

Mystery Veil Lifts: NU Pillars Had Depot Origin

BY KENT AXTELL.

At last the heavy veil of mystery which has hovered about Nebraska's famous pillars is lifted.

Now there is an answer for the question which perhaps every visitor to the Cornhusker campus has asked: Where did they get those columns?

Attempts by The Daily Nebraskan in the past three years to turn up definite information on the origin and a complete history of the colonnade at the corner of 12th and Vine streets had not been too successful.

Alum Detective

The entire story concerning the origin of the beautiful pillars however is told by an alumnus of the University, Val Kuska, now agricultural development agent of the Burlington railroad. He is the father of Dick Kuska, editor of the 1951 Cornhusker yearbook.

"It occurs to me," Kuska said, "that the interesting story of the old station and these columns should be told before it is lost to the memory and record of the people of Nebraska. Already the men who designed, built, and appreciated its classic beauty are gone, and the difficulty in finding records, descriptions, and pictures of it now, barely 20 years since it was replaced by the new structure, makes me realize how easily the past slips away from us."

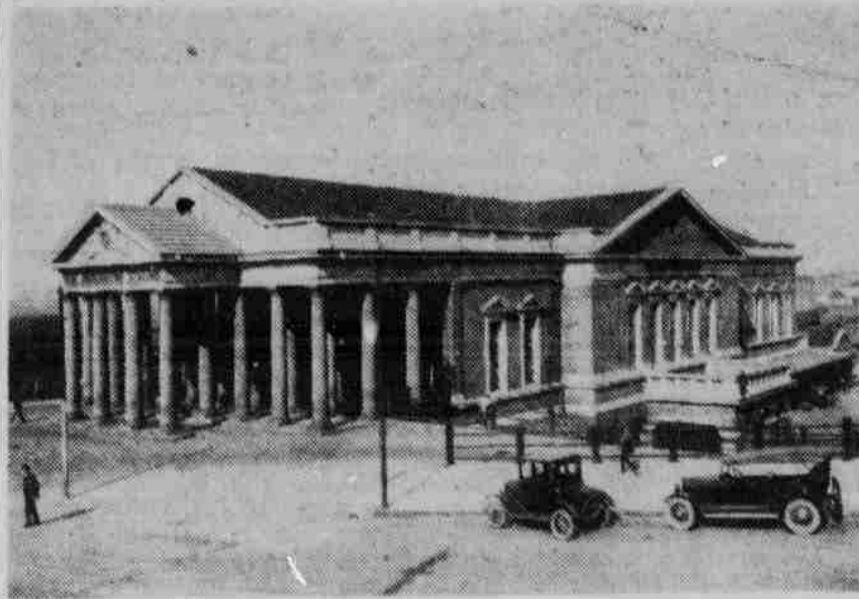
According to Kuska, the story of the 24 columns, which are worth a sum of \$20,880, began in 1898. The Columns were quarried for the portico of the old Burlington station in Omaha.

"Handsomest."

The Chicago Record in its July 16, 1908 issue said, "The handsome railway station ever seen is that of Chicago, Burlington and Quincy company at Omaha. It is an artistic gem and looks like a Grecian temple."

Perhaps the best description of the columns' origin is in the Burlington timetable, August 1900.

"The Burlington stations sits on the edge of a bluff and is entered thru a portico sustained by 28 gigantic pillars of the Doric Style, made from granite quar-



IVY COVERED PILLARS—The old Burlington station at Omaha is shown above before it was rebuilt in 1930. The columns at the entrance of the building were given by the Burlington to the University. Twenty-four of the 28 original columns now form a picturesque part of the campus between the stadium and the coliseum. The pillars were set in their present location under the direction of Linus Burr Smith, University professor of architecture.

ried at Denver. Each weighs 18,000 pounds."

The columns—28 inches in diameter, 22 feet high with molded cap and base—were nearly forgotten in 1930 when the station was dismantled. They were found in an Omaha stone yard.

The beauty of the pillars was recognized earlier when contemplation of razing the old depot was made. Alan McDonak, architect, protested destruction of the station. He claimed the loss was nothing less than an architectural catastrophe.

Grecian Columns

The news that the plans for razing were final was contained in an Omaha Bee News story. The article stated that "in order that the station might fit in with the passenger terminal plans, it will lose its grecian columns and classic aspect."

Perhaps most interesting is the story of how the columns ever arrived at the University campus.

Kuska in pointing this out, said, "When Chancellor Burnett,

who had long admired them in the Omaha station, learned that the pillars were being removed to make way for the new design he immediately thought of their fitness for the "Avenue of a Thousand Columns" (12th street)

NU Grad Wins Yale Fellowship

A graduate of the University Department of Architecture has won one of the top student prizes in U. S. architecture, Prof. L. B. Smith, head of the department was notified recently.

The student is Dale L. Gibbs of Lincoln who graduated last January. The award is the Graduate Fellowship in Architecture for one year with a \$1,000 stipend at Yale University.

The award went to Gibbs after he had submitted his fifth

once proposed for the campus.

"He got in touch with his old friend, C. J. Ernst, assistant treasurer of the Burlington and former University Regent, to ask for the pillars for that purpose."

Both Burnett and Ernst also had worked together for the establishment of the present College of Agriculture.

Free of Charge

"So," said Kuska, "with the help of Burlington officials, authority was secured from the State Railway commission to transport the columns free of charge to Lincoln from Omaha."

The order for the transportation of the columns was made and entered Feb. 26, 1930. Only 24 of the 28 columns stand today, since four were broken before they were found and brought to the campus.

Students and faculty, Innocents and TNE's, football players and PBK's come and go, but the pillars can be counted on to remain a part of the University. They found a home at Nebraska.

year class work in the University's Department of Architecture in competition with work done by other competitors for the award from universities in various parts of the U.S.

Gibbs is the son of Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Gibbs of Lincoln.

School of Music Presents Recital

The school of music presented an undergraduate recital at 4 p. m. in the Union, Thursday, July 6, with seven students participating.

The program was: Clouds, by Charles, presented by Glen Clark, Aurora.

Song of the Open, by LaForge, presented by Mary Wherry, Tecumseh.

My Lady Walks in Loveliness, by Charles, presented by Jach Wells, Columbus.

Blue Are Her Eyes, by Watts, presented by Leonard Blinde, Burwell.

Thy Beaming Eyes, by MacDowell, presented by Neil Solomon, Culbertson.

Ah Love But a Day, by Beach, presented by Virginia Taylor, Kearney.

Se Tu Mi Ami, by Pergolesi, presented by John Moran, David City.

"A Good Teachers Agency"

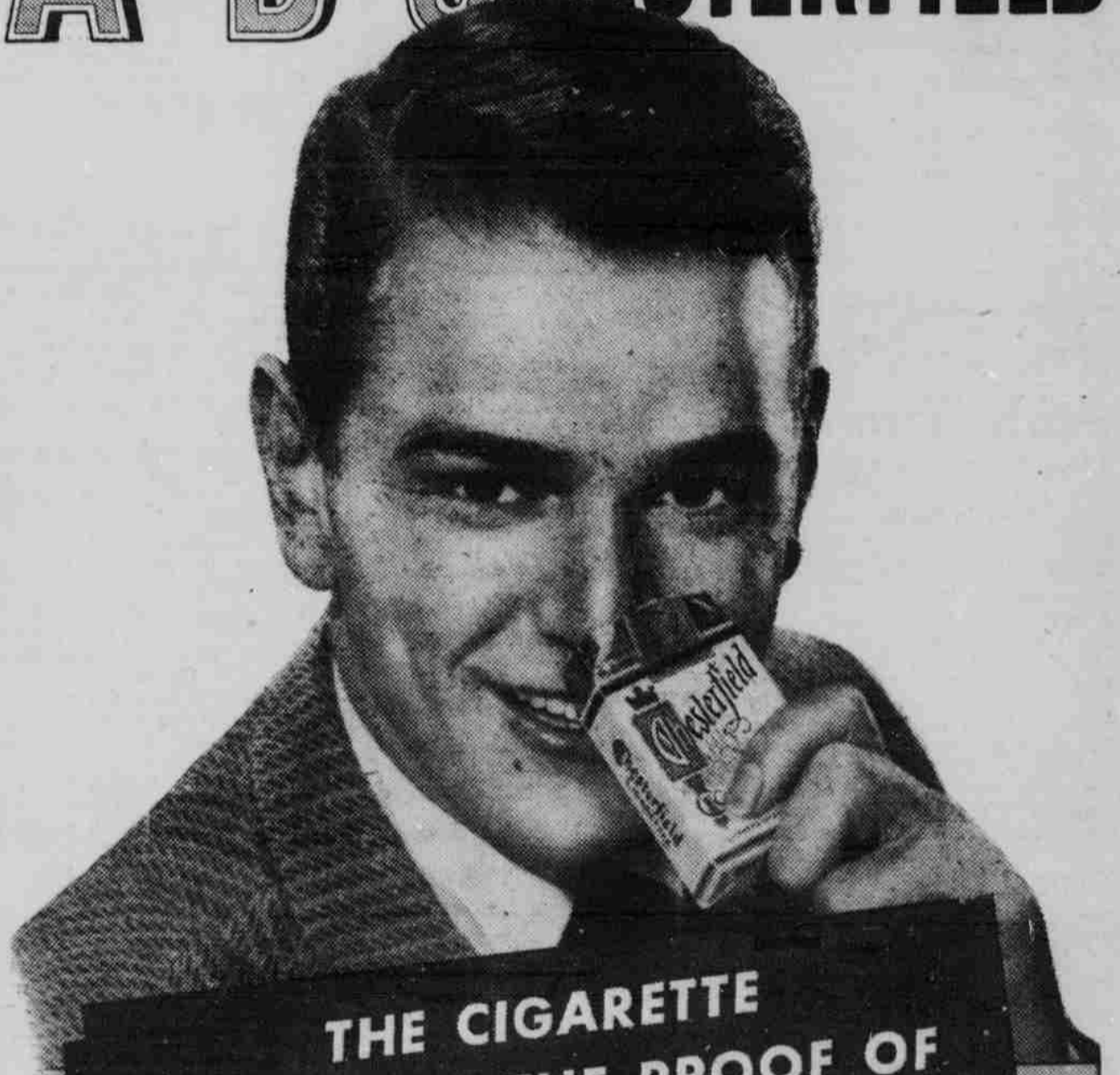
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