

The Conservative.

VOL. III. NO. 38.

NEBRASKA CITY, NEBRASKA, MARCH 28, 1901.

SINGLE COPIES, 5 CENTS.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY.
OFFICES: OVERLAND THEATRE BLOCK.

J. STERLING MORTON, EDITOR.

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE DISCUSSION
OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIOLOGICAL
QUESTIONS.

CIRCULATION THIS WEEK, 10,000 COPIES.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.

One dollar and a half per year in advance,
postpaid to any part of the United States or
Canada. Remittances made payable to The
Morton Printing Company.

Address, THE CONSERVATIVE, Nebraska
City, Nebraska.

Advertising rates made known upon appli-
cation.

Entered at the postoffice at Nebraska City,
Neb., as Second Class matter, July 29, 1898.

On Thursday,
ARBOR DAY ISSUE. April 11th, 1901,
THE CONSERVA-
TIVE will issue a number devoted to
arboriculture and forestry.

Arbor day comes this year on Monday,
April 22nd, and it is intended to fill THE
CONSERVATIVE of the 11th with instruc-
tive and interesting matter for its com-
memoration and practical observance.

Superintendents of schools and teach-
ers in all the counties and school districts
of the state should become readers of
THE CONSERVATIVE because it is the
only periodical in Nebraska making a
specialty of tree-planting and forest
conservation.

Those who have
THE THEATRE. been permitted to
witness great plays
by great actors recall the scenes, the
colloquies, the dialogues, and all the
wonderful gifts of speech and tricks of
gesture which charmed, with never-dim-
inishing satisfaction. It is an infinite
pleasure to recollect the music and art
of the stage which one enjoyed in long-
ago days when the ear was alert and the
eye sharp with youth and health. Thus
the writer again hears Jenny Lind, Ole
Bull and once more sees Forest and
Burton,—the mental image, is distinct
and clear, and the soundless melodies
are as sweet and as rhythmic as the real.
But the pioneers of Nebraska have wit-
nessed a drama in civilization wherein
the changes of characters and scenery
have been more miraculous than any
that ever garnished the mimic world.

In 1854 Nebraska was organized a
territory. The bells of an adventurous en-
terprise rang up
Eighteen Fifty-Four. the curtain and
the pioneers enter-
ed upon the stage, which was the plains

stretching from the Missouri river on
the east to the Rocky mountains on the
west. The buffalo and the Indian dis-
appeared in the hazy distance and the
plow and the planter usurped their
places. During thirteen years the
sparsely-peopled country remained a
semi-pastoral and half-farmed strip
along the western bank of the Missouri.
It was more than three hundred miles to
a railroad until the Hannibal & St. Joe
touched St. Joseph, Mo., in 1858. There
were no means of transportation
of sufficient magnitude to justify the
production of an agricultural surplus
and profitably carry it to market.
Isolated from the great marts of com-
merce, there was no demand for the soil
products of this fertile area of seventy-
five thousand square miles. It remained
relatively a wilderness, dormant as to
its immense productivity and valueless
in the eyes of Eastern capital. In 1860
Nebraska had a population of one hun-
dred and twenty-eight thousand. Lands
from the Niobrara on the north to the
Nemahas on the south, were almost with-
out value because there was almost no
demand for them. Then we realized
that land, in and of itself, is as valueless
as air, or water, until after some intelli-
gent human effort has been put forth
upon it, about it or in relation to it.
Then began the argument to the effect
that because we were a mere territorial
dependency instead of a sovereign state,
no men with capital would come in and
that, therefore, a state government must
be formed and admittance to the Union
be secured. And intermittently but with
increasing fervor the agitation was
maintained in favor of statehood until
1866 when a constitution, formed and
submitted to the people by the legisla-
tive assembly of the territory, was de-
clared adopted at an election held in the
summer of that year, by a majority of
one hundred and twenty-five in a total
vote of about eight thousand. But,
though Nebraska was admitted to the
Union in March, 1867, there was no
visible general advance in the prices of
lands.

The Chicago & Northwestern road,
however, reached Council Bluffs that
year and the Union Pacific, ground for
which had been broken at Omaha in
1863, was pushing its way towards the
mountains with stupendous energy.
Thus the lands began to attract atten-
tion. Then immigration commenced in
earnest.

The Indian and the buffalo were pur-

sued by the locomotive. The ox and
mule trains for
carrying freight
to the mountains
and their mines and miners began to
disappear, and finally, with its junction
at Promontory Point with the Central
Pacific on the 10th of May, 1869, the
Union Pacific had very nearly wiped out
the Overland stage coaches and com-
pletely appropriated their passenger
business. Thus the first combination of
capital in Nebraska killed competition
in the common carrier trade and formed
a gigantic trust for the transportation of
freights and passengers across the con-
tinent. Nobody damned that trust
then. Everybody was delighted except
the freighters who had been getting ten
to twelve dollars a hundred pounds for
taking goods to Denver and fifteen to
eighteen dollars a hundred pounds to
Salt Lake City; and the Overland Stage
Company, which had been collecting
hundred dollar fares to Denver, and one
hundred and fifty dollars on passengers to
Salt Lake City. Competition as incar-
nated in oxen and mules was killed out-
right and relegated forever to the crowd-
ed limbo of the "has beens."

With these railroads and the Burling-
ton system and their active agents, Ne-
braska lands were brought into public
view all over the world. The value of
these lands was demonstrated by
analyses made by learned agricultural
chemists—notably Prof. Goossman of
Amherst college—and heralded in all
Europe and America. Land-seekers,
eager to buy, began to come in and make
farms on the prairies. Energy and con-
fidence in the future pulsed among
the people and stirred them to plow,
plant and build homes. Their successes
were proclaimed by the railroad man-
agers and stories of Nebraska crops were
read as eagerly as the best of other
literature.

Instead of coming to Nebraska, a few
at a time, in covered wagons drawn by
oxen, horses or
mules, carloads of
families, carloads
of household goods, and carloads of
implements, and carloads of fine live
stock, were whirled into the state each
succeeding spring time by locomotive
engines. Lands were demanded. Values
of lands enhanced. Those about Grand
Island and Hastings which, before rail-
roads reached them, could not be given
away to actual settlers, began to have
fixed prices. People desired such lands