

LOCAL BREVITIES.

—Marshal Cummings says the snow must be cleaned from the sidewalks or complaints will be filed.
—The next concert of the musical Union orchestra will be given at the Turner hall, January 24th.
—The funeral of Anna, infant daughter of F. N. Hansen, took place Saturday. Interment in Prospect Hill cemetery.
—Saturday an old coat was found at the corner of Eleventh and Howard streets and a telephone message to the hall announced that there had been a fight. A search failed to find the combatants.
—A small-sized row took place about 5 o'clock last night near the City hotel, on South Tenth street. Clever dodging and precipitate flight on the part of one of the combatants prevented a serious termination.
—Notice was given in Friday evening's paper that the Apollo club would give a masquerade ball on New Year's Eve. This was wrong, as it is not the Apollo club giving the party, but two individual members, Messrs. Stenstrom and Cook.
—The Fourth infantry band assisted by the Omaha Glee Club will give a concert in Hoyt's opera house this Monday evening. Mr. T. D. Van Usben of the band has arranged a souvenir sash programme to be given to every lady attending the concert.
—One of the fire department boys lost a valuable fireman's hat at the Davenport street blaze Tuesday afternoon. It was picked up by some brilliant individual who doubtless thought it to be the latest style of New York head gear. It has not been returned.
—The remains of James O'Connell, the brakeman who died Friday night from injuries received while switching in the Union Pacific yards, were shipped yesterday. They were consigned to Patrick O'Connell, the brother of the deceased, living at Dunkirk, N. Y.

FIRE FIGHTERS.

Omaha's Fire Department of the Past and Present.

History and Reminiscence—Stories of Pioneer Days.

There is perhaps no feature of local history more interesting than that of Omaha's fire department. Reaching back to the days when Omaha was in her infancy, and when her present greatness was but a vague dream, the history of the department presents varied and inexhaustible sources of delightful reminiscence.
An article on such a subject must, of necessity, be incomplete. To chronicle the history of the local fire salvage corps would require a volume of no mean proportions. But to briefly summarize the main points of its history, to chronicle its struggles and advancements, to hastily cull here and there a story told by the old pioneer firemen, is perhaps within the scope of this necessarily limited article.
Before passing to the more pleasant part of such a talk, that of reminiscence, it were best, perhaps, to sketch, in very condensed form, the history of the department.

During the early days of Omaha's history—say for the first six years, the method of extinguishing fires was very primitive, the "bucket machine" being the only apparatus in vogue. During these pioneer times as soon as the cry of fire was sounded, each man seized his wife's best pail or pails, and darted in head-long haste in the direction of the fire. A line would be formed between the blaze and the nearest well or cistern. Sometimes the fire was extinguished; again, sometimes it wasn't.
Omaha's growing interests soon demanded an organized system of fire protection. A citizens' meeting was called in May, 1860. The result was the formation of the Pioneer hook and ladder company. For about six years this company was alone in controlling Omaha conflagrations. The company is still in existence and will complete its quarter centennial next May, when it will disband.

In the spring of 1866, at the arrival of the new Fire King steamer, the Fire King company, No. 1 was organized, with John Hassett president, and C. S. Goodrich secretary.
This Fire King steamer, really the first fire extinguishing machine ever owned by the fire department, is worthy of mention somewhat extended. The machine, one of the old-fashioned pattern, was first owned by the Utica, N. Y., department. It was afterward sold to Chicago, whence it was in turn disposed of to Davenport. Once again, it was sold to Omaha, where, after long and faithful years of service, the Fire King was purchased by Golden City, Col. It is still in that city, but its term of usefulness has long since expired.
In the fall of 1867 the steamer "Omaha No. 1" was purchased and turned over to the Fire King company, previously organized. The Fire King engine was turned over to a new company which was christened Fire King Company, No. 2. In 1868, a new Fire King steamer was purchased, named by Fire King Company No. 2. This company, then as now, was located on Tenth street. The old building was afterwards burnt down, being set on fire by some evil genius who had previously plundered it while the boys were away at a fire.
In 1870 the growth of the city justified the purchase of another steamer, "Nebraska, No. 3," which was turned over to the No. 1 boys.

The No. 1 steamer was moved to a new engine house in the northern part of the city and a new company was formed which is the nucleus of the present No. 1 company.
In March, 1879, a new steamer was purchased which was turned over to the Fire King Company No. 2. The No. 2 engine was turned over to the No. 1 Company. This put the old No. 1 engine out of service, and gave the city three second-class steamers with No. 1 in reserve. This was the state of the department up to the building of the waterworks. Since that time the steamers have been discarded and the department supplied with newly-patterned hose-carts. The Durant hose company was organized in 1870 under the management of the Union Pacific railroad company, while the Deluge hose company, the latest addition to the fire department, has been organized within the present year, and is now located in the new No. 4 engine house in South Omaha. Three years ago the volunteer department was supplanted by the paid system, since which time the fire-service has reached a high degree of efficiency.

Many are the stories which the veteran firemen tell of those days when the old Twelfth street house used to be the rendezvous of all the young bloods in the village. The hook and ladder house was situated between Farnam and Douglas on Twelfth, and was an old, tumble-down affair, long since lost in ruins. One of the favorite amusements of the boys used to be the practice of a most unorthodox trick on the unwary stranger who tarried for a moment in the abode of the fireman. As soon as a victim would enter the door he would be politely escorted to the stove, which had previously been filled with coal of the most inflammable and gaseous nature. The victim would then be snugly ensconced in a chair, the legs of which had been partly sawed, but which still gave no sign of the rotten condition of the foundation. In a moment the gas would ignite—boom! a most terrific explosion would ensue. The poor stranger would be paralyzed with terror, the legs of his chair would suddenly snap off and he would be hurled in a most ungainly and uncomfortable manner across the room. A general laugh would follow and the trap would be set for a new victim.
In those early days of the department, some of the incidental features of the firemen's life were decidedly amusing. Mr. Charles Goodrich, the genial veteran of the department, and now resting easily on his well-earned record, tells with great gusto of the rivalry between the hook and ladder men and the manipulators of the Fire King. It seems that the two machines were both stationed in the same house on Twelfth street. Of course as soon as the alarm of fire was sounded each set of men would rush to their respective machines, hoping to make

the first start. In order to forge ahead on an early start, the Fire King men would rush their machines (which was several times more heavy than the hook and ladder truck) wedged into the door and keep it there until the truck men would be compelled to give a lift and send it ahead. Another rule adopted by the Fire King men, in order to distance the rival, was to run their heavy machine between the fore and hind wheels of the truck and thereby would most effectively curb any undue speed that the truckmen might be disposed to display.

The first period of the department's history was one of struggle, a struggle to build up and to improve. It must be chronicled, in all truth that the city fathers did not support the department very energetically—for what reason does not appear. There is, however, no doubt but that the city failed to support the boys as it should. Many were the schemes of strategic nature to which the firemen resorted to build up the department in which they took so much pride. On one occasion, when they were considerably incensed at some grievance, they determined to set forth, in the shape of a practical joke, their opinion of the city council. Accordingly a leather medal was executed, with figures and embossment and appropriately carved with some legend, which, unfortunately, has not been handed down to the present generation. A committee of one was appointed to deliver the leather medal, and the unlucky choice fell to the lot of Jim Neigh, in those days known as Mr. J. J. Neigh. Mr. Neigh took a family dinner and rushing into the council room, dropped the testimonial of esteem (?) and abruptly shot out of the room, anticipating a forcible and unceremonious ejection. What effect this practical bit of sarcasm had upon the city fathers in the direction of inspiring their zeal for the fire department does not appear.

During the latter years of the war of the rebellion, and at the time when the Quantrell guerrillas were committing extensive depredations in Kansas, a ludicrous incident happened which serves well to illustrate the popular fear which then prevailed, that Omaha was to be victimized by the bold buccanner and his men. Everybody in those days was armed for any emergency, and there was scarcely a family but was provided with a small arsenal ready to do service in the event of an invasion. Guards were stationed on the outskirts of the village, prepared to herald, in post haste, the first approach of the invaders. One day, while the popular feeling was at its height, old Billy Williams, who had been doing sentinal service, was seen riding into Omaha, in the greatest of haste, following at the top of his lungs. The circumstance of Billy's effort at speed was, in itself, curious, for Billy was of a nature slow and phlegmatic, while his animal was a most antiquated mule of sadly forlorn and dilapidated appearance. Nevertheless it came to pass that Billy, lashing the poor long-suffering beast to its full speed capacity, dashed into town, bawling most vociferously. It so happened that the Western brewery, then situated in the northern part of town had caught fire. Billy had spied the conflagration and leaving for the moment his post of guard determined to give the alarm. He succeeded.

The sight of the old man dashing in town to "wake up the natives" was electric in effect.
Everybody supposed that the long dreaded guerrillas had finally come. In a few moments all Farnam street was bristling with arms and the whole town rose in arms to meet the invaders. No one seemed to divine the true cause of the excitement, nor did the fire department turned out and dashed to the fire as the faral cause of the excitement revealed to the people. It was some time before the anxious Omahaers subsided from terror into a broad grin over the Quantrell invasion.

One of the most memorable nights of the fire department in its days of infancy was the occasion of the Will R. King fire, the occasion of the murder of Higgins, on the night of November 23, 1887. Higgins, it will be remembered, was the cashier of King & Co., and was murdered by Baker, a porter employed in the store. Baker's plan was, after stealthily killing Higgins, to set fire to the store, hoping thereby to cover up all traces of the crime. When the fire was first discovered by the watchman, the alarm was promptly sounded. It so happened that the fire department that very day had purchased several hundred feet of additional hose. Each man picked up a fifty-foot section of the hose, and started on a run for the fire. The boys worked like Trojans that night, and before the flames had gained much headway, the fire was under control. The records of the department are dusty, still show a copy of the letter in which Will R. King and acknowledged the efficacy of the department and courteously tendered several baskets of champagne as a "testimonial of gratitude."

The burning of the Grand Central hotel and the terrible consequences connected therewith are too fresh in the memory of every Omahaer to require extended mention.
A glance at the fire department of today must close this already too extended article. There are now four engine houses in Omaha. No. 1, in north Omaha, with four men; No. 2, on Tenth street, with four men and two minutes men; No. 3, on Sixth street, with eight men, and No. 4, in south Omaha, with two men.
The department is fairly well equipped and has shown itself able to cope with any emergency that may arise.

Smoke Seal of North Carolina Tobacco.
A BULLDOZER.
He Attempts to Get His Note From a Bank Without Payment.

Saturday morning there was a commotion in the Commercial National bank, corner of Thirtieth and Farnam streets. A messenger boy was dispatched for a policeman, and for a time things were interesting. By the time the policeman arrived the disturbed party was over, and nothing could be ascertained as to its cause.
A Bee reporter called at the bank and inquired what was the cause of the commotion and was informed by Cashier Hopkins that there was nothing in it. He said that a man simply tried to get his note without paying it, but farther than this refused to speak. It is not known why he was so reticent about the affair, but it is supposable that he has his reasons.
Map of Nebraska.
Just issued, in colors, showing cities, towns, railroads and counties. Mailed for 15c. J. M. Wolfe, 120 S. 14th st., Omaha, Neb.

THE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL.

Saratoga Union Sunday School.
The festival of the Saratoga Union Sunday school on Christmas evening was a gratifying success. The school and their friends to the utmost capacity of the hall was in attendance. The music of the Italian band was much enjoyed. The tableaux under the supervision of Mrs. Dr. Lucas were very interesting. The welcome address by Rev. Geo. S. Pelton, as might be expected, was interesting, and appropriate. Santa Claus was present in the person of Mr. D. H. Christie, who amused the young folks as well as the older ones, and distributed over \$75 worth of presents from the trees, and a magic stocking. Superintendent Louis Littlefield was the recipient of an elegant card receiver, from a number of members of the school which was represented by Rev. Pelton, the response being suitable to the occasion.
The entertainment was the finest of the year, and the successful termination particularly due to the efforts of Mrs. F. M. Smith, assisted by Messrs. W. S. Rustin and C. R. Johnson.

Below is the programme:
PROGRAMME.
PART FIRST.

- 1. Overture..... Selection
2. Song—"Hail day of Jubilee"..... Chorus
3. Welcome Address..... Rev. Geo. S. Pelton
4. Song—"I love to tell the story"..... School
5. Recitation—Star of Bethlehem..... Miss Ethel McKay
6. Overture..... Selection
7. Recitation—Double..... Selection
8. Song—Christmas Tide..... Misses Thomas and Smith, Messrs. Rustin and Johnson
9. Recitation—Christmas Day..... Miss Annie Craig
10. Overture..... Selection
11. Recitation—Widow Gray..... Master Charley Hair
12. Overture..... Selection
13. Song—Man of Saratoga..... Chorus
PART SECOND.
14. Overture..... Selection
15. Song—Christmas Bells..... Chorus
16. Recitation—Last Christmas Day..... Miss Kay
17. Solo..... Miss Alice Rustin
18. Recitation—The Passing Year..... Misses Ada Smith, Mary Gruening, Lizzie McKenzie, Nettie McKay
19. Song—"Glory to God in the Highest"..... Quartette
20. Overture..... Selection
21. How Santa Claus comes..... Ethel McKay
22. Singing—"I am so happy in Jesus"..... School
PART THIRD.
23. Overture..... Selection
24. Parting Hymn—No. 317..... School

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O'Connell's Death.
Friday evening, at St. Joseph's hospital, occurred the death of James O'Connell, the switchman, whose arm was cut off by a passenger car Christmas day. His body was taken to Drexel & Maul's undertaking rooms, where it now lies.

Just as O'Connell was crossing the "great divide," a telegram came from Dunkirk, New York, stating that his aged father had been buried at that place on Monday last. The dying man did not see the message and passed over the river ignorant of the fact that his father had preceded him and was awaiting his coming.

Seal of North Carolina Smoking Tobacco is the best.

BALKY HORSES.
That is the kind now used by the Street Car Company.

For a month or six weeks past the street car company has been trying to work a lot of balky horses, particularly on the Green line. Many complaints have been heard in regard to this and indeed the passengers have a right to complain. It is no interesting thing to sit in a car which is colder than ice, for fifteen to twenty minutes, and wait until a balky horse takes a notion to go ahead. During the past two weeks this has been done many times a day and is growing worse instead of better. Yesterday afternoon a horse attached to a green car balked at the corner of Sixteenth and Webster streets, and refused to move for fully twenty minutes. The car was crowded with passengers and many of them got out and walked down town, not being able to wait for the horse to start. This thing might do if the weather was warm and pleasant, but the cars are supposed to make the trips at the depot and several passengers during the past few weeks have missed trains on account of being delayed by balky horses.

A gentleman was heard to remark today, "If this street car company want to break colts and balky horses, they should be compelled to build a track out in the country and do the work there and not inflict this torture upon their patrons.

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