

REPRESENTATIVE STATE COMMISSIONERS.



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LABOR AND THE EXPOSITION

Harmonious Relations of the Unions and the Management.

CONTRIBUTION OF WAGE-EARNING CLASS

Part Played by Organized Labor in the Creation and Completion of the Exposition Enterprise.

Notable among the incidents attending the building of the exposition is the fact that from its inception the enterprise has been characterized by harmonious relations with organized labor. During the long period of construction, when thousands of men representing nearly every branch of skilled and unskilled labor were on the pay rolls, there has never been a serious difference between the management and the men who toiled.

As a matter of fact, the workmen have had no unimportant share in the success of the exposition. Thousands of shares of stock were subscribed and paid for by men who had nothing but their daily wages and little homes on which they found it difficult to pay the taxes.

The labor question was brought prominently before the board of directors almost as soon as its organization was determined. At a meeting held January 20, 1897, Fred Young introduced a resolution which provided that all contracts entered into by the exposition management should stipulate that Douglas county labor should be given preference and that the minimum price for unskilled labor should be \$1.50 a day.

The resolution was referred to the executive committee and was returned a month later without recommendation. The directors were ready to stipulate that laborers should be paid at the rate of \$1.50 per day, but it was urged that the adoption of any resolution that seemed like a discrimination in favor of local interests would be most impolitic at that time.

Early Differences Adjusted.

As the construction of the buildings proceeded and a vast amount of skilled labor was called into requisition the labor unions demanded that the union scale of hours and wages should be formally adopted. The first difference occurred between the contractors and the Administration building. This was settled by arbitration, but early in October the dissatisfaction that had been bred by the methods of Dion Geraldine, who had been employed as superintendent of construction, culminated in an open revolt on the part of the union men.

A few days later thirty-six carpenters quit work for Goldie & Sons on the ground that they had not kept their agreement to recognize the union scale. In two days the contractors signed an agreement by which they bound themselves to pay the union scale and the men returned to work.

Resolved, That from and after this date all contracts for construction, which shall be awarded by the exposition, shall provide that the union scale of wages, in force October 1, 1897, shall govern in the payment of skilled labor and that eight hours shall constitute a day's work, provided, that extra shifts of eight hours may be used without overtime charge.

The scale which was thus endorsed was the following:

Table with 2 columns: Trade Name and Rate per hour. Trades include Carpenters and joiners, Plasterers, Painters, Plumbers, Sheet metal workers, Staff makers, and Casters.

Union Scale. The unions tackled Hamilton first and he capitulated after a strike of one day, and Parrish conceded the point a couple of days later.

Unions Force Geraldine Out.

At this time the question of voting \$100,000 of Douglas county bonds for the exposition was before the people and the election was at hand when the labor trouble was at its height. The workmen improved the opportunity to assist in the discomfiture of their old enemy, Geraldine, and they openly declared that unless he was discharged from his position they would defeat the bonds.

While he was no longer officially connected with the exposition, Geraldine continued to haunt the grounds, where he was still interested in several contracts. He made several subsequent efforts to stir up trouble among the workmen, but they had become too familiar with his system to be long deceived.

As Geraldine had completed the carpenter work on a minor building in the contract for which he was interested, he discharged the union foreman and put in a nonunion man. As soon as this was discovered by the carpenters' union a strike was ordered, as he had anticipated, but as soon as the union leaders saw how matters stood and that Geraldine was merely trying to make trouble for the other contractors the strike was declared off and the men returned to work on the other buildings the following Monday morning.

EXCELLENT FIRE PROTECTION

Every Precaution Taken to Prevent the Possible Spread of Destructive Conflagration.

In view of the inflammable character of the material of which the exposition buildings are constructed the necessity for the most effective and ample fire protection has been kept constantly in mind. A large conflagration at any time during the process of construction would have undoubtedly resulted in at least the postponement of the exposition, and a similar misfortune during the summer would seriously affect the success of the enterprise.

The arrangements made for the protection of the exposition buildings and their contents are the most complete and effective modern experience can suggest. In this respect the suggestions of Omaha's efficient fire chief, John Redell, have been generally followed. An ample water pressure is assured by a complete system of mains that intersect every part of the grounds and surround each of the large buildings.

Excellent Fire Protection

The alarm service is supplied by a complete equipment of electric boxes liberally distributed over the grounds.



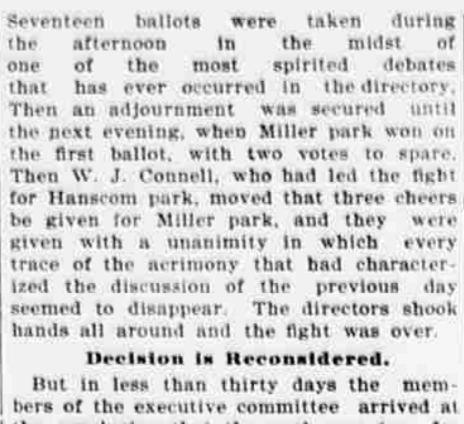
C. A. FELLOWS, Kansas.



L. W. SHURTLIFF, Utah.



C. A. MULLORY, Illinois.



GEN'L T. J. SHRYOCK, Maryland.

SELECTION OF THE SITE

Present Exposition Grounds Chosen by Unanimous Vote of Directors.

IDEAL LOCATION FOR THE GREAT SHOW

How the Perplexing Site Problem Was Solved to the Satisfaction of Everybody Concerned.

That portion of the Missouri bluff on which the big transmission tower is located has one distinction that is peculiarly its own. It is the only exposition site on earth that was chosen by a unanimous vote and the selection of which did not carry with it an aftermath of disappointed opposition from disgruntled property owners.

Aside from the house apparatus the stand pipe system will of itself furnish fairly adequate protection. There are from three to six stand pipes in each building, each of them equipped with two lines of two and one-half inch hose, with nozzles attached and reeled for instant use.

The selection of a site was one of the first problems which was taken up by the board of directors after the permanent organization. Strangely enough, however, the ground that was eventually chosen as the home of the exposition was scarcely suggested during the weeks of agitation that preceded the final action of the directors.

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BEAUTIFYING THE GROUNDS

Resemblance of the Exposition Tract to the Garden of Eden.

THOUSANDS OF TREES, SHRUBS AND PLANTS

Transformation in the Landscape Produced by Laying Out Walks and Drives and Application of Artistic Gardening.

While the superb architecture of Omaha's White City has been growing under the busy hands of thousands of workmen the surrounding grounds have been gradually transformed into a fitting framework for their architectural magnificence. The rugged bluff and monotonous vista of level soil has disappeared under the artistic touches of the landscape gardener and has been succeeded by long cool streets of turf, miles of neatly graveled walks and drives and a wilderness of trees and shrubs and flowers suggestive of tropical luxury.

Those who admire the exquisite beauty of the exposition landscapes can scarcely realize that the marvelous change has been accomplished in the last few months and trickled down the bluff to swell the turbid current of the river below. The trees are as luxuriant and the turf and flowers as inviting as though years had been spent in their cultivation and the beholder wonders whether he shall most admire the setting or the scene.

While the grounds selected for the exposition offered no original attraction they were susceptible of the most beautiful landscape effects. Rudolf Ulrich of New York was employed to make plans for their beautification and from that time until the present he has been employed in looking after this feature of exposition construction. The bulk of the work has been done during the last two months and the change that has been wrought in that period borders on the marvelous. It is most noticeable on the bluff tract, which was naturally adapted for the development of the most artistic effects and where the landscape architect found freedom to work out his ideas untrammelled by the crowding of large buildings.

The most important landscape effect has been worked out on the east slope of the bluff tract and consists in properly merging the bluff into the graded park. It required 3,000 trees and nearly 6,000 shrubs to carry out this feature and these chiefly consist of varieties native to Nebraska. Then 1,200 shade trees were planted along the walks and drives and as many more were set out with the shrubbery along the fences and in the Kountze tract. These consist mostly of soft maples, catalpa, cottonwood, white ash, sycamores and evergreens and other conspicuous varieties, the first named being largely used on account of the rapidity with which it could be cultivated.

Over 700,000 feet of ground has been sod laid and 14,500 square yards of sod broken by miles of graveled walks laid out in artistic pattern around the buildings and grass plots. The aggregate length of these walks is 15,204 lineal feet, exclusive of the 8,484 yards of graveled surface which form the Grand Plaza. To supply properly the grass and flowers with moisture a complete construction of an irrigation system, including 13,000 feet pipe, was completed.

Work of Floral Decoration

All this was preliminary to the installation of over 100,000 plants and flowers, besides a vast number of vines for decorative effects. The flowers have been largely raised in the greenhouse which had been constructed early in the season and would have been a difficult matter to purchase so many from local greenhouses. A score of different varieties are represented, among which the geraniums, oleander, dahlias, canna, lilies and arbutus are most prominent. Between sixty and seventy beds of various patterns have been laid out in the grass plots immediately surrounding the Horticulture building and filled with the exhibits of Nebraska and Iowa florists. One of the most interesting floral features is the aquatic basin just north of the Horticulture building, which is filled with an extensive and valuable collection of pond lilies, with some magnificent specimens of the Victoria Regina.

On the Kountze tract the landscape effects were somewhat simplified. The main court is largely occupied by 4,510 lineal feet of brick pavement, extending from the lagoon half way to the interior line of the buildings. The remainder has been graveled, leaving only room for a few minor displays of grass and shrubbery. Over 5,000 yards of sod have been laid in the Kountze tract and some striking effects obtained by the use of vines and shrubbery along the colonnades. The abrupt slope of turf at the head of the lagoon, broken by crescent shaped beds of flowers, makes an artistic effect and the appearance of the court is improved by the huge vases of flowers and vines set at intervals along the lagoon and against the white elevations of the buildings.

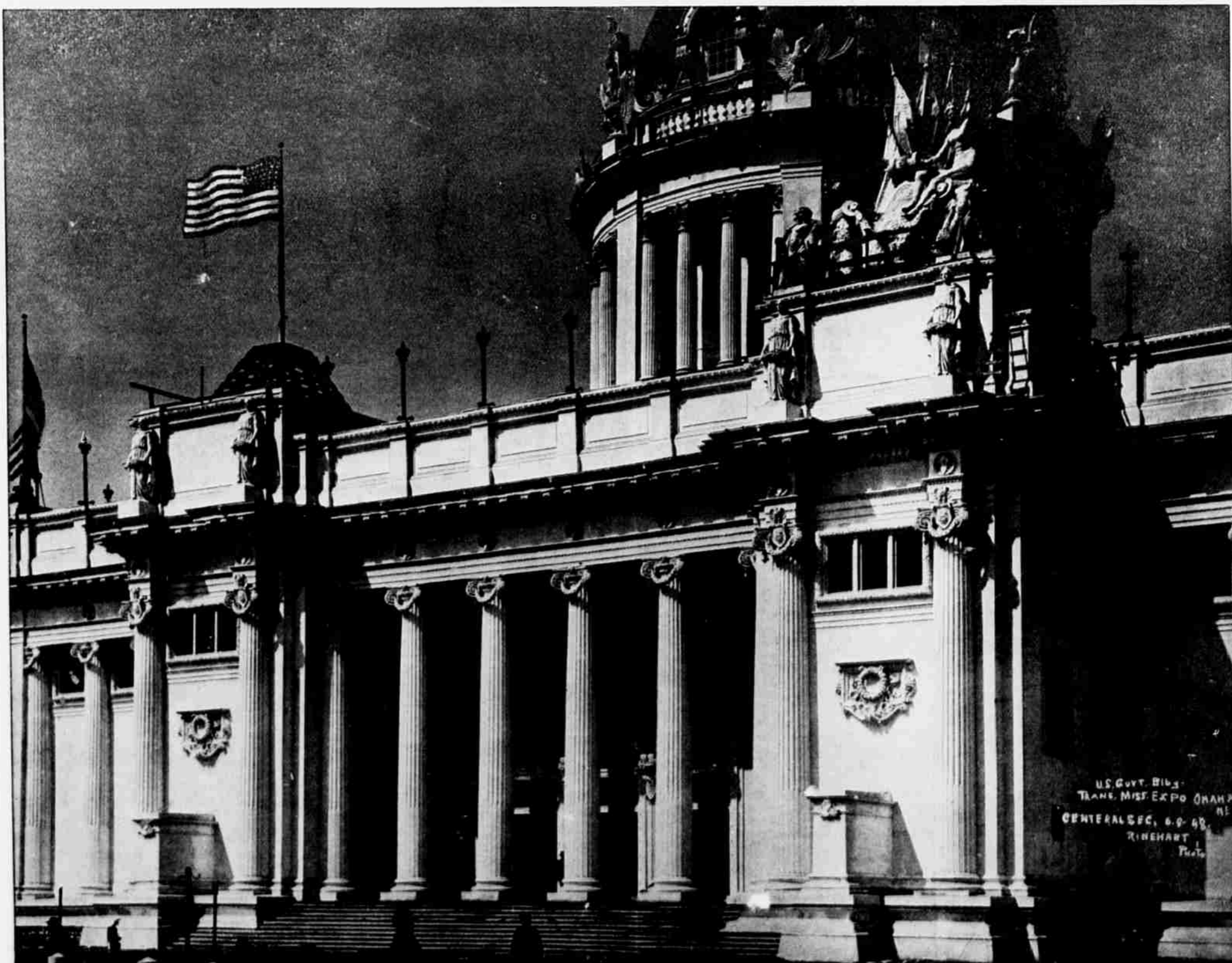
Another pretty feature of the main court will be the roof garden, to be constructed on the Mines and Mining building. This will be lavishly arrayed with shrubs and flowers and will be a popular resort for feminine visitors.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR THE PRESS.

Special Building at the Disposal of the Newspaper Men.

Liberal accommodations have been provided on the exposition grounds for local and visiting representatives of the press and these will be afforded every facility for gathering, writing and telegraphing their stories of the exposition. The Press building is a handsome structure modeled after the Italian Renaissance of the sixteenth century and conforming in its exterior appearance to the other exposition buildings. It is located in the center of the grounds just back of the Administration Arch and is sufficiently commodious to afford ample room for the purposes to which it is to be devoted. The building is 50x68 feet and the main hall, which will be used as a reception and reading room, is 20x36 feet and twenty-four feet high. The telegraph rooms and eleven smaller rooms for the use of reporters and correspondents open from the main hall and exceptional care has been taken to have the interior well lighted. The main entrance is a very attractive treatment of Corinthian columns and the character of the building is indicated by the statues emblematic of the Press and Telegraph which surmount the columns.

CENTRAL ARCH OF U. S. GOVERNMENT BUILDING.



U.S. GOV. BLDG. OMAHA, MISS. EXPO. OMAHA, GENERAL SEC. 6. 9. 98. RINEHART, Prop.