



Greater Omaha

OMAHA AS A RAILROAD CENTER

The day has passed when it is a mark of importance or distinction for any town or city to be "on a railroad." In the earlier history of development of the great west the railroad meant much. It means much today—perhaps more than ever before—but in a different sense. The business man who today seeks a location for his enterprise devotes perhaps more attention to the question of transportation than to any feature incident to the success of his undertaking.

Omaha is today the best distributing point in the west, owing to the peculiarly well developed system of railroads that center here. The Missouri river, according to the plans of the transportation managers, is made a basing point for all freight rates in the West and Omaha is the natural and logical center of an area greater than that tributary to any other city on the Missouri. The entire west, from the Missouri to the Pacific coast, on the north to the Dakotas and on the south to Arkansas and Texas found a market and a freight rate that makes it advantageous to deal with Omaha manufacturers and jobbers.

With eight trunk lines running east of the Missouri to Chicago and eastern points; with Nebraska threaded and cobwebbed by railway lines, with the western headquarters of several of the greatest of the transcontinental lines, Omaha is developing as a shipping and commercial center, more rapidly than any city in the country.

For the last year, Omaha railroads handled a total of 4,433,000,000 tons of freight, divided, in round numbers as follows:

Grain to north and south and eastern points 1,025,480
Freight from east, not including grain 876,730
Freight from west, excepting grain 742,960
Freight from east, including grain 718,000
Grain received from different roads 1,087,160

Divided into cars of thirty tons to the car, this freight business of Omaha would fill 147,650 cars or would make one solid train 844 miles long, or nearly long enough to reach Chicago and back. That was the story for 1906. Railroad men agree that the business for 1907 will exceed that, in point of tonnage by at least 35 per cent, despite the lessened shipments due to a shorter crop in certain sections of the territory tributary to Omaha.

Railroad managers state that there is not an hour in the year, day or night, that they do not have a freight train on every ten miles of their lines between Omaha and the Pacific coast. Most of this vast tonnage, grain, live stock, produce, and merchandise originates in Omaha in return for goods sold to western merchants. The business has grown to such remarkable proportions that the one complaint of the transportation companies is their inability to find facilities sufficient to handle properly the enormous mass of traffic offered.

The striking feature of the situation is that it is permanent and not the result of any special crop or movement of traffic. It is a natural and inevitable result of the development of the west and is certain to continue as the country grows. Omaha is in position to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by this unusual development, all of which aids in making the city the "Market Town" of the Trans-Mississippi region.

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