



Keep step with Omaha

Small picture shows the intersection of 16th and Douglas streets, looking west from Fifteenth street, as this corner appeared in 1873. In the distance appears the old high school, originally built as the capitol of the territory of Nebraska. The large picture, showing the view south from Sixteenth and Douglas streets, shows great retail stores, banks, hotels and other structures typical of the great shopping district of the Gate City.



All photographs in this series donated to the merchants of Omaha by Louis R. Bostwick, commercial photographer.

"Financial Agent for the U. S. and designated depository for disbursing officers. This Bank deals in Exchange, Government Bonds, Vouchers, Gold Coin, BULLION AND GOLD DUST.

"Drafts drawn payable in gold or currency on the Bank of California, San Francisco."

Such was part of an advertisement published by the Omaha National Bank in The Bee on August 5, 1871. It was one of the few commercial advertisements in the paper.

Even the most frugal needs of Omaha's pioneers were supplied with great difficulty. Up the "Big Muddy" on flat boats from St. Louis, and overland in groaning freight wagons drawn by mules, oxen or horses came the stocks of Omaha's first storekeepers and traders.

The "Bull-trains," hauling their cargoes of ten or twenty tons each, would be sadly inadequate to supply the stocks in our stores and business houses now.

As the final supply post for the outgoing gold seeker of '49, and the first safe place for the deposit of gold and bullion coming from the west, Omaha gained fame as the Gate City. This sobriquet is even more apt in its application today. For the thin stream of people moving across the Overland Trail has become a vast population, settled for hundreds of miles across the prairies, and today Omaha serves whole states from its warehouses and immense retail stores.

Today the tedious wagon journey of only a few years ago is accomplished in minutes instead of hours. The citizen of Blair is no more remote from Omaha's retail shopping district than was the dweller in South Omaha only a few short years ago. The automobile, whose usefulness has been facilitated by the splendid motor roads which converge at Omaha, and the railroad, enabling citizens in a 40-mile radius to make quick time into the city, have made buying in Omaha easy and pleasant.

"Keep Step With Omaha!" Our city has undergone a metamorphosis from savage prairie to sophisticated metropolis in less than a century. As it has grown, its needs have multiplied many hundred-fold. The pioneer of old would scarce recognize in the plate glass-fronted, towering buildings of our retail district the descendants of the frontier stores that supplied his frugal needs. Omaha's retail business houses deserve unstinted praise for the manner in which they have kept a step ahead of Omaha's multitudinous needs.

Factories, shops and looms the whole world over find in Omaha's retail stores an outlet. This, in large measure, The Bee believes, is due to the desire of Omaha's retail business people to serve their trade completely and satisfactorily.

The Bee finds more than ordinary pleasure in having kept step with Omaha since the paper was founded by Edward Rosewater in 1871. For over half a century, The Bee has been a widely employed means of directing to the stores of Omaha the gigantic buying power of Omaha's trading area.

This is the second of a series of advertisements on Omaha, "The Retail Market," dedicated to the merchants of Omaha by The Omaha Morning Bee, THE EVENING BEE

Omaha the Great Shopping District of Nebraska