

The Norfolk News

Welcome Firemen! Norfolk makes unconditional surrender to the brave fire laddies of Nebraska and bids them cordial welcome.

Norfolk recognizes in Nebraska's fire fighters the same noble and self-sacrificing qualities that made the first Nebraska volunteers invincible in the Philippines and gave them such high and enduring honor in the annals of American history.

Rightly proud is our young state of the record of her soldier boys who at the call of duty, of country and of God, left home and friends for the distant islands of the sea, their offering such true and heroic service as to reflect lustre upon the commonwealth and credit and immortal glory upon their country's flag.

But if we give high meed of praise to the boys who so willingly left home and kith and kin to do battle in foreign lands for their imperiled country, what shall we say of the men who as willingly risk life and limb at the call of their own town or village when home or property is threatened?

It is no detractor of the soldier to admit that heroism is not confined to the battle field nor glory to the defense of the flag.

After all, the stability and grandeur of the nation rests upon the homes of the people. And he who is ready whenever summoned, to save one or more of these homes from the rages of the fire fiend is a friend, not only to the parties immediately concerned, but a genuine patriot, a benefactor of his race.

It is such men who assemble from all parts of Nebraska today and honor our city by their presence and their deliberations.

They are entitled by the right of all that is plucky, prompt and popular to the right of way while they are in our midst, and THE NEWS can assure them that anything they see is theirs, and if there is anything that they want that they don't see all they have to do is to ask for it.

In ancient Rome conquering armies on their return home from other provinces used to march with their trophies through triumphal arches and be received with the acclamations of the populace.

In modern Norfolk we don't do things that way exactly. We just use good common horse sense and when a convention of firemen from various parts of this beautiful commonwealth assembles in annual consideration of things pertaining to their special line of work and the public welfare—men of brawn and brain—men of large hearts and generous impulses—men of sturdy mould and heroic purposes—the citizens of this municipality want them to distinctly understand that they are right glad to see them, that they extend to them both the right and left hand of fellowship and carry their hearts on their sleeves in their behalf.

We know your story. We have read it in that of our own fire department. The bleakest Nebraska blizzard, the sultriest summer sun, the wildest, blackest night, the fiercest day—none of these have acted as a detriment to the brave boys to do duty whenever the fire bell rang out its alarm. The most obscure building, the most difficult environments have served only to demonstrate their zeal and willingness to meet the emergency. And all this time and time again, until he who would question their loyalty to the material interests of our city would be considered fit for yonder asylum. The story of their valor and self-forgetfulness is but the common story of a fireman's career and experience.

To do homage to men of such a spirit is only proper. Norfolk does it with all her heart today.

Our citizens only hope that the strangers who are within our gates will carry back to their homes pleasant recollections of their stay here. If it were in the time of buds and flowers a trip up the fertile Elkhorn or Northfork valley might reveal to you the reason for the upbuilding of this substantial, prospering and growing city here. But at this season of the year, nature, ice locked and bare, conceals her treasures and her bountiful resources, and so we can only hope to make up the deficiency at least in some small measure, by the warmth of our greeting, the sunshine in our souls and the delights of good fellowship.

The NEWS voice is an unmistakable public sentiment in expressing deep appreciation of your labors and a sense of pride in your splendid achievements. It gives a feeling of security, difficult to realize because we have become so accustomed to it, to know the men behind the engine and behind the hose who insure a large measure of safety to our homes and our business.

Gentlemen, again you are welcome. Enjoy yourselves while you are here, and in the years to come "may you live long and prosper." The public whom you serve, wishes you well.

AUSPICIOUS OPENING.

Norfolk's Fine New Auditorium Opened Last Evening.

"HAMLET" IS THE ATTRACTION.

The Building is Complete and Beautiful, Well Furnished, Lighted and Seated, Shakespeare's Tragedy Very Satisfactorily Presented—Everyone is Delighted.

Those who anticipated a treat and have been making their calculations accordingly during the past few months were in no wise disappointed at the auspicious opening of Norfolk's splendid new auditorium last evening.

In the first place the building was the subject of comment, and could the gentlemen responsible for its construction have heard all that was said in laudation of its many merits they would have been highly pleased that their efforts were so satisfactory.

Many who had persistently insisted that the building would not be in readiness for the opening were compelled to admit that they erred in judging the capabilities of the management, as, although there yet remains many things to be done before the building, its furnishings and fixtures are in a state of completeness, to those who were uninformed or gave it but passing attention, there was nothing lacking to make it a perfect place of amusement and a pride to the people of Norfolk, who have for years felt the urgent need of a building of its character.

The high ceiling, extending far above the topmost place in the gallery was well formed to make the sound perfect in nearly every part of the house. Besides, the view of the stage was good from any part of the house and there is very little choice of seats, so far as seeing and hearing is concerned.

The ceiling and walls are finished in pink, ornamented with figure work of darker color. Over the stage is a beautiful design in colors, representing music. The auditorium is lighted by a brilliant array of the new and noiseless design with numerous incandescent lamps at appropriate intervals and places. The stage is also well lighted with incandescent lamps which can be regulated to produce any desired result.

The seating arrangement is excellent, the opera chairs being large and comfortable, their shape being calculated to conform to the shape of the body. The boxes are very handsome and comfortable.

Although there was but little of the scenery belonging to the house used last night, enough was shown to convince the patrons that this portion of the fittings is perfect. The drop curtain is very handsome and is adorned with a beautiful Venetian scene at once pleasing and restful to the eye.

Another curtain is representative of a boulevard or palace grounds which is very beautiful, while the wood scene is also very attractive.

All this combines to produce an effect exceeded by none in the state, although some are on a much larger scale. The building is an exact duplicate of the Empire theater of New York City and that Norfolk can afford this distinction is due to the energy of the management and the co-operation and aid of many Norfolk citizens. It will answer Norfolk's every need for years to come and will be an object of pride and pleasure to all citizens.

Mr. Warrant appeared before the curtain and was greeted with a hearty demonstration. He opened the entertainment with an apology to the people, desiring them to overlook any faults in the stage management, as all the help was new to the business and mistakes and delays were expected. But close observation of the performance failed to reveal any pronounced error or delay and everything moved along as smoothly and serenely as though none but experts at the business were handling affairs behind the footlights. And the shortness of the intervals between acts and scenes indicated that things were handled in a hurry.

The asylum orchestra of eight pieces furnished the music, opening with an overture and rendering selections between acts.

To accord with the splendid proportions and arrangements of the building the management decided that nothing but an attraction of the highest merit would answer the purpose and their effort in this direction is worthy the hearty thanks of their patrons. They were exceedingly fortunate in securing Mr. Walker Whiteside and his excellent company to render Shakespeare's great tragedy, "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark." This company came with most flattering recommendations and expectations were naturally high but were fully met if not exceeded.

The interpretation of Hamlet by Mr. Whiteside was very fine and many who had seen Booth in the part pronounced Mr. Whiteside as fully his equal in every particular.

Miss Lelia Wolstan as "Ophelia" gave excellent support and was heartily given a standing in the estimation of the audience scarcely second to that of Mr. Whiteside. Her interpretation of the mad scene was especially commendable.

Space forbids an individual write up of each member of the company. Suffice it to say that there was not a

"stick" among them, the parts being carried in a manner most pleasing to the audience. The "ghost" scene was most effective and every act and scene was excellent.

The special scenery and effects used were of a high order and were well handled, the "throne room" being worthy of especial mention.

Those in attendance comprised a distinctively Norfolk audience and the people were indeed few who do not now or have not at some time called this city their home. The audience was composed of representative and progressive citizens, each of whom was highly pleased to be able to sit in a building so well adapted to the wants of the city and the purposes for which it is intended. The aptness of the ushers, who were attired in white coats and vests, adorned with a boutonniere on the lapel of the coat, was marked. They were well informed as to their duties and seemed to experience no difficulty whatever in locating the seats called for by the coupons. This was rather remarkable when it is considered that the seating arrangement is new and the ushers inexperienced.

THE NORFOLK AUDITORIUM.

One of the Handsomest and Most Complete Opera Houses in the State.

The Norfolk Auditorium is a building which would do credit to a city several times the size of Norfolk, and is one in which every citizen should take pride. For many years Norfolk has needed just such a building, and from time to time various plans have been advanced with the hope of securing it, but until the present without result. In June last a proposition looking to the building of the present Auditorium was presented to the Business Men's Association of Norfolk by representatives of the Royal Union Mutual Life Insurance Company of Des Moines, Iowa, being in brief that provided the citizens of this city would purchase \$4,000 worth of opening night seats and take insurance policies in said company sufficient for the first annual premiums on same to amount to \$3,500, they would build in this city an opera house, with a seating capacity of approximately 1,000 persons, to cost not less than \$10,000. The present building is the result. It is in every way superior to what the people of Norfolk had any reason to expect under the agreement of last summer.

Under direction of Mr. F. Warrant, representing the company, construction was begun eleven weeks since. In this remarkably short length of time the people of this city have seen built a strictly modern auditorium, handsome, substantial and equipped throughout with all the latest accessories of the up to date play house. The building is 60 by 100 feet, with high arched ceiling, tastefully decorated in harmonious colors. The stage, 30 by 60, is as large as those in the best theatres of the cities, and is fully adequate to accommodate any entertainment that travels. An abundance of first class scenery is provided, so that every play presented may be well staged. The proscenium arch is 24 by 30.

The building is seated with easy opera chairs, so arranged on an incline that from every one a good view of the stage is presented. The lower floor seats about 400 persons, the balcony about 440, while the four boxes, two upper and two lower, will accommodate eight or ten persons each. The main entrance is at the center fronting on Fourth street, while there are three exits, besides those from the stage, through which the house could be cleared in two minutes in case of fire. Electric lights are used throughout, in such numbers that the effect is most satisfactory. The building is heated by two large furnaces, and in fact all details that go to make up a first class auditorium have been carefully considered and provided.

For this splendid auditorium the thanks of the people are due to the many who have contributed toward its construction, and also to Messrs. Williams, Wighton and Warrant, representing the Royal Union Mutual Life Insurance company, under whose plans, direction and energy the building was made possible. The new building is entitled to and should receive a liberal patronage.

Evolution of Amusement Halls.

The ancient history of Norfolk's theatrical and other entertainments is rather vague and indefinite but enough memories have been revived in the minds of several old-timers to give a more or less interesting sketch of the evolution of public entertainments.

Apparently the first move looking toward a public entertainment—at least among citizens of English descent—was in the winter of 1876 when a club styled the "B. T. M. I. W. A. F. F."—Bound to Make it Win and Anything for Fun—was organized. This club was of a social rather than a theatrical nature and its entertainments, consisting of socials, dances, etc., were held in a hall in the Beels block which was built in 1874. This hall was ordinarily used by the Masons and Odd Fellows for their lodge meetings but the club also secured it for their social gatherings.

In 1877 a stage was constructed in the west room of the Beels block, now occupied as a grocery by Braasch & Zuelow, and a performance in costume by amateurs was rendered. This was probably the nearest approach to theatrical en-

tertainment yet given in the village. In 1879 the Olney block was built and soon after its completion the Masons gave a grand ball which was largely attended by the people of Norfolk. It is believed that there was an Uncle Tom's Cabin performance in the same building but if there was the date of the entertainment is not remembered. This hall was used for quite a number of social and amusement functions.

About 1880 the building now known as the Widaman building and in which the G. A. R. hall was located until quite recently, was built by Henry Semmler. He conducted a saloon on the first floor and the upper room was used quite frequently for cheap theatrical and variety performances. Mr. Widaman purchased the building in 1881. It is pertinent at this time to note the fact that the Norfolk fire department had its birth in this building, the prime movers in its organization being Mr. Widaman, Major Mathewson and Harry Brome. The first named gentleman was the first chief and served with honor for several terms. He was presented with a cap or helmet and belt by the members of the infant department upon his retirement from the position. These accoutrements are still in the possession of and highly valued by Norfolk's chief of police.

Early in the 80's the roller skating excitement was abroad in the land and this amusement took firm hold upon the entertainment-loving citizens of Norfolk and the building quite recently used by Herman Pasewalk as an implement warehouse and salesroom was converted into a skating rink. The pastime proved so popular that about 1884 two gentlemen by the name of W. Woods and L. Davis built a large rink on the corner now occupied by the Cotton block, Main and Fourth streets. This building is now located next door north of the present auditorium. In it the amusement of roller skating held full sway until its decline in popular favor. However the rink was occasionally used for dances, and theatricals were given from a temporary stage erected for each occasion. When the building came into the possession of Herman Gerecke the roller skating fad was on the decline and he soon after converted it permanently into an opera house. This proved most satisfactory for many years and many operas and theatres, both professional and amateur, were held on its stage. When the people thought that they should have a better place of amusement the opera house was converted into a carriage repository, and nothing better having been provided, C. F. Eiseley opened the hall in his building, secured the scenery and erected a stage. This proved not as satisfactory as the old rink and it soon became impossible to get an audience to attend the performances given therein.

The Marquardt hall was opened last May by A. J. Durland as an opera house, having been equipped with stage and scenery. This hall is better than any of its predecessors, the chief objection to it being that it is on the third floor. It is still used as an amusement hall, and is frequently occupied with dancing parties and other entertainments.

THE RED COCKADE.

Walker Whiteside and Company Entertain Another Good Audience.

Mr. Walker Whiteside and his company appeared to a Norfolk audience again last evening at the new auditorium in "The Red Cockade" and was greeted by a large number of people.

The plot of the play is a very pleasing one—full of startling situations and replete with love scenes and humorous exchanges. In the latter Geo. A. Holt as "Barjac" and Miss Gertrude O'Malley as "Marie" easily carried off the honors with the audience.

Mr. Whiteside as "Captain Martel" and Miss Wolstan as "Beatrice De Lille" were again the objects of especial praise and commendation from the audience. Mr. S. De Deyn as "Count Valmonte," also took a good part.

The costuming and stage settings of the company were especially fine and of great variety.

The play presented some of the startling scenes claimed to have taken place during the French revolution of 1795 and excited the interest of the audience to a high pitch.

A large delegation of Madison people were over to attend the performance and were conveyed home after the show by a special train run by the Union Pacific.

At the close of the play Mr. Whiteside was called before the curtain by a hearty demonstration and in a very well delivered talk thanked the people of Norfolk for their hearty appreciation of his company's efforts to amuse. He also congratulated the people and management on their new opera house, stating that never had he been in or seen so beautiful and commodious a structure put up in so short a time. In closing he expressed the wish that he might be able at some future time to again greet the people of Norfolk—a wish that, it is unnecessary to state, was heartily reciprocated by the audience.

The company departed this morning for Sioux City where they will put on "The Red Cockade" this afternoon and "Hamlet" tonight. They depart with the best wishes of Norfolk people for their future welfare and success.

Farm land and city property for sale by G. R. Sellar.

THE STATE FIREMEN.

Gathering for the Eighteenth Annual Meeting.

IN NORFOLK FOUR DAYS THIS WEEK

The City Has Put on Holiday Appearance in Honor of Her Visitors—First Session of the Association to be held at the City Hall This Evening.

The city put on a holiday appearance this morning in honor of the Nebraska State Volunteer Firemen's association which meets in eighteenth annual convention in this city during the week. Nearly every business house displays an abundance of flags and bunting, while across the Main street is strung a large banner, bidding the firemen "Welcome to Norfolk."

The advance guard of the delegates arrived last evening, and this morning every incoming train brought more firemen, until this afternoon the streets show many a bright uniform, happy smile and highly colored badge.

The first meeting of the association will be held this evening in the firemen's room of the city hall, which has been tastefully and appropriately decorated for the occasion, and which will be made headquarters during the convention. At eight o'clock tonight the Norfolk band, together with the reception committee of the department, the mayor and city council, will meet at the city hall and proceed to the incoming trains to welcome the delegations of firemen. At 9:15 the first session will be called to order by the president of the association, J. L. Shiek of Beatrice. Mayor Simpson will deliver an address of welcome, which will be responded to by the president. After the appointment of a committee on credentials, the business session will adjourn until morning.

Commencing tomorrow morning and thereafter during the remainder of the session the meetings will be held in the new auditorium.

Tomorrow evening and the following, the Pringle company will give entertainments at the auditorium under auspices of the Norfolk fire department. The first play presented will be "The White Elephant," and the second "Eccles Girls."

They Take the City.

From Wednesday's Daily. At the time for convening the first meeting of the Nebraska State Volunteer Firemen's association last evening at 9:15 fireman's hall in the city building was well filled with delegates to the convention and the session was promptly called to order by President John L. Shiek of the association.

He made a few opening remarks and then presented President C. E. Hartford of the home department who made a short but well worded address of welcome in behalf of the Norfolk fire department.

Mayor J. E. Simpson was then introduced and made a welcome address in behalf of the city of Norfolk. The mayor occupied about 15 minutes of the association's time and gave them the cordial and hearty welcome which he is so capable of doing and making the visiting delegations feel at home and that the freedom of the city was their's. His remarks were heartily received. At the close of his address three little girls appeared bearing a large key made of wood and bound with the national colors. This was appropriately presented as the key to the city's gates.

President Shiek made a well worded reply, and a motion was then made by Mr. Hamilton of North Platte that a committee of five on credentials be appointed.

The following were appointed as such committee by the chair: J. W. Moist, York; W. H. Hamilton, North Platte; C. E. Elliott, West Point; C. Mortisen; Fremont and R. J. Hite, Grand Island. A motion was then made that the three young ladies who carried the key of the city be accorded seats at the play and at the banquet.

Moved to amend that the mayor and common council be included in the invitation. The amendment carried and the original motion as amended prevailed.

There being no further business the committee adjourned to meet at the auditorium this morning at 9:30.

After adjournment the fire boys enjoyed themselves according to their inclinations taking in the sights, the theater, and getting acquainted with the town and its people until a late hour.

The time yesterday was occupied by committees in meeting incoming trains, in which work the band assisted and the city streets were alive with delegates wearing their vari-colored badges during the afternoon and evening.

The weather yesterday was cloudy and threatening and was not as delightful as could have been desired, but in spite of its threatening nature no rain or snow fell and the delegates didn't appear to be bothered by the prevailing dampness.

The convention was again called to order at 9:30 in the new auditorium and the report of the committee on credentials was read and adopted after which adjournment was taken until 1:30 this afternoon.

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11—Croup, Laryngitis, Hoarseness. 25
12—Salt Rheum, Erysipelas, Eruptions. 25
13—Rheumatism, Rheumatic Pains. 25
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