

The McCook Tribune.

VOLUME VII.

McCOOK, RED WILLOW COUNTY, NEBRASKA, FRIDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 28 1888.

NUMBER 18.

McCOOK!

THE QUEEN CITY OF THE REPUBLICAN VALLEY.

And the Metropolis of Southwestern Nebraska.

AN IMPORTANT DIVISION STATION ON THE MAIN LINE OF THE

Great B. & M. Railway!

WITH EXTENSIVE ROUND HOUSE AND REPAIR SHOPS.

The Third Largest Water Works System in the State.

SOLID BLOCKS OF BRICK, WITH PLATE GLASS FRONTS.

The Finest Natural Location in Nebraska, with Scores of Elegant Homes, Good Schools, Handsome Churches and

WIDE-AWAKE PEOPLE.

Business Men and Business Interests.

A CITY OF PHENOMINAL GROWTH.

No section of the country, perhaps, is to-day more prominently in the eyes and thoughts of the migratory world than Nebraska. The settlement and development of the state from the earliest period of statehood, a little over twenty years ago, has been wonderful, if not phenomenal, in its character. Yet, notwithstanding the remarkable strides of civilization in the past, Nebraska offers at the present time, opportunities to the representatives of every legitimate business enterprise, such as cannot be found in any other section of the great prairie states and territories. But a single score of years have passed away since Nebraska entered the sisterhood of states. At that time the entire white population numbered scarcely more than 50,000 souls. It was the thirty-fifth state created, and at the time of its birth, contained less than 400 miles of railway. The only towns of importance at that time were Omaha and Nebraska City, and these even had scarcely attained to the dignity of cities. With the exception of a few towns situated near the eastern border of the state, which, at the time of Nebraska's admission into the Union were mere hamlets, the hundreds of flourishing cities and villages that dot the map of Nebraska at the present time, had then no existence. The greater portion of the broad expanse of beautiful prairie, extending from the Missouri river on the east, to the Rocky Mountains on the west, was as wild and free from civilizing influences as when the stars of the morning sang together at nature's dawn. But behold the change! To-day, nearly a million people find happy hours in the region indicated, and nearly six thousand miles of railroad is operated within its borders. Thus it will be observed that during a period of twenty years, a region of country over four hundred miles in length by two hundred in width, has been reclaimed from an almost primitive condition, peopled by more than a million inhabitants, provided with schools, colleges, universities and railway facilities, equal to any similar area of country on the continent. In twenty years Nebraska has advanced from a very wilderness to a position among the foremost states of the Union, as regards material wealth, population, products and educational advantages. Extraordinary as the above may seem, is but a simple array of facts that may readily be verified by referring to the statistical records of the state. Nebraska is an empire within itself; a country unsurpassed in natural resources and advantages. To one who is acquainted with the wonderful resources of the country, the almost magical growth of cities and towns ceases to be a matter of surprise, and yet the most truthful record of the up-building of scores of Nebraska's fair cities, is to many a distant reader, more like a fairy tale than reality. It is not our province or purpose, however, to write of Nebraska as a whole, but of one of her youngest, as well as one of the most promising cities within the borders of the state. If the reader will consult a

map of Nebraska he will observe that the Republican river flows from west to east through the southern tier of counties, and he will also find that in the third county—Red Willow—east of the Colorado line, upon the north or left bank of the stream, McCook is situated. This fact although significant in itself, is perhaps of the least importance of the numerous advantages of which this young city is possessed, and to which this chapter will be mainly devoted. Many articles descriptive of the western country, are doubtless regarded by the distant reader as greatly exaggerated or overdrawn, and while it may be true in some instances, there are many sections of country in Nebraska, and many cities and towns to give a description of which, it would be almost impossible to exaggerate. However, it will be the aim of the writer in referring to McCook and its surroundings, to give only facts, plain, solid, substantial facts.

HISTORY.

The history of McCook is so brief as to be embraced in the memory of many of the school children of the city, and yet its past comprises a proud record to those who in any way participated in its origin and subsequent growth. It requires but a slight effort of the memory to recall the incidents of the past six years which comprehend all there is of McCook's history. The construction of the B. & M. railway was the cause, and the Lincoln Land Company the agency that consummated the origin of a town that in six years has grown into a city of nearly three thousand inhabitants. In the summer of 1882, the Lincoln Land Company commenced the work of improvement by platting about 140 acres into lots, and when a few months later, the young city was connected with the outside world with bands of steel, many of those lots were occupied by substantial buildings. The completion of the railway to this point was immediately followed by the location of a division headquarters, and the construction of a round house, blacksmith shop, store house, and hotel and dining hall. The year following, or in 1883, the Lincoln Land Company commenced the construction of a system of water works, which with two exceptions, Omaha and Lincoln, is to-day the most extensive in the state. In June, 1883, the Government Land Office was located in this city. During the past five years numerous important additions to the original plat have been laid out, until today not less than one thousand acres subdivided into blocks and lots, over one-half of which was, or is, the property of the Lincoln Land Company. Among the more important individual additions are the following:

EGAN PARK.

located about four blocks north-west of the original plat and consisting of 80 acres, which has been subdivided into five-acre tracts with 70 foot streets, all of which have been bordered with shade trees. To the west and north of this is found

STERN'S ADDITION

of 160 acres, the most of which has been platted. About six blocks east of the original is

BROWN'S PARK ADDITION

of 160 acres, 90 of which has been subdivided. On the west and south are two large additions, platted earlier in the history of the town, by

H. C. RIDER.

From the day of the first sale of lots, there has been a steady increase in population and improvements. School houses and churches were built, streets graded, residences erected, and grounds beautified, until

McCOOK OF TO-DAY

is a beautiful city of nearly three thousand inhabitants, and still rapidly growing. There is nothing of a speculative or ephemeral character in its make-up; everything in the way of improvement bearing the impress of the most substantial permanency. Situated upon the gentle slope of a hillside, extending down into the broad and beautiful valley through which flows the clear waters of the river, only the trees and shrubs and rocks are lacking to give to McCook the appearance of a New England city. Standing upon some elevation overlooking the city, a scene is presented to view, that

would enthuse the soul of an artist. The broad valley stretching away up and down as far as the vision extends, with the busy, bustling city resting gracefully upon its fair bosom, the majestic curve of the grand and beautiful landscape surroundings, with here and there a glimpse of the silver waters of the river glistening in the sunlight, forms a panorama of nature's handiwork, such even as no artist's hand can imitate.

With such a location, magnificent in its natural state, the added attractions of tree and shrub, together with the numerous embellishments suggested by an inspiration born of a love for home, will a few years hence, make of McCook one of the most beautiful cities of the state.

The town is peopled largely by native born Americans who have gathered here from various sections of the eastern states, and who are imbued with the common purpose of building up a city that will be an honor to the great commonwealth of which it forms a part.

It is a new town in a new country, but all the valuable resources that a lavish nature can bestow to aid in the upbuilding of a town or city are generously blended in McCook's surroundings. It is impossible for any man to look for the first time upon this prosperous young city, and then upon the grand country by which it is surrounded, without being deeply impressed with the thought that a splendid future is before it.

SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES.

There is nothing, perhaps, that more fully indicates intelligent and moral tendencies in a community than good church and educational facilities. In the matter of school and educational advantages McCook presents a fair example of one of the proudest features of the state. There is no state in the union, perhaps, that can boast of a more thorough and perfect school system than Nebraska. The public schools of the state have attained a high grade of proficiency, and the educational system ranks with that of the foremost states of the Union. McCook's present facilities consist of a central or high school building, and two ward schools, but the rapid growth of the town has made necessary more room and increased advantages, which will soon be supplied by the addition of another building, a handsome brick structure, already begun, and which will cost when completed about twelve thousand dollars. With a graded system under the management of a corps of experienced and efficient teachers, the public schools of McCook offer at all times educational advantages equal to towns of similar size in the older eastern states. The city already contains

FIVE CHURCHES

all provided with good substantial buildings, as follows: Methodist, Congregational, Catholic, German, Congregational, Lutheran. Other societies have effected organizations, and for whom edifices will soon be erected.

CIVIC AND BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES.

The following societies have strong and active organizations: Masonic, Knights of Pythias, Uniform Rank K. of P., Odd Fellows, Ancient Order of United Workmen, McCook Chapter U. D., Modern Woodmen of America, Grand Army of the Republic and Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. Hocknell Hose Company comprises a well organized and well equipped fire department.

BOARD OF TRADE.

This organization is made up of the leading business and professional men of the city, having for its object the encouragement and aid of all public and private enterprises that tend to the general advancement of the interests of the town. It is through the agency of such organizations that the many public improvements rendered necessary by the rapid growth of a city are secured, and the McCook board of trade have been unusually active in the promotion of the city's growth, and heralding abroad the numerous advantages that this city offers to men of all professions and occupations.

BUILDING AND LOAN ASSOCIATIONS have been organized, and are an important agency in the work of development and upbuilding the city, inasmuch as they enable people of small means to build and

possess homes of their own.

THE PROFESSIONS

of law, medicine and dental surgery are all well represented, and the town can justly boast possession of men of talent, many of whom are graduates of some of the leading colleges and universities of the land.

THE PRESS

comprises three weekly newspapers: THE TRIBUNE, Gazette and Democrat, all of which bear evidence of being well and liberally sustained, one of the surest indications of intelligence and enterprise on the part of the inhabitants.

CENTRAL PARK

is situated in one of the most sightly portions of the city, consisting of an entire block planted to beautiful shade trees, and will in a few years become one of the most attractive features of the city. This park was planted with trees, and is maintained by the Lincoln Land Company for the use of the public.

THE SOCIAL ADVANTAGES

of McCook are not one whit inferior to the towns of similar size in the older, eastern states. The stranger who visits this region will observe the same degree of refinement and intelligence among the people, that he would look for in the cities and villages of the Middle and New England States. A commodious opera house, and several smaller halls, provide means for social amusements, or for the presentation of all ordinary theatrical or operatic performances.

WATER WORKS.

As stated elsewhere, with two exceptions, McCook is provided with the most extensive system of water works in the state. This system was established in 1883, in the second year of the town's existence, and about four miles of piping or mains laid that year. The system has been extended from year to year, as the town expanded in growth, until every street is supplied with pipes, and aggregating at the present time thirteen miles of mains. The system used is the Holly, and embodies a pumping capacity of about 500,000 gallons of water every twenty-four hours, although less than half that amount is required to meet the demands of the city at the present time. The water supply is furnished from three huge wells, and is inexhaustible. These wells are located near the river, are eighteen feet in diameter, thirty-two feet deep, and walled with a stone curbing eight inches in thickness. This stone curbing and the sand and gravel at the bottom form a perfect filter, and the water which is nearly as soft as rain water is presented to the consumer throughout the city as clear and pure as crystal. The engine and pump house, which is a substantial brick building, provided with modern engines and machinery, is located near the wells, and forces the water through a twelve-inch main to a large reservoir located on a hill in the center of the residence portion of the town, and about three-fourths of a mile distant from the works. The reservoir is sufficiently elevated to afford a direct pressure strong enough to carry the water to the top of nearly every building in the city. The system has already cost the company about \$75,000, and it is the intention of the company to eventually erect a large stand pipe, which will afford a much stronger pressure and insure the conveyance of water to the top of the highest buildings that may in the future be erected, and to any portion of the city. This system is not only a perfect fire protection but furnishes all the water used by the railway company, and is almost universally used by the citizens in their dwellings, places of business, and for fountain purposes. The McCook water works system is one of its most metropolitan features, and an acquisition that cannot be too highly prized by the inhabitants.

RAILWAY INTERESTS.

That the railway is the great civilizer of the present age, none will deny, and to this agency the wonderful development of the past decade in the great prairie west is mainly due. Notwithstanding the vast and grand natural resources and advantages that surround McCook on every hand, notwithstanding the presence of the broad and beautiful plains of agricultural wealth and beauty that now contribute to the growth and prosperity of the town, it is none the less

true that to the railway it owes its existence, and a large share of its success. The presence of the railway made possible the rapid development of the beautiful country that lies tributary to McCook; enhanced greatly its value, and has and will contribute to the wealth of the agricultural classes as well as to the city. McCook is situated upon the main line of the B. & M. railway system about midway between Omaha and Denver, and between Denver and Kansas City. It is one of the most important division stations on its lines in Nebraska being the home and the headquarters of an assistant general superintendent and a full corps of subordinate officials as well as hundreds of the employes of the company. The company are the owners here of over 300 acres of land upon which their buildings and yards are located. The number and dimensions of which will be largely increased during the coming year. The property of the company at the present time consists of several miles of side track, a large depot and office building, a large hotel and dining hall, two large ice houses, a brick round house with twenty stalls to which is now being added ten more, a blacksmith shop, store house, logging house, coal sheds, bath house, etc. They are engaged at the present time, in addition to the round house extension, in building a coal chute, 32x75 feet, with trestle approaches of about eight hundred feet in length, and a stone and brick oil house about twenty feet square. The improvements already made have incurred an expenditure of several hundred thousand dollars, but are a mere drop in the bucket in comparison to what is to follow. The material is already being accumulated for the beginning of a system of shops for repair and construction purposes, that will be when completed, the most extensive owned by the B. & M. company in the state, and will ultimately require a force of about three thousand men to operate. Next year will witness the construction of a machine shop 285 feet long by 125 feet in width, two stories high, an iron house 200 feet long by 75 wide, besides a large blacksmith shop, store house and other buildings of less importance. These buildings are all to be constructed in the most substantial manner, with Colorado sand stone foundations, while the superstructures will be of brick and iron. The completion of the company's works here, means an addition to McCook of four or five thousand people. The city at the present time is the headquarters of nearly forty train crews, and the number of men now employed in all departments amounts to nearly 500. The monthly disbursement of the railway company at the present time amounts to nearly \$25,000, and with the completion of their works two or three years hence, the amount paid out each month will be increased to nearly, or quite two hundred thousand dollars. The business of the B. & M. company alone will be sufficient to maintain a city of eight or ten thousand inhabitants. But there is every indication that other lines will soon build to this city. Surveys have already been made, and there is every indication that McCook will soon become a railway center. The conditions and circumstances at the present time fully warrant the above prediction. McCook is now, and always will be the metropolis and chief market place of Southwestern Nebraska a section of country unsurpassed in beauty and fertility, the broad acres of which teeming with hogs, corn and cattle, forming too rich a prize to be left to the quiet possession of any one or two railway companies.

The foregoing briefly sketches the main features that have contributed to the growth of McCook in the past, but there are numerous other advantages scarcely less important, some of which we desire to present to the notice of the readers of this paper. In the first place McCook is the natural trade center of a section of country amply capable of maintaining 50,000 people. The country is being rapidly developed, and already contains some of the finest stock and grain farms in the state. The Republican river offers opportunities for cheap manufacturing scarcely excelled in the western country. The peculiar course of the stream renders the construction of a

CLIMATIC ADVANTAGES

of the most desirable character. The idea entertained to a certain extent by some of the people of the more easterly states, that this section of Nebraska is a drought-stricken country is entirely erroneous. The magnificent crops of corn, wheat, rye and oats of the present season effectually give the lie to any such declaration. The rainfall is not only sufficient, but as a general thing comes at the season when most desired. The indications at the present time, September 1st, are favorable for a most bountiful harvest in all the various products of the soil. The climate of Southwestern Nebraska is perhaps, all things considered, the most desirable of any portion of the Western States. McCook is situated in latitude 40°, and with an elevation of about 2,000 feet above the level of the sea, a mild climate combined with a dry, pure atmosphere, insures the utmost freedom from malarial or fever-producing causes. This is a country of almost perpetual sunshine, where the extremes of temperature are rarely known. The winters are mild, while the summers with cool evenings in the hottest season, are delightful, and from statistical sources we learn that Nebraska is one of the most healthful regions in the Union. To the farmer of small or ample means, this country offers unparalleled opportunities. To the man who is possessed of a few hundred dollars, this country presents better opportunities for securing a home and a competency than it is possible for any government land district with its free lands to offer. It is unnecessary for us to say why the above statement is true, for a little thought on the part of any intelligent farmer will convince

WATER POWER

practicable and comparatively inexpensive. And an outlay in that

direction could not fail to yield a handsome return for the money expended in such an enterprise. What the Rock and Cedar rivers are to Illinois and Iowa, the Republican is to Nebraska, and the day is not far distant when its waters will be utilized as the propelling force for the wheels of numerous industries. There are numerous manufacturing industries that could be operated here with every assurance of immediate and continued profit. A flouring mill, a paper mill, an oat meal mill, and a canning factory are among the various enterprises for which this locality offers exceptional opportunities, any or all of which would be welcomed by the people, and would be encouraged by a liberal bonus of money and real estate. There is not only a large and rapidly increasing home market for the products of such enterprises, but the rapid development of the surrounding country will soon make the presence of such industries absolutely necessary.

SURROUNDING COUNTRY.

A few words in reference to the country embraced in McCook's immediate surroundings may be of interest to the distant reader of this chapter. Red Willow county in which McCook is situated, contains 720 square miles, or 460,800 acres of as fine agricultural land as the sun ever smiled down upon. The county consists of a series of valleys and table lands, with a variety of soils adapted to the growth of all the cereal or root crops known to a temperate latitude. The country is finely watered by numerous streams, the most important being the Republican, which flows through the central part of the county from west to east, the Beaver in the southern part of the county, the Red Willow in the northerly portion, together with the Driftwood, Medicine, Dry Creek, and numerous other streams of greater or less importance forming a water supply equal, if not superior, to that of any other county in the state. The large amount of bottom or natural meadow land makes this county exceedingly valuable to the stock and dairy man, and industries that are already quite well represented throughout the county. Red Willow county is a fair example of half a score or more of others forming the southwestern portion of the state, some of which contain extensive tracts of government land. All this section of country is being rapidly occupied and improved, however, and in a few years will be all dotted over with towns and villages which will depend largely upon McCook as a supply depot for many articles of merchandise, and a market for the surplus products of the farm and herd. McCook is possessed of

many of its accuracy. The man who has experienced the hardships incident to the homesteader's or pre-emptor's life, in a country remote from railways, markets, schools and society, the increased expense for provisions and fuel, will find that at the end of five years' residence, that he has expended more than the purchase money for a quarter section of land, where all the conveniences and advantages referred to above are ready at hand. There are others, and to the farmer, more important reasons, who are attracted to the beauties of nature, stands this beautiful young city of magical growth; the pivot, the center, in itself magnificent, and from which, a few years hence, will radiate railway lines to almost every portion of this vast empire of agricultural wealth and beauty, establishing an interchange of commercial interest, that will aid in the work of general development, and greatly multiply the industries and business enterprises of one of the fairest of Nebraska's fair cities.

THE LINCOLN LAND CO.

Thomas Colfer, resident manager, why this section should be preferably to the untried government land districts further north and west, and which are contained in no words, "water and soil." To the stock farmer especially, good water is an all-important consideration when selecting land. A productive and durable soil is also a very desirable feature, as it will require less expense to maintain productive qualities.

Many a renter in the states farther east, pays out every two years in rent alone, money enough to purchase outright, a corresponding number of acres in this country, where the natural advantages are in every way superior, and where market and social advantages are equally as good as in the older states.

The elements here exist for the upbuilding of a large city, and to accomplish which only requires the united and persistent efforts on the part of those who are interested in the growth and welfare of the town. The estimate of future growth and development is not in any sense a matter of speculation. The cheap lands of this section of the country are being rapidly settled and improved, the development of which will also add greatly to McCook's prosperity.

McCook presents a degree of solidity that is rarely found in the new towns of a newly settled country. Business and residence buildings are constructed in the most substantial manner, and of pleasing architectural designs. There are numerous brick blocks upon the business thoroughfares that would be a credit to any city however great, and several others that are in course of construction.

The town embodies all the market advantages of an old settled country. The business men and merchants carry large and complete stocks of goods, three solid banking institutions, all doing an extensive business, indicate a most healthful financial condition. Active competition in all departments of trade insures low prices for all commodities, while the constant demand for all the products of the farm gives to the agricultural classes of the surrounding country, a most satisfactory market for everything that they have to sell. Many of the merchants of this city are already doing a jobbing trade, and it will not be long until the wholesale trade in certain lines of merchandise will become a distinct and important feature.

To the capitalist, manufacturer, mechanic or laborer, this locality offers the most desirable opportunities. McCook is the growing city of Nebraska, to-day, and the man who invests his money here now, will reap the benefit of a rapidly augmented valuation.

Our limited space will admit of but a mere glance at the numerous advantages here offered, but that McCook and its surroundings combine more elements that are calculated to contribute to the success of all classes of business than almost any other locality in the great prairie west, is a fact that can be readily demonstrated by investigation. Good water, a healthful climate, good schools and churches, good society and excellent market facilities are all elements that commend this city and country to that world of immigration that is continually moving towards the setting sun.

The center of such grand and noble resources, with landscape sur-