lion's share
Like a stuffed toad
Swim like a fish
Cock and bull story
As a duck takes to water
Like a chicken with its head cut off
The biggest toad in the puddle
As a cat watches a mouse
Pigeon breasted
Bill and coo
Screach like an owl
Sing like a lark
Scare like an eagle
Horse sense
Skin anyone
Make sheep's eyes
Moon struck
A wolf in sheep's clothing
Between two fires
Like a stag at bay
Play the fool
Stick one's head in a noose
Play whalcy
To toll tales out of school
Wink at a thing
Shark's ponies
Hold your horses
High handed
Kick over the traces
Like a fish out of water
Like sardines in a box
As the crow flies
To kill two birds with one stone
Other fish to fry
A bee in his bonnet
Fly in the ointment
A bug in his ear
Flea in his ear
To be hidebound
To turn tail
To get one's goat
More sinned against than sinning
Blow one's own horn
Borrow trouble
Get away with murder
Give a black eye
Kill with kindness
Play fast and loose
Wear the brooches
All hell broke loose
To cab
To crawfish
Above board
On the level
On the square
A sucker
To sponge
Caught napping
Like water off a duck's back
Finders keepers, losers weepers
Blue blood
Bootlicker
Gone but not forgotten
A thin dime
 Gnashing the teeth
The school of experience
Hobson's choice
Wine, women and song
Turn the tables
Lay down on the job
Jack of all trades
Sing and dance
Down in black and white
To steal a march
Boon through the mill
Throw up the sponge
Down and out
Go to the mat
Have him on the hip
Pass the buck
Play a trump
I morrow chase
Rolling in money
Upset the apple cart
Rear ing to go
To bridle one's tongue
To hoo f it
Set your cap
Cut off your nose to spite your face
By hook or crook
By fair means or foul
Add insult to injury
Caught red-handed
Generous to a fault
Born to be hanged
To give the cold shoulder
To kick the bucket
Apple pie order
Dead-head
A feather in his cap
Nothing doing
Touched in the head
Up your sleeve
Come off your porch
To beef
To change one's tune
Something the cat dragged in
Whale hog or none
In one ear and out the other
Shut up like an oyster
To get one's names
Pin money
Bury the hatchet
Baker's dozen
True blue
Fingers crossed
Oil on troubled waters
The man in the moon
Crocodile tears
A tongue lashing
A piece of mind
To take the rag off the bush
Eat crow
Eat humble pie
Eat your words
Filthy lucre
The morning after
Burn the candle at both ends
Give and take
Livo and let live
The upper ten
A snake in the grass
It his book and call
The favor of the gods
No rest for the wicked
A nigger in the woodpile
The long and the short of it
To be half-baked  
To be in hot water  
Tied to mother’s apron string  
To go like a house afire  
To go like hot cakes  
Family skeleton  
Calm before the storm  
Good riddance to bad rubbish  
More than you could shake a stick at  
More truth than poetry  
In the nick of time  
Till the cows come home  
To get the cart before the horse  

Hail fellow well met  
Last but not least  
The worse for wear  
Castles in the air  
End of his rope  
Tit for tat  
Holding the sack  
Nine ways from Sunday  
Smells to heaven  
A chip of the old block  
Between you and me and the gate post  
A doubting Thomas  
Sit tight  
Strut like a turkey gobbler  

Nebraska Folklore Pamphlet Number Eleven will be issued on or before November 1, 1937, and will contain more COWBOY SONGS. Future pamphlets planned include GHOST LEGENDS, November 15, 1937, and TALL TALES, December 1, 1937.