

## OLD OMAHA DIRECTORY FOUND

Gazetteer of 1864 Containing Records  
Uncovered in State Library.

### DECIDES OLD SETTLER DISPUTE

"Write Up" of the Town of 5,000 Is  
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Marvelous indeed are the changes made in Omaha since 1865, just forty-one years ago, when the city could claim scarcely 5,000 people and was fighting numerous rivals for commercial supremacy. There are some people living in Omaha today who live in those days of struggle, the memory of which must be burned deep on their brains. There are others who have crossed over the river, leaving behind monuments that will live forever in the magnificent city, the foundation of which they helped to build.

Omaha is still making history every day, though the pace set by the early settlers is hard to keep up or surpass. A splendid record of the old days was brought to light by H. C. Lindsay, state librarian, recently, when it has been for years uncalled for and perhaps forgotten. It is a little volume entitled "Cath's Omaha Directory—1865-1866." The author in his preface says: "Our object in the compilation of the present work was to give a record of Omaha's past, present and prospective advantages. Whether or not we have succeeded in producing such a book we leave to the impartial critic and the 'old inhabitant' to determine."

#### Record of Real Estate Business.

In 1864 the real estate transfers in Omaha amounted to \$25,000. In 1865 the real estate transfers amounted to \$176,000, a sample of the pace set in the old days. The enterprise of the early settlers can be better understood when it is recalled that at the time of the compilation of the book Omaha was about 12 years old, had 1,000 people, had been through a boom, the financial panic of 1857 and the civil war. Nebraska had about 30,000 people and had sent its quota of soldiers to the front for Uncle Sam. The following incidents and historical information were secured from the publication:

In the summer of 1865 Dr. George L. Miller entertained at his residence those Omaha settlers who reached here previous to 1864 and 1865. According to the account of the affair published at the time the following were present: A. D. Jones, the first postmaster; A. J. Poppleton, the first attorney and the first man to mail a letter from Omaha; Bill Snowden, who dug the first grave and became the first auctioneer; John Logan, who was the first man married in Omaha; Bill Brown, who claimed the first township; Dr. Dow, who formed the company to lay out the city; Dr. Miller, who attended the first ill person in Omaha; Withnell brothers, who laid the first brick; Seiden, who fired the first fire; Colonel A. R. Gilmer, who was the first United States land officer ever appointed in Nebraska; James McGrath, who was the first merchant in Omaha; H. D. Johnson, who was the first fellow green enough to run for congress in Nebraska; Captain McPherson, who ran the first steam-ferry and runs a big one now; Captain Downey, who carried stakes to drive down and mark out the streets, lots and blocks; Experience Estabrook, who was the first United States district attorney for Nebraska; Joseph W. Paddock, the first clerk of the house of representatives and the first old bachelor; Colonel Louis Miller, present mayor of the city, and many others were present.

#### Society News in City Directory.

The published account does not say how the time was spent at this gathering and neither does it say what refreshments were served. It did say, however, that all had a good time. There are people still living in Omaha whose names are mentioned among the guests, including the host.

The little volume contains the record of the organization of the Early Settlers' association, January 2, 1866, the publication of which may settle the often disputed point as to who was really the first settler in Douglas county and Omaha. The organization, which was perfected just twelve years after Omaha was settled, is believed to have made a correct compilation of facts relative to the early settlement of this part of Nebraska. The object of the organization, as set out, was to preserve facts and statistics of Omaha and Douglas county which would be of value and interest to future Omahans. The officers of the association in 1866 were as follows: Dr. Enoch Lowe, president; Dr. George L. Miller, vice-president; A. D. Jones, secretary and treasurer. The association was formed exclusively of Omaha and Douglas county settlers, and it reported the following members, with the date of their arrival in the territory:

#### Record of the Settlers.

William D. Brown, June 1, 1865.  
Enos Lowe, June 25, 1865.  
H. D. Johnson, October, 1865.  
A. D. Jones, November, 1865.  
C. H. Downey, April 22, 1864.  
A. R. Gilmer, May 24, 1864.  
William P. Snowden, July 4, 1864.  
O. R. Soden, September 25, 1864.  
William Gray, September, 1864.  
John Withnell, October, 1864.  
J. W. Fiddock, September 24, 1864.  
S. E. Rogers, October, 1864.  
A. J. Poppleton, October 22, 1864.  
Loren Miller, October 23, 1864.  
George L. Miller, October 29, 1864.  
James G. McGrath, November, 1864.  
E. Estabrook, June 22, 1865.  
John Davis, March 28, 1865.  
H. H. Visscher, April 2, 1865.  
David Richards, April, 1865.  
R. N. Withnell, May 2, 1865.  
Edwin Patrick, May 7, 1865.  
E. H. Warner, May 10, 1865.  
John Logan, July 8, 1865.  
O. P. Ingalls, September 7, 1865.  
John P. McPherson, October 25, 1865.  
Roy R. Gaylord, December 25, 1865.  
Misses Schenck, April, 1865.  
J. M. Morrison, November 16, 1865.  
W. W. Wimber and family, June 5, 1865.  
Allen Reed, May 28, 1865.  
J. C. Reeser, July 26, 1864.  
A. H. Moore, April 22, 1864.  
M. C. Stephen, September 4, 1865.  
M. B. Riley, August 21, 1865.  
Daniel Gaunt, May 12, 1865.  
J. W. Pitman, December 19, 1865.  
S. A. Orchard, November 15, 1865.  
J. H. Schier, August 25, 1865.

## Mineral Waters

The mineral water business has for many years been specially developed in this country. We buy our waters direct from the springs or if a foreign water, direct from the importers. We are thus able to make the lowest prices and to absolutely guarantee freshness and purity. We sell 100 kinds. Lowest prices by case or dozen.

Write for Catalogue.

**SEEMAN & MCCONNELL DRUG CO.**  
Cor. 18th and Dodge.  
**OWL DRUG COMPANY,**  
Cor. 18th and Harvey.

E. Estabrook, January 22, 1865.  
R. S. Knox, January 1, 1865.

**Margaret Ferry the First Child.**  
The first white child born in Omaha or Douglas county was Margaret Ferry. She was born in October, 1864. Her father was James Ferry, who laid the first stone for the foundation of the old statehouse, used later as offices by the Union Pacific Railroad company.

The author of the publication said A. D. Jones was the pioneer squatter, the first postmaster and first lawyer and kept the records of the "Ancient Nebraska."

The city, the author said, derived its name from a tribe of Indians who formerly owned the town site. In November, 1863, Mr. Jones crossed the river from the Iowa side and squatted on a claim in what is now, or was in 1865, the principal business part of town. He called his claim "Park White," because on it was a beautiful grove of trees. At this time the Indians had not deeded their lands to the government and they seriously objected to such a hustler as Mr. Jones encroaching upon their rights. They promptly complained to the Indian agent, a Mr. Hefner, who notified the first settler to vacate, just as the landlord does in Omaha at the present time when rent is past due. But Mr. Jones didn't like the idea and refused to move. He went the Indians one better, and applied for and received his commission as postmaster. Just as soon as he received his commission he became a citizen, and on May 25 moved into his "postoffice." As far back as 1865, "it was stated of him that he generally carried his delivery mail in his hat, postage boxes at that time not having come into use."

#### Indiana Sell Site for the City.

In 1864 the Indians disposed of the present site of Omaha to the government, and the location having natural advantages, immigrants began to pour in and in a very short time, the surrounding country was staked out in claims. The government at that time had not provided the settlers with any officials to carry out the laws, so the settlers organized a "Squatters or Claims Association," the object as set out in this historical record being mutual protection and the enforcement of laws. The first claim house was erected in 1864 by the Council Bluffs & Nebraska Ferry company, known as the "St. Nicholas."

Accepting the headwaters for the old settlers. Here they met and discussed questions of the day and promulgated laws. It was about this time that the little village was given the name of "Omaha," Mr. Johnson of the "Council Bluffs Bugle" having given credit for originating and suggesting the name. In 1865 "Old Bill Brown," as he was called, was given the exclusive right by the county commissioners to run a ferry, and he at once began operations. A. D. Jones then organized the Council Bluffs & Omaha Ferry company, "Old Bill Brown" sold out three-fourths of his privileges under his original charter to the new company. The new organization then purchased a ferryboat called the "Marian" and before there was scarcely an inhabitant in the new country outside the city, "its shrill whistle" could be heard for miles.

#### First Dancer and First Preacher.

The first brick building erected in the town was built by John Davis, who owned it. It was located west of Child & Co.'s soap factory, which may be recalled by later settlers now living. The first religious service was held in a house owned by Allen Davis, by a Methodist preacher, Rev. Cooper, in 1864. The first dance was held in a log house built by William Snowden, near Jackson street. The dance was opened by William Snowden and A. D. Jones.

The first number of the first newspaper circulated in the town appeared in July, 1864. It was edited and published by J. Patterson in "The Bugle" office at Council Bluffs and had no political complexion. Its name is not given. The next newspaper started was the "Nebraska," a democratic paper published by Strickland & Sherman. The first numbers were distributed among the members of the territorial council.

#### Staged Daily and Hourly Radiate from here to all points east, west, north and south. The Bousman route, which starts from here, shortens the distance to Virginia City and other points in Idaho and Montana about 50 miles, and possesses the advantages of an abundance of water and timber and avoids the desert by way of taking other routes. This city has a future before it which will more than realize the ardent expectations of its most sanguine admirers."

Regarding packed lines, the directory says: "The Omaha and St. Joseph packet line running in connection with the Hannibal & St. Joseph railroad start packets daily for St. Joseph, connecting with cars at the latter place for the east. The Omaha and St. Louis Packet company has five magnificent packets, the Montana, Captain Throckmorton, Glasgow, Captain Lagomarsino, Evening Star, Captain Murphy, Cornelia, Captain N. Hooker, Columbia, Captain Barnes. The packets were scheduled to leave St. Louis, so a regular tri-weekly packet line was maintained. As a conclusion to his historical sketch the author says:

"Staged daily and hourly radiate from here to all points east, west, north and south. The Bousman route, which starts from here, shortens the distance to Virginia City and other points in Idaho and Montana about 50 miles, and possesses the advantages of an abundance of water and timber and avoids the desert by way of taking other routes. This city has a future before it which will more than realize the ardent expectations of its most sanguine admirers."

Regarding the first steamship, the author says: "The first steamship to call at Omaha was the 'City of Omaha,' which arrived in 1865, having been built at Council Bluffs and was the first vessel to call at Omaha. The ship was 100 feet long and 15 feet wide. The logs on the business streets were originally 6x6 feet, but they have since been subdivided.

#### The Capital Fight Opens.

It was about the same time that the location of the capital became a matter of vital interest. Every point in the territory with a few settlers claimed it. The fight was furious, but Omaha being centrally located and having many advantages selected for the capital and in 1865 the first territorial legislature met here.

The following is a list of the members of the legislature of the Early Settlers' association, January 2, 1866, the publication of which may settle the often disputed point as to who was really the first settler in Douglas county and Omaha. The officers of the association in 1866 were as follows: A. D. Jones, speaker; Dr. George L. Miller, vice-president; Dr. George L. Miller, president; Dr. George L. Miller, secretary and treasurer. The association was formed exclusively of Omaha and Douglas county settlers, and it reported the following members, with the date of their arrival in the territory:

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#### Lawmen from Five States.

A large proportion of the members of the legislature were non-residents of Nebraska, a condition one met with in new territories. Colonel J. L. Sharpe was a resident of Iowa as were M. H. Clark and L. Nickols. E. R. Boyle resided in North Carolina. W. A. Richardson in Quincy, Ill. D. W. Johnson in St. Joseph, Mo. The record gives an illustration of the hunting ability of the Johnstons and probably caused the origin of the phrase "to much Johnson." The Missourian, while serving as a Nebraska legislator, secured the usual ten days leave of absence, went down into Kansas and was a candidate for the legislature of that state. He was defeated only by a very small vote. When it is recalled that these were the days when slavery was being carried onto the new territories, the great interest of the non-residents in legislative affairs, is accounted for, says the record.

The little volume contains an account of the legislative session that does not seem

possible at this time. It was the occasion of the first visit paid by a woman to a session of the council. Mrs. A. D. Jones was the first woman to attend a session of the council and as she walked into the august assembly the members were so impressed that one of them, H. Bradford, composed a poem on the impulse of the moment and delivered it to the body. Here it is:

"Though man is called creation's lord,  
The earth was but a desert broad,  
Till cheered by lovely woman's smile."

So in this hall of state stood man.  
With passions roused by fierce debate,  
The entrance of dear woman's form,  
Smote softly down those looks of hate.

#### Transportation Talked Then.

Regarding Omaha's transportation facilities the directory says: "The Missouri river is to be bridged at this point, which will give direct and uninterrupted communication with Chicago and other eastern cities. The railroad between here and New York. Already there are five railroads which center at this point, viz.: The Platte river railroad, which is now finished to Forest City and will be completed to this point by January 1, 1867. The Iowa division of the Chicago & Northwestern railroad is now completed and running daily trains to Rock Island, and the Illinois Central & Milwaukee railroad from Davenport west, and the May 25 started into its 'postoffice' office. As far back as 1865, "it was stated of him that he generally carried his delivery mail in his hat, postage boxes at that time not having come into use."

Following is a list of the early settlers:

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