

## Plattsmouth One of the Early Settlements of Nebraska Territory; Chartered in 1855

From Earliest Days This City and County Has Played Important Part in History of State—Ferry Across River

### SAMUEL MARTIN THE FIRST SETTLER

Wheatley Micklewait First Postmaster and Mayor—Home of First Railway Shops—Always Provided Unexcelled Educational Opportunities.

The city of Plattsmouth ranks among the early settlements of the territory of Nebraska, with Bellevue, Omaha, Nebraska City and Brownville, being one of the localities in the new west that first attracted the attention of the pioneers who came to this part of the west to find homes, these pioneers having played a large part in the early history of the territory and the state.

The first known explorations in this locality were made in 1805 when Manuel Lisa, who gave the name to Bellevue, came to this locality to visit both sides of the Platte river and investigate the character of the country then unknown to the white man, followed in 1810 by Francis DeRoh, acting in the capacity of a scout for the American Fur company, and who sought locations for fur trading posts along the Platte and the Missouri rivers. One of the first definite explorations of this section was in 1819 when Long's expedition was sent from St. Louis on the steamer "Western Engineer," the first boat of its kind on the river, to explore that section of the country adjacent to the mouth of the Platte river.

The history of this section is vague from the time of the Long expedition until in 1842 when the expedition under the command of Col. John C. Fremont was sent west to explore the territory between the Missouri and the Rocky mountains. This expedition camped one night on the bluffs south of where the City of Plattsmouth is now located and in his record of the expedition note was

and Lafayette Nuckells, in November, 1854, the town was platted and laid out by O. N. Tyson, the surveyor of the company, and on March 14, 1855, a special act of the territorial legislature was approved, defining the boundaries of Cass county and the incorporation of the City of Plattsmouth.

One of the early problems of the settlers was that of transportation and a ferry was established shortly after the incorporation of the city and which was ended by the leaders of the early settlers including Sharp, O'Neill and Wheatley Micklewait. Until 1857 a flat boat served as the vehicle for crossing the river, but was later supplanted by power boats and the "Emma," and then in 1859 Peter A. Sarpy brought the ferry boat, "The Survivor" to this place as a ferry boat, this being sunk in 1860 and then other boats were placed in service here.

The first postoffice was established here in 1855 and Wheatley Micklewait was designated as the first postmaster of the community.

Mr. Micklewait was the first mayor of the city under the charter of 1855, the government being organized December 20, 1856, with Enos Williams, W. M. Slaughter and Jacob Vallery as the councilmen to assist in guiding the affairs of the little pioneer community. Incidentally the first council voted themselves a salary of \$100 per year and also levying a tax of one-half of 1 per cent on all the taxable property of the city. Later the council voted to place the salar-



PLATTSMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL

taken of the facts relative to the land south of the mouth of the Platte river.

About the year 1848 a Mormon by the name of Libeas T. Coon, established a ferry—a flat boat propelled by sweeps—across the Missouri river, landing near the mouth of the Platte river and here a large number of the Mormons bound west to Salt Lake City, stopped for a short time and continued west along the south bank of the Platte to the promised land in the west, although the greater number wintered at Florence. At this time the country was held by the Otoes, Pawnees and Omahas, the settlers being compelled to keep on their way westward and small military posts were established along the Missouri river that the rights of the Indians might not be invaded. No one was allowed to remain in the then unorganized territory without a special permit from the secretary of war.

The first permission of this kind that there is record of, was that obtained by Samuel Martin, a trader, located on the east bank of the Missouri river, in Iowa, who in 1853, just before the ice broke up in the river, brought over on the ice the logs of his house in Iowa, establishing a trading post at the point where Plattsmouth is now located. He was assisted by James O'Neill and Col. J. L. Sharp in the erection of a two story log house, which was generally known as "The Old Barracks" and was in existence for many years in that part of the city bounding on the river front. This first settler had come to the west from Illinois and had purchased the ferry of Libeas T. Coon in 1850. He was not only the first settler, but his was the first death in the community, as he passed away on December 15, 1854.

By treaties made by the government and President Pierce with the Otoes and the Pawnees, the land adjacent to the Missouri river was permitted to be settled in the summer of 1854, or at least the requirements of a special permit from the war department was removed, this being followed by the advancement of the white pioneers across the stream to make their settlements.

The Plattsmouth Town Company was organized October 26, 1854, by Samuel Martin, James O'Neill, C. Nuckolls, J. L. Sharp, Manly Green

### PLATTSMOUTH CITY GOVERNMENT

The city of Plattsmouth is governed by the councilmanic form of government, the city divided into five wards, and the executive officers of the city, consisting of John P. Sattler, mayor; Herman L. Thomas, city clerk; John E. Kirkham, city treasurer; Charles L. Graves, police judge. The members of the city council are: Frank M. Bestor, Elmer A. Webb, first ward; Claud C. Smith and W. A. Tulene, second ward; W. H. Pals, Miles Allen, third ward; George Luschinsky, C. A. Johnson, fourth ward; Edward Gabelman, R. H. Patton, fifth ward. The president of the council is C. C. Smith. The police and street departments is headed by Jess N. Elliott as chief of police while other members of the police department are Joseph Libershal, assistant chief and David Pickrel, night police. The health department is headed by Dr. O. C. Hudson, while the city legal department is in the hands of Joseph A. Capwell as city attorney.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## Churches and Homes of City on Par with Any

Finely Kept Lawns is the Rule and Not the Exception Here—Petunia is Official Flower

Since the first settlers came to dwell in the community of Plattsmouth there has been here the spirit of the Christian faith as expressed in the many churches that have come to be part of the civic life. The early missionaries that served from



ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

the missions at Bellevue laid among the Indians the seeds of the Christian faith and the bands of the early settlers together in the ties of the belief of the church of Christ.

As the city has grown in size the members of the various denominations have erected fine substantial buildings over the city and to which has come the faithful at the call of their belief to worship.

### The Methodist Church.

The oldest in point of existence in the city was that of the Methodist Episcopal church which was organized here in June, 1857, twenty members being enrolled with the Rev. Hiram Burch as the first pastor of the church. The church was subject to the trials and tribulations of the early days, the first church being in a building at Fifth and Main streets and which was the gathering place until in 1869 when a building was erected on South Sixth street which was the meeting place until in 1900 when the building was sold and the site converted into a place of business and which is now occupied by the Christ Furniture Co., the congregation meeting for a year in the A. O. U. W. hall, until the present church building was erected. This edifice has been gradually improved until it is one of the largest and most up to date in the city. The present structure has grown by the addition of the excavation of the basement for the use of the social activities of the church as well as the Sunday school work. The Sunday

members of this faith to settle in Cass county. The church has been active in the community since its foundation and has a fine church building on North Eighth street where under the guidance of the Rev. A. L. Oeden there are held services each Sunday of the church and Sunday school.

### St. Luke's Episcopal Church

The Episcopal church was one represented among the very earliest settlers in the community and the pioneers Bishops Talbot and Clarkson served the charge here for a number of years, giving the consolation of their faith to the members of the pioneer band. Although organized in 1860, the church did not erect their present building until 1869, when the church was erected as a memorial, and has since served to house this faith. The Rev. George C. Betts, one

### First Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian church was one of the first in Nebraska territory and the church here was established in 1858 with sixteen charter members and is now one of the largest in membership in the city, with a very fine church edifice and a splendid organization of church workers who are making the church one of the most active in the community. The church building is one of the most attractive in this part of the state and arranged in the most modern manner for the handling of the church services and the large Sunday school organization. The pastor of the church is Rev. Harry G. McClusky, one of the best known ministers of the state and who has gained a wide reputation for his work as a pulpit orator. This church is located at Seventh and Granite streets.

### St. Paul's Evangelical Church

The St. Paul's Evangelical church is one of the youngest in the city as it was established here in 1892 and the growth of the membership was very rapid and in 1897 the church structure at Fifth and Vine streets, in the main portion of the city, was opened to the service of the members, later in the pastorate of the Rev. O. G. Wichmann, the present pastor, the basement of the church was completed and made into a very attractive meeting place for the social activities of the church and serving as a great aid in the stimulation of the work of the younger people of the church. This church has a very large membership among the residents of the country districts adjoining the city.

Other of the church that maintain religious homes is that of the Christian Science society which has a church at Sixth and Granite street and which numbers a great many of the residents of the city in its membership.

The Holiness church also has a very active organization here, that has secured for the purpose of a house of worship one of the homes in the south part of the city and where each Sunday services are held. Truly the religious life of the city is fitting with the many pleasant homes and contented families that makes this city the ideal home city of the state and one where there is a broad and friendly feeling among the peoples in their religious beliefs.

### LODGES OF THE CITY

Fraternally, the city is represented by a large number of the leading orders of the country, having here representation of all branches of Masonry, Plattsmouth lodge No. 6 A. F. & A. M., Nebraska Chapter No. 3 of the Royal Arch Masons; Mt. Zion commandery No. 5, Knights Templar; the Home Chapter of the Order of Eastern Star and Cass Chapter of the Order of DeMolay. There are also Plattsmouth lodge No. 739 of the B. P. O. E., Plattsmouth Aerie No. 365 of the Fraternal Order of Eagles; Cass Camp 322 of the Modern Woodmen of America; Platte lodge No. 7, I. O. O. F.; Fr. Juan DePadilla Council Knights of Columbus; A. O. U. W.; Sons of Herman; Woodmen of the World. In the ladies organizations there are the Does, W. B. A., Ladies Auxiliary of the Eagles, Rebekahs, Degree of Honor, Royal Neighbors, Catholic Daughters of America.

### DESIGNATED STATE SEAL

This community was for many, many years the home of Captain Isaac Wiles, veteran of the Second Nebraska, who at the close of the war and the perils of the Indian menace on the Nebraska plains, spent his years on the farm at the southwest boundaries of the cities. It was



Captain Wiles who in the days when Nebraska was admitted as a state of the Union in 1867, designated the seal that has since served to represent the great state of Nebraska on the state papers and on the state flag that was adopted a few years ago as the official emblem of the commonwealth. Despite the efforts to change the seal the lawmakers of the state protected the old time seal that represented the spirit of the Nebraska pioneers and which is still the official design of the state.

## Big Sand and Gravel Industry Being Built Up

Pits of Lyman-Richey Co., Merritt & Sons and Geo. W. Bell Company All Busy Places Now

One of the big reasonable industries that has been built up here in the past two or three years is the sand and gravel industry. A few years ago the Lyman-Richey company moved one of its large pumping outfits to this vicinity from Louisville where the land holdings it had worked for many years were becoming exhausted and opened up a large pit just a short distance up the Platte river from the Oregopolis tower.

The business increased rapidly and the high test of the road gravel and paving aggregate resulted in heavy demand for shipments to Iowa paving contractors and the placing of Iowa state highway inspectors here

## Paving or Gravel on Most Streets in Plattsmouth

All Thoroughfares in Business Section and Many in Residence Portion of City Paved

Few cities the size of Plattsmouth can boast of more paved and gravelled streets than are found here.

The past decade has seen some paving done each year, until not only the business section but a great part of the residence section is served with paving, while many of the unpaved streets have been gravelled as a part of the campaign to abolish mud and give residents of the city an all weather roadway to their front doors.

The nearness of the gravel pits to this city has permitted the trucking in of gravel for this work at a very low cost and in many blocks the



ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

regularly throughout the summer season to place their O. K. on the various shipments that go all over western Iowa, rather than having a separate inspector on each of the jobs.

A second pumping outfit was added and during the season, which is now on in full blast, both outfits are in operation 24 hours out of every day, Sundays included, sending out solid loads of this material.

The Lyman-Richey company is one of the oldest sand and gravel companies in the state and has pits located along the Platte river the entire length of the state, but nowhere are they able to secure a better quality gravel than the Plattsmouth pits are yielding.

Another company that does a good shipping business and is located on trackage is Merritt & Sons, whose pits and loading tipples are located just north of the Oregopolis tower, near the south end of the Platte river bridge on Highway 75. Their daily output, although smaller than that of the Lyman-Richey company, is sufficient to give employment to a good number of men and is increasing, the owners report.

The latest entrant into the sand and gravel field here is the Geo. W. Bell Co., of Omaha, a well known builders supply concern. They have acquired land on the east side of Highway 75 and are opening up a large pit there. This pit is not located on trackage, but the Bell company plans truck delivery of its entire output, in line with their policy

property owners have gone together and provided the gravel without the expense and bother of creating an improvement district, paying for the same at time of laying, with the city providing the necessary grading and drainage. Not only has this proven very satisfactory on the more level streets, but a great deal less expensive. On the hill streets paving has been laid to prevent washing.

The graveling program is going steadily forward with new blocks being added to the network almost every week, while the dirt streets are kept in good condition for traffic at all times except during muddy weather, by use of power graders and modern equipment under supervision of the streets and alleys committee of the city council.

Go where you will, it would be hard to find a town with better maintained streets than Plattsmouth has.

## Paved Highway North and South Through City

Completion of Work in Near Future Will Greatly Increase Traffic Over U. S. Highway 75.

The coming few weeks will see



ST. PAUL'S EVANGELICAL CHURCH

of laying all builder's materials on the ground for the contractor. They have a fleet of trucks and expect to also engage in the ready-mix concrete game, delivering same onto the job all ready to be poured into the forms. The Bell company is taking a great many truckloads of gravel from its pits daily and will increase its trucking facilities in order to take care of still greater demand.

The ready-mix concrete game is becoming a very lucrative business, and should increase in popularity with the introduction of new containers that are kept revolving as the delivery trucks speed along the streets or highways enroute to place of unloading, thus preventing separation of the sand and cement, as was often the case under old methods of delivery.

The gravel industry here has grown by leaps and bounds until today it is one of the largest employers of labor outside of the shops, during the summer season. In the winter, freezing weather prevents continuing operations and the force of employees dwindles to only a few men.

completion of the paved highway extending north and south through this city from Omaha south to the Union corner, a total distance of 34 miles.

This project, begun last year, was held up for weeks due to incessant rainfall and a portion of it carried over to this spring for completion.

A gap of some three miles south of this city and about a mile (exclusive of grade crossing projects) between here and Omaha is all that remains to complete the job.

Given good weather, the first of June should see the opening up of the entire stretch between Plattsmouth and Omaha and the first of July the stretch running south to the Union corner from where grading is to be completed this year on into Nebraska City and that portion paved in 1931. This year's paving project on U. S. 75 is between Nebraska City and Auburn and by the end of next year U. S. 75 will be paved all the way from Omaha to the Kansas state line.