

THE CITY OF  
PLATTSMOUTH

One of the Most Beautifully Located Cities in Nebraska.

## ON THE MISSOURI RIVER

In Cass County, One of the Best Counties in Nebraska

## A CITY OF 5000 POPULATION

Who Extend Open Arms to all Those Who May Come Here to Locate—Beautiful Homes and Pleasant Surroundings.

Cass county is one of the oldest counties in the State of Nebraska, and Plattsmouth is the county-seat, situated at the confluence of the Platte and Missouri rivers. The valleys and hillsides are finely timbered and for fruit culture there is no equal to Cass county in the United States. Plattsmouth, so named from its site at the mouth of the Platte river may be called the corner stone of the great State of Nebraska, because from the day that it was selected as the initial point of the B. & M. R. R. in Nebraska the future of the state was assured, farmers, home-seekers and speculators came in one continuous string until today she stands without a peer in the world's history for development. Every nation on the globe has sent their representatives and they having been received with open hands—so to speak—settled and became prosperous and wealthy. Fifty years ago the prairie grass and wild roses that covered the county of Cass knew not the touch of a plowshare nor spade and today its 540 square miles produce more than double its area in any other section of the Union. It must not be inferred from this that farming alone is carried on here, such is not the case. Several towns and hamlets bear evidence of the wealth that was hidden beneath the surface of the soil, manufacturing and financial institutions, temples of education and religion that any nation might well feel proud of dot its area, and from most every farm in the county the tall spire of some grand tabernacle of the Christian faith meets alike the gaze of the farmer when he lifts his hat to wipe his brow and the innocent child who watches the flight of the birds wending their way across the expanse of the heavens, reminding as it were, the farmer that some day his days of labor will be crowned by an endless mid-day rest and peace in that place where its tall index finger seems to indicate, and to the latter it acts as a beacon light directing its youthful steps in the path trod by Him whose mansion is above.

The people who come west at the present time are not all tillers of the soil and for some unexplained reason more than nine-tenths of the editions that have been published about Nebraska harp on that one string, "lands for farms and homes." This is not said depreciatingly of the land by any means because some of the richest men in Nebraska made their money from yields of the farms they took up less than 2 score years ago and these farms are as productive today as ever they were and no doubt will so continue, but there are a great number of people who do not care so much for land as for a place to locate and invest their money in some mercantile line or professional calling, where the highest state of civilization exists, where good law-abiding people reside, where good schools

exist and churches are established, to all those the people of Plattsmouth say, "Come!" To the merchant and manufacturer, there can be no better place found; within twenty-one miles of Omaha, the manufacturers can escape the high taxation of that metropolis and yet can get his wares into the greatest distributing point in the entire west; to the stock raiser this is indeed a mecca.

**The Topography**  
of Cass county is in keeping with its location. Any effort to portray its charming landscape must end in failure. If there is a lovelier land between sunrise and the golden gate, the writer has yet to see it. Fully forty per cent of the county is valley and bottoms of the fairest description. Indeed, it is a land of valleys, only equalled in the softness and beauty of contour by the surrounding counties. The remaining sixty per cent of the county is made up of graceful undulating prairies, interspersed with pretty tables, the whole smooth enough for the plowman. There are more good lands, more fine farms, more genuine happiness, prosperity and thrift than in the same area in any other part of the union. For Cass County's future we entertain none but the most flattering predictions, and we express only the opinions of every man and woman who visits this portion of the State.

**Plattsmouth at Present.**  
Having carried our readers over a strange, wild and weird route in the history of Nebraska, and Plattsmouth in particular, we will now introduce them to Plattsmouth of modern times. A few words concerning the early history of our city may not come amiss in this place.

The first settlement made in Plattsmouth was that of Samuel Martin, who, at a point which is now diagonally opposite the present depot. Mr. Martin, as well as the early settlers who soon joined him, was not slow in recognizing the advantages of this place for the location of a city, and accordingly they organized the Plattsmouth Town Co. in October, 1845, and caused the town site to be surveyed and platted. In November of that year, by a special act of the legislature, the city of Plattsmouth was incorporated. Just previous to this the first frame house was erected which also had the honor of being the pioneer hotel under the name of the "Farmer's Hotel."

The city passed through all the phases a new city in a new country usually does, without any great outburst until 1869, when the B. M. R. R. Co. decided to locate their starting point here. Col. T. Doane, chief engineer and general superintendent, had charge of the work from the start and from a few buildings, the company has added repeatedly until at present there is \$2,000,000 invested in the car shops at this point, but of this we will speak more in detail later on.

To the large surplusage of eastern capital now seeking investment in the west, and to the many industries in search of more central location in the midst of the consumers of their products, Plattsmouth offers superior advantages that cannot fail to be ultimately recognized. The object and aim of this paper shall be to hasten that recognition.

Situated as the city is, at the junction of the Platte and the great Missouri river, at the gateway of the greatest railway system that traverses the state, and being indeed the central point of supply, manufacture and repair of that ambitious and growing system, Plattsmouth presents first an assurance that every dollar planted in a legitimate business within her growing limit will sustain a healthy increase in the immediate future. The city is surrounded by highly cultivated agricultural lands as rich and fertile as can anywhere be found, the products of which would supply raw material for countless industries, and furnish food for their myriad of artisans. The city is easily accessible from all directions, and lines of railroad daily run their trains into and out of the place to and from the north, east, south and west, radiating to the great trade centers and traversing the richest and most thickly populated portions of the west. Assurances of additional facilities are already in sight for the near future. Land is cheap, and the establishment of a manufacturing plant does not involve the outlay of an immense fortune in a simple location. The latter can, in all probability, be had for the asking for any worthy or promising industry. Good homes are easily available for the laborers required to man and operate any number of industries—a great desideratum—and such is the city's location among and upon its seven wooded hills that every home can be made a bower of beauty at little expense.

The climate is not surpassed, nor indeed is it equalled in this section, her location giving Plattsmouth effective protection from the vicissitudes of the weather. The food and water are good and good health always prevails to a remarkable degree. The school facilities are unsurpassed, as can be seen by reference to another column. Of her society this city may well be proud. It is marked by a spirit of geniality and a degree of sincerity seldom found in cities of the magnitude of Plattsmouth.

In her prosperity of today there is none of the element so universally prevalent, lightly termed "boom," but her stability is everywhere certain and apparent. She has enterprises sustaining her that cannot fail. She is founded upon a rock.

**Inducements to Manufacturers.**  
The inducements for capitalists to invest their means in the engagement of manufacturers in our city are not surpassed in any city in the state; for the favorable location of all manufacturing establishments we can point with pride to a surrounding agricultural country peculiarly fitted for any industry wherein are manufactured farming implements. An excellent opportunity for the establishment of a creamery is presented here, the surrounding country being abundantly able to furnish all milk and cream necessary, and besides there being no creamery in the entire county, which is the fifth wealthiest in the state. A shoe manufactory would thrive here owing to the few manufactories in the entire state. Inducements would be offered by the Commercial club to all capitalists who contemplate engaging in such industry, and communications addressed to the secretary of the Commercial club will receive prompt response and enlarging upon the advantages offered.

**Public Health.**  
The high altitude of this portion of Nebraska insures to all new comers a healthful climate, free from that atmosphere which, by reason of sudden changes, induces sickness and produces depression.

The winters, while they are at times severe, are nevertheless healthy and when winter sets in no fear need be entertained that

sudden changes will occur to occasion sickness, such as is prevalent in other portions of the country.

The summers are pleasant and autumn extends into November and at present writing the weather is charming. Invalids desiring a healthy location should live in this location.

Plattsmouth presents to manufacturers, who may be wise enough to forecast the future, striking advantages which they can hardly afford to overlook. Exceptionally good mill and factory sites can be secured on or near the Burlington and Missouri Pacific sites. The opportunities offered here are as great if not greater than at any place in the middle west. Land can be secured at a nominal price—some of our citizens standing ready to donate desirable ground in order to encourage the coming in of enterprises of the right sort. Flour, corn, and alfalfa mills would be sure to reap a rich harvest. There is a great wheat, corn and alfalfa country all around us, and most of this big yield is being shipped to other points, because there are no facilities for handling it at home.

The city of Plattsmouth today is distinctively a retail and distributing center, which makes a clear field for the manufacturer. The town needs a planing mill badly and a good grain elevator would be a fine investment. South of the city is one of the best undeveloped lime stone quarries in America. There is also a splendid deposit of high-grade clay, suitable for vitrified brick, which will make the fortune of the man who starts a brick yard here. The shipping facilities are the best. The Burlington and Missouri Pacific railway systems traverse the entire middle west. The proximity of the city of Omaha is also a valuable asset. It gives our manufacturers a near market for his products.

The manufacturer who locates here will receive a hearty welcome. Our business men are hospitable and progressive and are ready to extend a helping hand to any worthy enterprises that seek to locate. The banking facilities of the town are excellent and all the local banking houses are under the management of men who are liberal in their dealings and do all in their power to foster home enterprises.

Plattsmouth at the present time has about five thousand people, composed entirely of whites. They are unassuming in every particular, yet active, energetic and business like. You will find the same culture and refinement as exists in the larger cities, and the men and women are, perhaps, more extended and expansive in their views. Their hospitality to the stranger is proverbial and they make good neighbors and friends.

The principal business thoroughfare of the city is Main street. This is an unusually broad highway, running west from the Burlington depot to the corporate limits, with wide cement sidewalks all the way. The street is well lighted and like all the rest of the business district, is paved with brick.

On Main street, between the depot and Sixth street, are located the banks, most of the big retail stores and the leading hotels. Sixth street, also, has some fine establishments. The location could not be better for the retailer, and in the opinion of many it will eventually become the great retail center.

**Stores and Storekeepers.**

The desirability of a locality as a home depends largely upon the character of its stores and storekeepers. No one can find much comfort in a town where the necessities and comforts of life are not within reach. Therefore, high-class stores and storekeepers do much to draw people into a community and develop it. Most developments of Plattsmouth may be credited to the business men and women of the city, who have either instigated or loyally supported every movement that would benefit the commercial or social interests of the community. The mercantile establishments conducted by these gentlemen equal, and in many cases, surpass those found in other localities, not only in the magnitude and variety of their stock, but in the handsome appointments of their stores and in the artistic display of the merchandise. The show windows that line Main and Sixth streets are a great ornament to the thoroughfares, and give the city a metropolitan appearance. The merchants, as a whole, are a representative body of men—each of whom is a master of his line, striving in the best way to cater to his trade. That they have pleased the public is evidenced by the great volume of business done in this territory.

**Beautiful Homes.**

Home life in Plattsmouth is at its best. The elevation of the residential sections, overlooking the river, make this an ideal place for a summer home or permanent residence. There are many fine streets with beautiful dwellings, splendid trees, well-kept lawns and out-buildings, which reflect the taste and prosperity of our people. Frame structures naturally predominate though there are some good examples of brick, stone and concrete construction. Some fine parks have been laid out in the home section, which with the expenditure of a little time and money will add much to the beauty of the city and the pleasure of the people. The home section is well lighted and the same fine system of cement sidewalk runs from the business district to every part.

Desirable building lots can be purchased at a reasonable price and there is no question of the fact that they will greatly increase in value in the next few years. When the interurban railroad connecting Plattsmouth with Omaha is completed the price of these lots will go up by leaps and bounds, and now is the time to get in on the ground floor.

**Public Schools.**

The people of Plattsmouth are justly proud of their public schools. Recognizing the part played by education in the life of the community, the citizens of Plattsmouth early made provision for the schools of the city and have always followed a liberal policy in maintaining them. Owing to the steady and constant growth of the city the schools have continually been enlarged until at the present time seven modern brick buildings are required to house the children. These are located at convenient points. No city in this section of Nebraska has better equipment as to buildings. Each building is modern in architecture, and provides the proper amount of light and are well ventilated and heated. The courses offered in the high school are such that the school is ranked among the highest. The equipment for laboratory work in each department is exceptionally complete—making it possible for the students to pursue their work under the most modern methods of instruction. New equipment is purchased each year that the newest devices may be followed by the pupils. Three courses of study are offered—the Latin, German and Normal training. The Normal training department has been one of the strong features of the work of the school. Many of the rural teachers of this section are graduates of the Plattsmouth high school. Each year this department enrolls many pupils preparing to teach. The grades also are maintaining well balanced courses of study and what is being accomplished in every department is a source of satisfaction to the patrons. To the man of family who is seeking a location where his children may have the best of educational advantages Plattsmouth has as much to offer as any town of its size in the country.

**An Astor Family Custom.**

It is said that, according to the custom of the Astor family, Mrs. Vincent Astor renounced her dower rights in the vast Astor estate before her marriage. This has been done for generations in lieu of a settlement. The settlement is seldom generous in proportion to the vast wealth of the family. Vincent Astor's grandmother, Mrs. William Astor, renounced her dower right; so did Mrs. Ava Willing Astor and Mrs. Madeleine Force Astor.—Exchange.

THE EARLY DAYS  
IN NEBRASKAWhen the Early Settlers Crossed the Plains  
With Ox Teams

## ENCOUNTER NARROW ESCAPES

Plattsmouth the Starting Point, Where the  
Wagons Were Loaded With Goods

(By Basil S. Ramsey.)

In the early pioneer days of Nebraska, it is a well known fact that many farmers in the eastern counties were, to a certain extent, engaged in freighting on the plains. The products of the farm, especially that of corn, were hauled in wagons with oxen, mules and horses, out to military forts, such as Fort Kearney, Fort Julesburg, Fort Laramie and to Denver, Colorado, and to the mining camps.

It was a common practice with many farmers, that as soon as corn was "laid by," hay in stack and harvesting completed, and in many instances threshing done, to load up as many wagons as were available, with farm products, especially that of shelled corn, raised the previous year, and with ox, mule or horse teams haul the same over the plains to some point mentioned above, where there was always a ready and remunerative market. Often the government at Washington was the purchaser of large quantities of corn for the use of the soldiers at the different forts.

At that time there were no railroads running much farther west than Eddyville, Iowa, but there were numerous steamboats running on the Missouri river, which conveyed large quantities of Nebraska-grown spring wheat to southern markets.

Concerning the stationing of the soldiers at the different points mentioned above and at other points, it was necessary for the government to do so, for the protection, not only of the large freighting element, but also for the protection of the large immigration then seeking homes or fortunes in the mining regions of Colorado, Wyoming, Montana and far-away California. It was no uncommon occurrence for a band of thieving, marauding Indians to rush from their concealment in bushes or ravines, upon a small train of freighters or emigrants and kill the men, make prisoners of the women and children, if any, and then take the oxen, mules or horses, empty the wagons of such goods and articles as they wanted and then leave the wagons in flames.

A notable illustration of this species of savagery was what is known in history as the Plum creek massacre, in 1864, just the year before the writer of this sketch made his trip as a "bull-whacker" to old Fort Julesburg. The flourishing city of Lexington, Dawson county, Nebraska, is located near where this terrible massacre by the Sioux Indians took place forty-nine years ago.

But the writer has commenced to write a condensed history of that trip as a "bull-whacker" to Fort Julesburg in 1865, and we shall have occasion to refer again to that Plum creek massacre.

It was in August, 1865, and the writer at that time lived on a farm just east of the old Mt. Pleasant townsite. He was just past 24 years old and had lived in Nebraska a little more than a year, engaged in farming and teaching school. His health was very poor and doctors had failed to cure him. He was advised to take a trip on the plains if he were physically able to do so, and this he concluded to do. A noted plainsman, who for a number of years had made at least one trip each year with his ox teams hauling freight to some point "out west," was recommended

to the writer. This plainsman was also one of the leading farmers of Cass County, owning a large and well improved farm, south west of old Factoryville on the south branch of Weeping Water and his name was William Altaffer. The writer was introduced to Mr. Altaffer and stated his business, that he wanted a job of "bull-whacking" with him in his train of ox wagons soon to start for a trip to Fort Julesburg; that he knew nothing about driving four yoke of oxen to one wagon; that his health was very poor and that he wanted to take the trip for two objects, to recuperate in health and to make all the money he could. Promptly and very frankly Mr. Altaffer employed the writer as driver of a team of four yoke of oxen at \$45 per month with board, lodging and washing. He also said to the writer in substance, as follows: "Mr. Ramsey, in view of the condition of your health, all you need to do, is to yoke your oxen when in the corral, hitch them to your wagon and drive. When we stop to go into camp, just unyoke your oxen and the others will take care of them. All you need then to do is to cook and prepare the meals, the other boys will carry fuel and build the camp fires, and also carry the necessary water for cooking and washing dishes." The writer said to him: "Why Mr. Altaffer, I know nothing about cooking—never cooked a thing in my life." His reply in substance was: "Never mind, I'll soon teach you the way and how, we freighters bake biscuit, potatoes, cook onions, fry 'sow-belly,' make coffee, even with 'buffalo chips' for fuel if we can't get any other kind." That settled the matter and we were to start within a few days.

Now as to the personnel of the "bull-whackers." The drivers were as follows: Payton, Abner and Eli Dillon, members of a pioneer family of Otter county, Neb.,—Wilson and ——— Clark whose first names the writer has forgotten if he ever knew. He is certain however, that they were neither Woodrow Wilson nor Champ Clark. Gus Blume, Joseph and Finney Tempest and the writer, Basil S. Ramsey, completed the list of the young "bull-whackers."

Of course the big one of the outfit was the owner and boss—William Altaffer. Altogether there were ten of us. Joe Tempest had no team to drive; his business was to tend the oxen at night when unyoked and turned out to graze, while he would sleep during the day. Finney Tempest had charge of the grub wagon which was hauled by two yoke of oxen, while to each of the other seven wagons four yoke were used in hauling the same. Of course, Boss Altaffer exercised general supervision over everything and especially over us boy drivers. The grub wagon was filled with an abundance of various kinds of food material, such as flour, corn meal, potatoes, onions, "sow-belly," as it was called, which consisted of the fattest smoked bacon the writer ever saw or heard of and was the only kind of meat we had except as we could capture wild game. The grub wagon also contained a small keg of spirits fermenting which was the only medicine we took with us. Boss Altaffer advised

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