

## Clutter Family Slayings Shock, Mystify Area

### Holcomb Shocked But School Open

By BOB GREER  
School went on as usual — at first glance — at Holcomb this morning.

This small western Finney County community, stunned by one of the most tragic events in regional annals, went about its way in an almost-ordinary manner this morning.

Town folk chatted about the deaths of the Clutters and speculated over what may have been behind their brutal slaying. But to the casual observer, things were near normal in town.

School continued. Officials wisely decided that the best way to cope with the situation was to have the youngsters go to class as usual.

The first hour was "a little hard," they commented this morning. But, after that, most students settled into their regular Monday morning patterns of classes.

At mid-morning, the younger children were playing in the handsome Holcomb gymnasium as usual. Students were attentive as teachers conducted their classes.

In the hallway on a wall was Nancy Clutter's picture along with that of a boy student. They had been chosen — by vote of the faculty — as winners of the school's citizenship awards for the first six weeks.

Holcomb school has an enrollment of 386 students, Principal Dave Williams said this morning. In the high school were 87 students.

"Or 85 now," Williams said tersely today. Williams noted that both Nancy and Kenyon Clutter had attended Holcomb school throughout all their years of education.

Only last Wednesday night, the Clutter family had been at the school. An open house had been held in the auditorium as part of Holcomb's observance of National Education Week.

The band, speech, and debate departments all took part. Nancy and Kenyon Clutter both sang in the mixed chorus that

night as their parents watched.

A local chapter of the Future Teachers Assn. had been organized. Nancy Wednesday was installed as the chapter vice president.

Taking office as president of the Holcomb PTA was Nancy Ewalt. It was she who first happened upon the grisly murder scene Sunday morning, finding Nancy Clutter's body in bed.

Clutter was among those recognized Wednesday night for service on the board of education. He had served a two-year term in 1940's.

Kenyon participated in both basketball and track for the Holcomb Longhorns last year. The school does not have a football team.

The annual Finney County 4-H Achievement banquet originally scheduled for today at 6:30 p.m., has been temporarily postponed.

A second Achievement night date will be set through the Agricultural Extension office following funeral for the Herb Clutter family, Holcomb.

The two Clutter children both were to be honored for achievements at the banquet.

Both Clutter children were on the school's honor roll for the first six weeks. Friday night, Nancy had appeared in the annual junior class play. She took the role of Becky Thatcher in the old favorite, "Tom Sawyer."

Superintendent John F. Riggs Sr. said he was not certain yet what the school would do for the funeral Wednesday.

Nancy Ewalt was not in school today. Neither was Bob Rupp, junior student who lives two miles west and 1/4 north of town. Rupp apparently was one of the first persons to see the Clutters alive. He had visited with Nancy and the family until about 10:30 p.m. Saturday.

A sheriff's department car was parked at the road which leads west half a mile through a tree-covered, graveled lane to the Clutter home.

Only officers and news personnel were being admitted past that point this morning. The house was still closed to newsmen.

Leading across the front of the browned lawn were two sets of tire tracks. These were from the ambulances which carried the bodies away Sunday morning.

At the east entrance to the home was the family dog, not in too friendly a mood. He was lying near a cement side porch. Near him was a pair of rubber overshoes, probably left by Kenyon or his father.

Sheriff Earl Robinson stepped out from inside. News personnel loomed a volley of rapid questions. A Wichita television station crew recorded sound movies of the sheriff in front of the home.

Downtown, things went on as usual at the old Holcomb post office. Postmaster is Mrs. Myrtle Clare. Her husband died in June after 31 years as postmaster.

"No one seems to understand why this happened," she said. "The Clutters were real boosters here."

She admitted that many persons in the small community were fearful. Doors were kept locked. But no mass hysteria was evident, and none seemed likely. Only remorse for a neighboring family wiped out.

In a small cafe on US 50 which passes through Holcomb, more town folk were chatting. Rumors were being hashed over.

There, too, everyone seemed to ask "Why?"

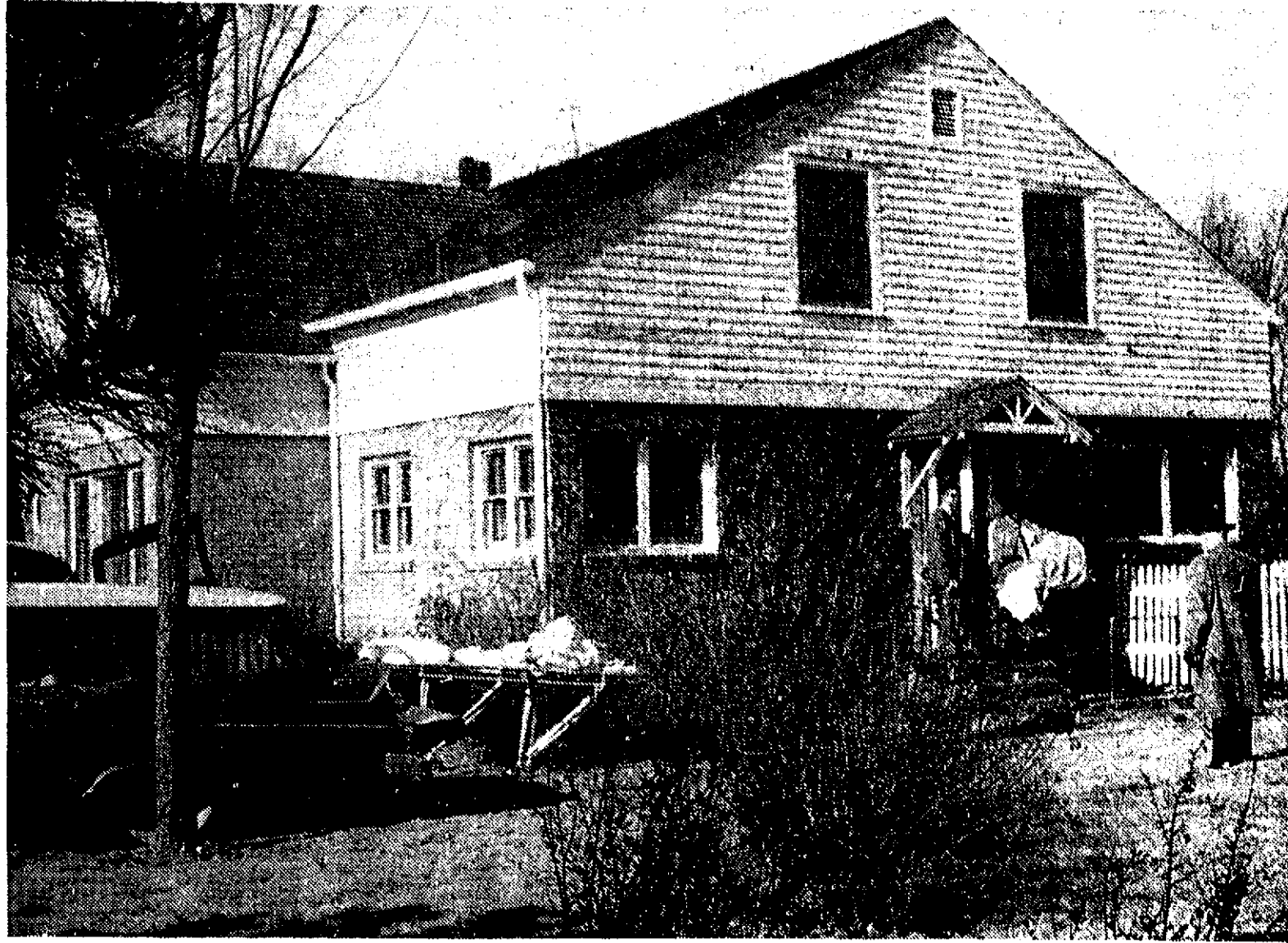
Many persons have come to Holcomb in the hours that have passed since the finding of the four bodies. The traffic has been much heavier than usual.

But — outwardly at least — Holcomb this Monday morning was like Holcomb last Monday morning. And the Monday before that.

Only internally was it different.

### Dairy Head, 85, Dies

CHICAGO (AP)—Otto F. Hunziker, 85, former president of the American Dairy Science Assn., died Sunday. Hunziker, who was born in Switzerland, was professor of dairying and head of the dairying department of Purdue University from 1905 to 1946.



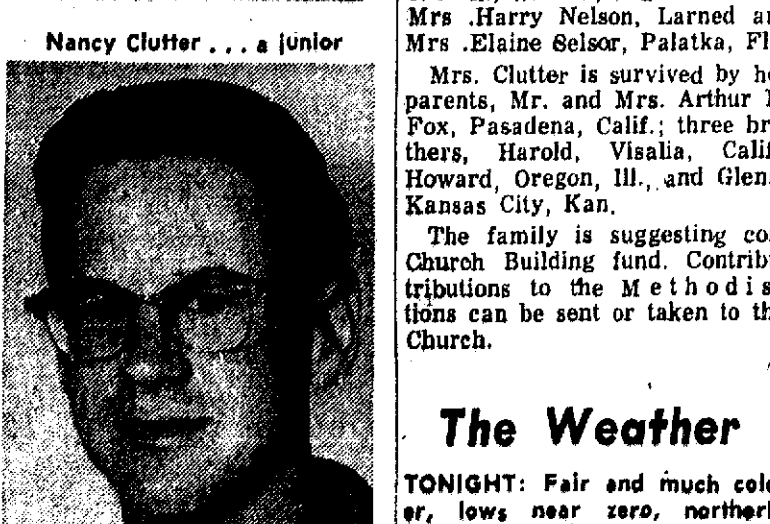
BODIES of the four members of the Clutter family are removed about noon Sunday from the modern, 2-story brick farm home located about one mile west of Holcomb and 7 miles west of Garden City, County Attorney Duane West holds the door open for Phillips Funeral Home officials.



ONE OF THE MOST recent pictures to be taken of Mr. and Mrs. Herb Clutter was this photo taken during their daughter's wedding about 2 years ago.



Nancy Clutter... a junior



Kenyon Clutter... a sophomore

### Clutter Funeral Set Wednesday

Funeral services for the four members of the Clutter family have been set for 11 a.m. Wednesday in the First Methodist Church here.

The Rev. Leonard Cowan, pastor of the church, will officiate. Burial arrangements will be announced later by the Phillips Funeral Home.

Survivors include two daughters Beverly, Kansas City, Kan., and Mrs. Eveanna Jarchow, Mount Carmel, Ill.

Clutter is survived by his father, James, Larned; two brothers, Arthur E. Larned and Clarence L. Wichita, and two sisters, Mrs. Harry Nelson, Larned and Mrs. Elaine Selsor, Palatka, Fla.

Mrs. Clutter is survived by her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur B. Fox, Pasadena, Calif.; three brothers, Harold, Visalia, Calif., Howard, Oregon, Ill., and Glenn, Kansas City, Kan.

The family is suggesting church building fund. Contributions to the Methodist church can be sent or taken to the church.

### The Weather

TONIGHT: Fair and much colder, lows near zero, northerly winds diminishing to 10 miles per hour.  
TUESDAY: Fair and not quite so cold, light northerly winds becoming light southeasterly, afternoon temperatures in the 20s.  
Sunrise 7:25, Sunset 5:32

	Max.	Min.	Prec.
Dodge City	52	13	
GARDEN CITY	56	10	
Goodland	54	3	Trace
Hill City	47	9	
Russell	48	12	
Salina	48	20	

### No Solution Found As Yet to Killings

A tragedy — unbelievable and shocking beyond words — struck a prominent Western Kansas farm family near here yesterday and was still unsolved at noon today.

Death—brutal and without apparent motive—struck four members of the Herb W. Clutter family late Saturday night or early Sunday morning.

Dead are Clutter, 48, his wife, Bonnie, 45, daughter, Nancy Mae, 16, and son, Kenyon, 15.

All were shot in the head with a shotgun at close range and in addition Clutter's throat was cut.

"This is the goriest crime I have ever seen in Kansas," Logan Sanford, director of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, said here this morning.

Sanford and three other KBI agents joined local KBI agent Al Dewey and Finney County law officials in the intensive investigation.

The four victims had been bound and gagged — their hands tied behind their backs and feet bound at the ankles.

The house, unlocked when the crime was discovered shortly after 9 a.m. Sunday, was not ransacked and robbery did not appear to be the motive.

The mother and daughter, found in separate bedrooms upstairs, had not been sexually attacked, Finney County Coroner Dr. Robert M. Fenton said after examination of the bodies Sunday night.

Several persons who worked for and with the Clutters and who had been in contact with the family late Saturday were being questioned today. However, no arrests had been made at last report.

Last person to see the family alive, County Attorney Duane West said last night, was Bob Rupp, son of Mr. and Mrs. John Rupp of Holcomb. The boy had been visiting the home, and left about 10:30 p.m.

About 9 p.m., Clutter had a telephone conversation with Gerald VanFleet, 810N. 1st, who assists Clutter in his extensive farming operations. VanFleet told officers nothing sounded unusual. Clutter said nothing to indicate anything was wrong at the home.

Earlier in the evening, Alfred Stocklein, who lives with his wife and three children in a small house a few hundred yards west of the Clutter home, had done chores with Clutter and his son.

"I did not know anything was wrong until my children came in the house Sunday morning and said the police had driven up to the Clutter home," he said yesterday.

He told officers he and his family had been out Saturday night and returned home about 9:30 p.m. He said he did not hear any gun shots later in the night.

The blood-covered, pajama-clad body of Clutter was found in the furnace room in the basement. His son, dressed in a white T-shirt and blue jeans, was on the couch in the adjoining recreation room.

Kenyon was barefooted, and his bed in his rooms upstairs was turned down and showed signs of having been slept in.

The bed also was disarranged in the master bedroom on the first floor, where it is believed Clutter slept. His wife was dressed in a nightgown and was found in an upstairs bedroom.

Wires to the two telephones in the home, one in the study and the other in the kitchen, had been cut and removed.

Here's the way the tragedy unfolded: Shortly after 9 a.m. Sunday, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Ewalt, who live about three miles north

of the Clutter farm, drove up to the modern, and silent rural home. They were bringing their daughter, Nancy, to the Clutters as they do about each Sunday so that she can ride to church with them. They attend the First Methodist Church in Garden City.

They found no signs of life, and could not raise anyone when Nancy knocked at the front door. Assuming the Clutters had left early, they drove to the home of Mrs. Wilma Kidwell, Holcomb, whose daughter, Susan, also attends the Garden City church and rides with the Clutters.

The Kidwells had not received any call from the Clutters, so Ewalt returned with both his daughter and the Kidwell girl. The girls went into the unlocked house and upstairs to the Clutter girl's room.

The girl's room is located just to the right and the head of the stairs. From the doorway, the girls could see the body of Nancy Clutter, with feet bound at the ankles, hands, tied behind her back and lying on her side—facing a blood-splatter wall.

They ran from the house, hysterical, and told Ewalt what they had found.

"I went in alone to call the police," Ewalt said, but noticed almost immediately that wires leading from the telephone to the wall jack had been removed.

"We drove to the Kidwell home to call police."

Garden City police notified the sheriff's office and Finney County Sheriff Earl Robinson and Under-sheriff Wendel Meier went to the farm.

### Agriculture, Church Lose Strong Backers

Agriculture, both in Kansas and over the nation, lost a valuable supporter in the person of Herb Clutter, as well as his local church and school.

He was the first president of the Kansas Association of Wheat Growers, and was given much of the credit in forming the organization. It was an outgrowth of the old Western Kansas Development Assn.

He also was a former president of the National Association of Wheat Growers, and was one of the first to serve in that position.

In 1953, President Eisenhower appointed him to serve on the Federal Farm Credit Board, made up of 12 members from the federal land grant districts over the nation. He was reappointed for a second term in 1957 but declined the nomination.

At the time of his death, he was serving as president of the board of the directors of the Garden City Co-operative Equity Exchange, and also was a member of the board of Consumers Co-operative of Kansas City, Mo.

He started in farming circles here as agricultural agent of Finney County in 1934, a position he held until 1959.

In the First Methodist Church here, in which the entire family held membership, he had served as chairman of the building committee since its organization. The church is now completing its new edifice at Main and Kansas under a construction program started a few years ago under Clutter's direction.

He was a member of the church's official board, pastoral relations committee, teacher of the Heartstone Sunday School class for many years, and has at one time or another worked on most of the church's committees and commissions.

He was an enthusiastic booster of the Methodist Family Camp staged each summer, and he and his family usually attended.

Mrs. Clutter helped organize the Heartstone Class and last week she and her husband were hosts for the class party at their home with about 40 attending. Mrs. Clutter taught for several years in the children's department of the church, and assisted with youth department work. She also was a member of the Women's Society of Christian Service.

Both Nancy and Kenyon were active in the Methodist Youth Fellowship. They held offices in the MYF, and Nancy was scheduled to conduct the lesson at last night's meeting, which was cancelled.

One of the girl's last acts was to fill out a pledge envelope with her weekly money for the Sunday morning MYF collection. The sealed envelope was still on her dresser yesterday morning — untouched.

The Clutters also were members and supporters of the Finney County Historical Society.

### Tax Reduction Urged by NAM

WASHINGTON (AP)— Prompt congressional action to reduce income taxes was urged today by the National Assn. of Manufacturers.

A thorough revamping of tax rates should boost annual personal incomes by at least 40 billion dollars within eight years, the NAM said.

The views were presented to the House Ways and Means committee by John C. Davidson, vice president of the NAM's Government Finance Division. The committee opened a five-weeks tax study hearing today.

### 42 Thought Dead In Crash of Big Airliner

NEW ORLEANS (AP)— A National Airlines search pilot spotted the wreckage of a four-engine passenger plane in the Gulf of Mexico today, leaving little hopes for the 36 passengers and a crew of six.

The Miami-to-New Orleans airliner lost contact with radio points shortly after midnight.

The crash was the second involving a National Airlines plane in six years. Another plane crashed in the gulf in 1953 taking 46 lives.

Capt. Charles H. Ruby, chief pilot for National, spotted the plane's wreckage about 108 miles east-southeast of New Orleans. His radio report said there was no sign of survivors.

The Coast Guard's earlier report said its planes had spotted an oil slick and life raft, but no survivors.

The plane, National Flight 967, vanished in a fog that enveloped the area so quickly that Moisant International Airport at New Orleans had to amend its midnight forecast. The plane was already overdue at fog-shrouded Moisant when the amended forecast came out.

The plane was about a half-hour out of Moisant when it dropped off the radar screen that had been tracking it. The aircraft was flying at 14,000 feet over the 450-mile overwater route from Miami.

A radar station at Dauphin Island, just south of Mobile, Ala., said it was watching the plane on its screen "when it just dropped off."

The plane carried standard escape equipment for over-water flight, including inflatable life jackets for each crewman and passenger.

The plane stopped at Tampa, Fla., after leaving Miami and picked up 10 more passengers.

The crash today and the one in 1953 had some striking parallels. The planes were on the same run, the weather conditions were about the same and both carried approximately the same passenger load.

The 1953 crash resulted in a rash of law suits, one of which was settled only last week by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The high court denied a National Airlines petition for a review of an order awarding \$250,000 to Mrs. Beryl Whitman Stiles, widow of one of the victims.

The Coast Guard ordered an all-out search, including a specially equipped 95-foot search and rescue vessel. Teams of doctors and full medical equipment were readied and private vessels joined the hunt.

### Vice Adm. Cochrane Dies

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP)— Vice Adm. Edward Lull Cochrane 67, USN (Ret.), chief of the Navy's Bureau of Ships during World War II, died Saturday. Cochrane, who was vice president of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, retired from the Navy in 1947 after 33 years service.