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THE WAGEWORKER
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AK-SAR-BEN IS NEBRASKA SHOW

Enchanting Festival of the North
Attracts Wide Attention.

STORY OF ITS ORGANIZATION.

Sixteen Years Prove Value of King
Ak-Sar-Ben to Trans-Missouri Coun-
try—Writer in Hearst's Papers Gives
State Big Boost for Its Enterprise.

By Will A. Campbell.

When Mark Twain wrote thirty years ago that no such an enchanting festival as the Mardi-Gras of New Orleans could live in the practical north any longer than it could live in London, one season—the distinguished journalist did not know what kind of men and women the future citizens of the middle-west would be; did not imagine that a foundation of business fraternalism would continue a great festival in the north just as surely as the love of romance would sustain such a festival in the south.

On the practical foundation of business, Ak-Sar-Ben has been built and has flourished. The festival is about to open in Omaha for the sixteenth year and for the first time membership has been limited because of the growing popularity of the enterprise.

Void of all those things which set the world in love with dreams and phantoms; without sham grandeur, gauds and chivalries, Ak-Sar-Ben is really a big "boosters" organization which has done more to put Nebraska on the map and renew the confidence of her people, than any other force in the trans-Missouri country.

This festival has everything which Mardi-Gras has and more. The romance is present; there are kings and knights; big sounding titles go thundering along after the names of its officers, but the soul of Ak-Sar-Ben is the co-operative spirit of the people of the middle-west the eternal effort of the business fraternity to boost for each other and for the trans-Missouri empire always.

Ak-Sar-Ben is more than a relic of the French and Spanish occupation with the religious features knocked out. It is more than a tawdry masquerade of knights and nobles clothed in silken and Paris-made gorgeousness. Ak-Sar-Ben has a reason and has had since its inception back in those hard days when Nebraska and Kansas were thought to be a blizzard cursed western waste in the winter; sun baked prairies—the harbors of cyclones and grasshoppers in the summer.

"We must do something," said the men of Nebraska in 1895 when the veins of commerce had become so sluggish that the state had lost confidence and lay bankrupt at the feet of the national government. What to do was a mystery. Eastern insurance and trust companies became possessed by foreclosing of the most valuable real estate, some owning from fifty to one hundred pieces of property widely separated. Out in the towns and cities of the state homes of men were being moved to the ranches to house cattle and sheep in the winter that the more comfortable quarters might take the place of nourishing food.

Thus the Ak-Sar-Ben festival was born in poverty; planned with the belief that it would bring the people of the state closer together; keep their money at home and working. As they joined hands to hold this festival sixteen years ago, confidence began to return; an opportunity has been given each fall for taking an inventory of the resources of the middle-west and a graphic lesson in the advantages of co-operation has been driven home to the people.

There was something about the selection of the name which increased this business fraternalism. True, the name is Neb-ras-ka reversed, but it is more than that. "Ak" is Syrian in its origin and is said to mean "head of a

household." Then "Sar" is good Arabic for "household," and "Ben" in the Hebrew is literally translated as "family" or "brothers of a household."

Thus there is a touch of Oriental enchantment about the word. There is Ak, the head of the household, or the king; sar, the board of twelve governors who manage the affairs of the festival; last there is the family called ben, which embraces the body of knights, and every true Nebraskan is a Knight of Ak-Sar-Ben whether he has been able to journey to the den in Omaha and attend the ceremonial or not.

The same spirits who organized Ak-Sar-Ben made the Trans-Mississippi and International exposition possible in 1898, and this enterprise marked the close of stagnation and opened the era of prosperity in the middle-west; the period of the '90's, dark with industrial gloom and commercial disaster, became history and the star of Nebraska began its ascendancy.

The men who have continued Ak-Sar-Ben for sixteen years and made it the most enchanting festival the north has ever known, are the men who have planted the boom seed deep in the soil and nourished it until Nebraska and Kansas are second to none in the individual prosperity of their people, and in the amount of food contributed annually to help feed a hungry world.

Ak-Sar-Ben has two distinct seasons. The first comes in the summer and is for initiating candidates. The second is festival time in the fall.

Beginning early in June the unknown king who is to be revealed and crowned in the fall, holds initiations in his great den every Monday evening. Business men of Omaha join each year and pay substantial initiation fees. Some 2,500 contribute thus annually. Every stranger within the state is knighted without paying a fee if recommended or accompanied by some Omaha knight.

The initiations are unique, change each year and are originated and executed entirely by Omaha talent. Some of the ceremonials "would linger in the memories of your great grandchildren" to use an expression of a distinguished visitor who knows.

Three presidents, McKinley, Taft and Roosevelt, have been initiated and Colonel Roosevelt returns this fall as a private citizen to renew his allegiance to the king. Foreign ministers, cabinet members, senators, army officers, governors of almost every western state and many eastern states, have journeyed to Omaha, been knighted and experienced the mysteries of Ak-Sar-Ben.

All this mystery vanishes in the fall. It is a season of great events. As the carnivals of Venice became famous in history because "no less than seven foreign princes and thirty thousand foreigners" attended them, so have the festivals of Ak-Sar-Ben attracted attention because one hundred and fifty thousand people attend them annually and men more than foreign princes have been guests of the organization.

Last year the event of the festival was the visit of President Taft. This year it is the presence of Colonel Roosevelt.

The electrical parade of King Ak-Sar-Ben is excelled nowhere in the world. The scores of floats, different each year, move through the streets, bearing hundreds of actors appearing as the men and women of song and story or as the oddities and pleasant creatures of fairyland. All these floats are brilliant with tens of thousands of electric lights which from the first succeeded the smoking and flickering torches in the parades.

Then at the coronation ball comes the cry, "The King, the King," and for the first time in the season the real personality of the king becomes known. He is always a gentleman of position and consequence as the "Rex" of Mardi-Gras, and it is an honor highly esteemed to be selected king of Ak-Sar-Ben, so the mystery with which his personality is hidden all summer is merely for the sake of romance and not an account of the polle.

During the summer and fall festival the country west of the Missouri river is referred to as the Kingdom of Quivera. This is explained by Samsor Lord High Chamberlain of the realm Coronado, a Spanish grandee and ad-

STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE.

Cost of Living Has Increased 40 Per Cent in Ten Years.

The cost of living during the past fifteen years has been rapidly increasing. In ten years it has gone up 40 per cent. This tendency will probably never decrease very materially. While wages have gone up they have by no means kept pace with the living expenses. The increase in the rate for the skilled workers has been about 20 per cent, but the wages of unskilled labor have remained practically stationary. The greatest expenditure of the average family is for food, constituting about 45 per cent of the cost of living, and it is in the food products that the increased cost has been greatest. The next largest item of expense is that of rent, constituting about 20 per cent, and that for clothing following with about 16 per cent of the total expenditure.

We need not discuss the causes of this increased cost of living, says the Rev. Charles Steidle. There is a very wide difference of opinion as to the reasons for the increase, and no doubt there is truth in all of them. But this fact remains—it is costing the average workingman more to live today than it did fifteen years ago, and his wages are not as great proportionately as they were at the beginning of this period. If the rate of production were the one factor at work, instead of an increased cost of living there should have been a decline in the cost of living of at least 15 per cent. The American workingman is the most highly skilled workman in the world. He produces more than the workmen do in other parts of the world, but compared to what he produces, he is probably the poorest paid workman in the world. The question of a living wage must necessarily be a relative term. It depends altogether upon the standard of living which men set up for themselves. The living wage of the day laborer would not be a living wage for the average professional man. But generally the term is employed to designate the amount upon which the average workingman and his family subsist. The average family in New York city cannot live comfortably on less than \$800 a year. This applies to practically every other city. Less than this amount lowers the standard of living below the normal demands of health, working efficiency and ordinary decency.

The wages of the average worker in the United States is \$432.20 per annum. But this includes all wage earners, and it must be evident that there are large numbers of workers who receive very much less than this amount. It should be remembered that large numbers of wage earners are not permanently employed during the year. In many industries the workers are not employed more than half the year. This applies principally to laborers, who are more subject to casual employment than are the skilled workers, but even among the trade unionists about 20 per cent are unemployed, even during prosperous years. It is true that there is often more than one wage earner in the family. But the measure of a man's wages today is not determined by his ability to support a family, but rather by what the average family as a whole may earn, and this measure is the margin of bare subsistence.

The Philosophy of Work.

Labor is discovered to be the great, grand conqueror, enriching and building up nations more sure than the proudest battles.—Channing.

What is there that is illustrious that is not also attended by labor?—Cicero.

The gods seal everything good for labor.—Epicurus.

Genius begins great works; labor alone finishes them.—Joubert.

Toil and pleasure, in their natures opposite, are yet linked together in a kind of necessary connection.—Livy.

Labor is the divine law of our existence; repose is desertion and suicide.—Mazzini.

Labor Briefs.

The 1,150 stage hands employed in seventy New York theaters want an increase in wages. They are all members of the Theatrical Protective Union of Stage Hands.

Washington Central Labor union has begun a campaign against the display of strikes and strike breaking scenes in motion picture shows. Labor leaders hold that the pictures put their cause before the public in a false and damaging light.

The engineers of the Central Vermont railway will receive an increase in wages averaging 20 per cent as a result of an agreement recently signed by officials of the company and representatives of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.

Adjutant General Weybrecht of Ohio told the Columbus street railway attorneys that the investigations by the militia and police pointed to strike breakers as the perpetrators of many deeds of violence in order to "hold up" the company and prolong their employment.

Judge K. M. Landis, umpire in the dispute between the Bridge and Structural Iron Workers' union and the contracting firm of John Griffiths & Son, Chicago, imposed a fine of \$200 on the union because twenty-nine of its members quit work in violation of an agreement.

Frank H. McCarthy, New England organizer of the American Federation of Labor, who has been conducting the organizing work in Quincy for the past several months, recently announced that he has completed his task and that Quincy is now one of the best organized cities of Massachusetts.

MY STORY OF MY LIFE



BY
JAMES J. JEFFRIES

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CHAPTER XXI.

I PUT BOB FITZSIMMONS AWAY FOR THE SECOND TIME.

I TRAINED at Harbin Springs for that second fight with Fitzsimmons and got into very good condition. The bout was held at Alec Greggains' San Francisco Athletic club, at Fourteenth and Valencia streets. A lot of my Los Angeles friends came up to bet on me. I guess they brought up at least \$40,000 or \$50,000. George Miller got down \$5,000 at the regular odds, which were 10 to 4 in my favor. "Chalk" Roberts brought \$10,000. Jim Hayes, the proprietor of Harbin Springs, put up \$2,000 on me. Lots of the other boys got down smaller sums.

There was a big crowd at the ring-side that night. Fitzsimmons was introduced first and had a great reception. He was always well liked in San Francisco, where he fought his first fight after coming to America from Australia. Bob looked in as good shape as when he fought me at Coney Island. He didn't even look a day older, although he was thirty-nine now. A challenge from Jim Corbett was read, and the crowd cheered. I was glad to hear the challenge taken so well, for the heavyweight crop was running out, and there didn't seem to be many more fights in sight for me.

As soon as we began fighting I went after Bob steadily. We were both a little cautious at first. I sent a good hard left into his body, and he took it all right. Before the end of the first round he had begun landing on my head, and my nose was bleeding a little.

I had found out something too. The new ring platform was too lightly built. Fitzsimmons could skip about on it like a Frisco flea, but whenever I moved quickly the boards bent under me. It was like trying to dance around on a springboard. It made my footing uncertain and awkward and took away half my speed.

In my crouching position the "give" of the ring platform affected my footing so much that I tried standing straight up. Fitzsimmons mixed it with me, and we both got in some stiff punches. The way the old fellow could hit was a wonder. He was hammering my face in. The blows were as heavy as any I ever felt. The jar didn't daze me, but I had never been so cut and bruised in a fight before. Fitzsimmons was a wonderful fighting boxer.

Along in the fifth round I managed to get over a left hook that cut Bob along the cheek bone, but a moment later he stepped in with a terrible right that landed squarely on my left eye and nearly knocked my head off. The blow opened a big gash along my eyebrow. I was in pretty bad shape for a champion now—all cut to pieces and my eyes closing. When I went back to my corner Billy Delaney was mighty anxious. "Jim," he said, "you have got to get him before your eyes close. Go after him."

I crouched as I came from my corner that time and went at Fitzsimmons with a rush. He skipped out of my way and laughed as he moved around. I kept turning to face him like a bull in a bull ring, and every time he seemed within reach I rushed him again. Once I cornered him on the ropes, but he slipped away, and as he went by me he landed a couple of hooks that made the blood run again. I couldn't get him. He surely was a slippery fellow.

"You've got to do it soon," said Delaney again.

With my cuts all closed up and the blood washed off I went out after Bob again as hard as I could go. All of my injuries were on the surface. Inside I was as sound and fresh as ever. I wouldn't think any worse of Fitzsimmons if he had shown discouragement about this time. He had beaten me enough to knock out any ordinary man. I knew his right hand was gone, for once when he landed a heavy smash on my forehead I could hear the bones crack, and although he went right on hitting with it, there wasn't the same weight in the blows. He was jabbing more and depending on the left. Fitzsimmons had a great left. I think it was his best hand. He usually landed knockouts with the left.

In this the seventh round I went after Bob hard and swung my left into his body, then brought it up to his head. The punches were well meant, but Fitzsimmons took them and came right back with three hard left hooks on the mouth that started me bleeding again and forced me to the ropes. I rushed and chased Fitz across the ring, punching him over the heart. As we came into a clinch Bob grinned and asked, "Well, how do you like it?"

"Suits me all right," I said. "You are pretty good for an old fellow."

From that on I punched at Bob's body, and he jabbed and hooked with the left. All the time the crowd was cheering like mad. Fitz looked like a winner, for he was almost unmarked, while I must have been a sight. The crowd thought the old champion was coming back into the title again. I knew I'd win in time. I was all right still inside, not weak or dazed or even tired. And I knew that Fitzsimmons could not keep up such a terrible pace for twenty rounds. In time he must wear himself out even if I didn't bring him down with a blow. His only chance was to blind me entirely and then beat me down when I couldn't see to block or get away. And even then I might have been able to stick it out.

My eyes were nearly closed when I came up for the eighth round. I went after Fitzsimmons steadily. Fitz stood up straight and tried with his left for pay chin. I ducked under the blow and sent my right to his body. I could feel the ribs bend. It was a hard punch. Fitz hooked me on the face, and I leaned in with another body punch. Then we fought hard for a minute. I could feel that Fitz was growing weaker. His blows didn't hurt, and he seemed to be tiring. The right time had come at last. I stepped in and swung my left for the pit of his stomach. The glove landed a little to one side, striking just at the edge of the right ribs and driving them in. Fitzsimmons straightened up and stood perfectly still for a moment. I knew the blow had paralyzed his legs and he couldn't move. "You've got me, Jeff," he gasped, and just at the same instant I started the finishing blow for his jaw. I landed both hands before he fell. Fitz went down hard, and Referee Eddie Graney counted him out. Fitz was trying to get up and managed to rise to his feet just after the end of the count. He walked to one side of the ring and raised his hand. "The best man won," said Fitzsimmons. "I am satisfied. I'll never fight again."

"You're the most dangerous man alive," I told him, "and I consider myself lucky to have won when I did."

That fight with Fitzsimmons was one of the hardest I ever had in my life. I don't think money would pay me to stand up and deliberately take the beating I got from him before I landed the knockout. Every bone in my nose was broken and driven in. My nose was flat with my cheeks. It was a lot of trouble to have that fixed



Photo by American Press Association.
JEFFRIES TRAINING FOR JOHNSON-JEFF'S WRESTLING POSE.

up again. The doctors took eight stitches above my right eye and eight more over my right cheek bone. The cut over my left eye took seven or eight stitches. Every tooth in my head was loose. For two days after the fight I couldn't eat. I couldn't move my jaw, and I thought it was surely broken. One of my ears was in bad shape.

Fitzsimmons, when he was taken to the Olympic club after the fight to have hot salt water baths and be rubbed down, fainted as soon as the rubber touched his ribs. He fainted again a few hours later when he tried to raise his left arm to reach for a hat. That was from my body punching over the heart. Fitzsimmons' right hand was smashed. He landed it over my eye and drove the first two knuckles back over an inch, splintering the bones into small pieces. He was a game fellow. Long afterward he asked me one day if I had noticed during the fight that he was turning his right hand to land with the last two knuckles. These were the only two left, and yet he was hitting almost as hard as with a sound hand. The joints of Bob's left hand were buckled toward the end of the fight, but he didn't hold back his punches.

And the funny thing is that a sporting writer in San Francisco supposed to know something about the game saw all this damage done in the ring and then went away and wrote that the fight was a fake. He sent out a story that it was "framed" for Fitzsimmons to lie down in the eighth round and that when the time came Fitzsimmons dropped his hands to his sides and said, "Hit me now." That was funny when my own brother Jack bet \$500 I'd knock Fitz out in five rounds.

The whole country laughed down the "fake" story. My friends all knew that there wasn't money enough in circulation to induce me to fight a crooked fight. Fitzsimmons was always on the square. The fight itself was evidence enough.

REVIEW OF LABOR

Progress of the Union Movement
In America.

FACTS ANSWER QUERIES.

Enthusiasm and Harmony Prevail
Throughout the Membership of the
Federation—Notable Change in Trend
of Public Opinion.

We do not expect that union men and union advocates shall take all things, indeed take anything, for granted and thereby perhaps imagine themselves in a fool's paradise, writes Samuel Gompers in the American Federationist. We ask only that the irresistible cold facts shall speak for themselves in the constant progress and success of our American trade union movement.

That the course of the various trade unions of this country is proceeding with a degree of success gratifying to the members our readers have abundant evidence in the statements given in this issue by men who write with authority. But when the question of each union doing its share in advancing wages, making more general the shorter workday and carrying out the purposes of its existence within its own sphere is answered satisfactorily queries arise as to what is being done by the movement as a whole: Is it in a healthy condition? Does it fully cover the ground prescribed by its mission? Is it on the right road? What of its perils from causes beyond the reach of the separate organization? Is it losing ground actually or relatively? Have its enemies found any new means for its weakening?

Here are facts which sketch the reply to such inquiries:

Never was the American Federation of Labor in better fighting trim than today. Never were the various big international unions, taken generally, better provided with ammunition for their struggles. Never was the movement stronger in point of solidarity. Not only have trade union centers been able to report the elimination of such organized enemies as the Citizens' alliance, but large bodies of trade unionists are enrolling in the fold with their brother organized wageworkers. Among the officials of the American Federation of Labor there is no variance of policy, no factional difference, no clashing of personalities. In the unions there is no east or west or north or south. Ours is a united, harmonious, disciplined and enthusiastic movement.

We believe we can read in the composite voice of the press and the platform the encouraging fact that the sentiment of the people of America has in the last few years turned toward recognition of the necessity for trade unionism and the fulfillment of that necessity to the highest degree possible in all the existing circumstances by the American Federation of Labor and its affiliated organizations. Large numbers of our fellow citizens—men and women—not qualified for membership with us are from time to time coming forward, as occasion prompts, with the services of their emphatic approval, their personal aid and even their finances, especially in cases where the unions are fighting the battles of toiling women and defenseless children.

With regard to compensation for injury to the workmen there has been recently a decided move by the public in general toward the stand taken by the trade unions. It is seen, with sincere approval by the mass of union men, that leading active trade unionists are giving their time to this pressing question, and largely on them devolves watching the developments of the compensation discussion, with the proposals growing out of it, so that the United States may herein move up to the level of the rest of the world. The unions and the lovers of right and humanity are drawn together in the solution of this problem. The women of America responded to the call of a noble common sentiment in the battle of the shirt waist girls for not only better wages, but their rights as Americans when on strike. The close of that episode marked a distinct advance toward the democracy of the women in this country.

In all its breadth and depth the American trade union movement has waxed mightier within recent years—aye, even months. Its militant activities have been justified by events—the unions have won right along the line its principles, its policies, its management through its own democratic methods, have justified themselves to the thought and conscience of the overwhelming majority of its membership and will surely reach even the unorganized workers, who will be the organized union men of tomorrow.

Actors' Union Getting Busy.

Notwithstanding the many fallacies given circulation to hinder organization and tending to hold the union up to ridicule, the Actors' International union is setting on foot a movement to install locals in every important city throughout the country. Detroit and Boston are the two latest cities to fall into line, both having very recently been the scene of two healthy locals. In view of the fact that the average performer never received his full worth prior to the activities of the union and that his conditions of work were in many respects intolerable, it is now apparent that the better pay and conditions prevalent in some localities are due to the actors' connection with the labor movement.