

OMAHA'S MILITARY POST.

History of Fort Omaha—Description of the Grounds and Buildings. HOW THE BOYS IN BLUE LIVE. In Times of Peace a Holiday Life—Their Duties, Amusements and Pay—The Officers' Quarters—Dress Parade.

[Written for the Omaha Sunday Bee.]

The post now known as Fort Omaha, was established in 1808. It was then styled Sherman barracks. In the same year, by a general order, its name was changed to Omaha barracks. In 1858, by a general order of the division of the Missouri, the name was a third time changed to that of Fort Omaha. When the next change, either by general order or other means shall take place, may not now be determined.

THE POST comprises thirty-eight buildings used as residences for officers, places for the transaction of regimental business, store houses and manufactories of all kinds required for local repairs.

The quartermaster and subsistence stores are furnished from this city by contract. There are two wells, one eighty-six and the other twenty-six feet deep. From these, water is pumped to a reservoir situated on the bluff northwest of the officers' quarters. This reservoir has a capacity of 88,000 gallons. The bottom of this cistern is 100 feet above the level of the city. The supply of drinking water, at present, however, is secured from the city water works.

THE GROUNDS occupied by the post comprise eighty-two and a half acres. These, in the main, were purchased by the government, on August 26th and September 4th, 1868, and March 29th, 1869. The first two tracts were the first two dates was about \$100 per acre. This was paid to a man named Seymour, through Augustus Koutzke, then of Omaha, and now of New York. The third tract was purchased by the government, at the time of the establishment of the fort, a tract of land was bought by a number of Omaha citizens, each of whom contributed \$100 to the fund required. With this money about forty acres were purchased and granted to the government, to be used for military purposes.

This is a brick building, two stories in height and thirty-four feet wide by one hundred and fifty-seven in length. The quartermaster's stores are on the second floor, and the commissary's the remainder of the building. In the former may be found almost everything required in a first-class hardware store; and in the latter, the most complete assortment of a perishable nature, in a grocery.

Following the drive on the east northward and turning to the west, the parade ground is reached. It is a square of 40x25 feet in size, each comprising a sleeping and mess-room and kitchen for a company. The companies are arranged with their beds ranged beside each other, and with women and children. Adjoining each is a movable locker, in which the soldier deposits his little possessions.

It was one of the dark days in the history of the fort when the headquarters of the department of the Platte and the staff of officers were removed from the city to the post. The order emanated from Gen. Sherman and caused a great deal of dissatisfaction. A detachment of officers of many pleasures of city life and compelled the civilians to make long and tiresome trips to the post when business came.

This transfer caused the erection of a brick building for the residence of the commander of the Platte, which, by the way, was inaugurated on the most notable social gathering ever assembled in Omaha. Many of the old rookeries which had been used as officers' quarters since 1808, were razed to the ground, and enlarged, and the gaudy gentlemen and their families adapted themselves with military resignation to their changed fortunes.

Several years have elapsed since the issuance of the Sherman order, or rather, since it was put into effect. Nothing of a serious nature affecting the post has occurred since, with the exception of a move lately made to transfer the fort to some point about ten miles from Omaha. This is probably the most formidable move that has ever taken place.

These barracks are quartered E, A, H and B companies. The south side of the barracks is another line of barracks, built in the same uniform style and dimensions. These accommodate D, C and F companies, and the regimental band, under the leadership of Mr. Wedemeyer.

These soldiers are paid every two weeks. Their clothes are issued to them, but if a man draws in excess of the allowance it is deducted from his wages; if less than the allowance, he is credited with the amount and given it on his retirement from the army. Their term of enlistment is five years, though some of them become soldiers for life.

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kitchen, the dining room, the boiler which heats the hospital by means of twenty-two radiators, and a cell for sick prisoners, for the accommodation of soldiers who while under sentence may fall sick and require skilled attention. On the second floor, there are large wards with four smaller ones, capable of accommodating thirty-two patients. The building was erected as above mentioned and cost in the vicinity of \$30,000.

THE GUARD HOUSE is a one-story brick building, immediately south of the main entrance to the grounds. It is 50 feet wide and 100 feet long. It is protected on the front by an ample porch. On a walk before the entrance, a sentinel is always on duty. He is dressed in fatigue uniform, with polished rifle and bayonet fixed to the barrel, and he walks back and forth, instinctively endeavoring to impress the visitor with the dignity and importance of his position.

THE OFFICERS' QUARTERS are passed. Some of them are new, others show recent improvements, and others still bear the marks of an infantry superintendent by bad care and old age. They are nearly all painted in dark brown. Each has a porch, and in front a little garden spot, which is but rarely improved. The gables of the structures are turned from the avenue, and the effect of the whole is that the architect originally intended that the houses should be a single file, but suddenly changed them to a company front.

THE INSTALLMENT plan finds great favor with them, and a majority of them are making investments in different parts of the city. About a dozen Italian families own their own houses and live in a little settlement on the south side of the city. They live economically, though their surroundings are due to a natural habit and a peaceful disposition.

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THE ITALIANS OF OMAHA.

Facts About a Peculiarly Interesting Class of Citizens. WHO THEY ARE—WHAT THEY DO. Characteristic of Italy's Unsubdued Sons—A Fruit Peddler—Musicians—Furnaces Made From Small Beginnings.

[Written for the Omaha Sunday Bee.]

The Italian population of Omaha is a peculiarly interesting class of citizens. A people of natural commercial instinct, the more intelligent of them find the serfdom and army life of their native country unbearable, and each year thousands of them make their way to America, and are not slow in taking advantage of the opportunity afforded them of selecting their own method of making a living.

THE ITALIANS do not, as is generally supposed, have a monopoly upon the street corners of Omaha. They own all or nearly all of the street corner stands, while the huckster wagons on the west side of the city are principally owned by Russian Jews.

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Something About the Unconquered Minstrels Who Spread the Gospel of News. THEIR LIFE AND HABITS. Their Pleasures and Amusements—How They Work and What They Earn—A Boy Who Owns Real Estate—Life in a Dry Goods Box, Etc.

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An article on the newsboys of Omaha to be comprehensive in its scope would have to be strung out to a length distasteful to the average reader in these days of torrid weather. Some limited idea, however, of the life and habits of the young street Arabs who sell the daily papers, may be given perhaps in brief space.

REPORTING FORTY YEARS AGO. Interesting Reminiscences of an Old-Time Stenographer. Indianapolis Journal: "I suppose I am the oldest stenographer in this part of the country," said J. J. Henderson, agent in this city of the Adams express company, "when I say stenographer I mean it in the old-fashioned way. I learned the shorthand system in 1846. The other half are on lay or on independent to make the exertion which the stenography. Of course it has been many years since I practiced it. I was living in Buffalo and began learning it in 1848, being taught by a friend who advised me to learn it. Mr. Hicks, who at one time was a reporter on the London Times, He afterward went to Washington and was on the Congressional Globe, that manuscript engagement to report in the Canadian parliament. That was in the stirring times of Mackenzie and Papineau, I came back to Buffalo the same year, I then got a place as reporter on the Buffalo Courier, at the munificent salary of \$34 a week. Little or no attention was paid to the matter of the day, and my service not being in demand even at \$3 a week, I went into an office to study law. About the 7th or 8th of June, 1851, President Fillmore with his cabinet, accompanied by a number of the United States. A telegram came from Thurlow Weed to the editor of the Express, saying that Daniel Webster, who was to deliver an address at Buffalo, and he wanted a verbatim report of the speech. Word came to me, and I said I would take it. The president's speech was delivered at Buffalo, and he wanted a verbatim report of the speech. Word came to me, and I said I would take it.

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DEATH OF FATHER BERGIN.

A Prominent Ecclesiastic, Formerly of Omaha, Dies in St. Louis. Rev. John F. Bergin, S. J., vice president and chancellor of the St. Louis university, and formerly of Creighton college in this city died at the novitiate of the Jesuit fathers at Florissant, Mo., on last Tuesday evening shortly before 11 o'clock. Father Bergin was ill for several months preceding his death, and this sad event was not altogether unexpected. The illness which resulted fatally was consumption, the result of a cold the contracted last April. He grew gradually worse, but still remained at his position in active discharge of his onerous duties. During the month of August his illness took a bad turn, and he was leaved by his physicians to have him leave the university for Florissant, where it was thought he would soon improve. He left the college about a week before the commencement exercises were held, but the fresh country air could not build up his shattered constitution. Despite the care given him by the medical profession and the members of the order, he continued to grow worse every day, bearing his pain with heroic fortitude, until Tuesday night, when he calmly expired, with several of the Jesuit fathers at his bedside.

Father Bergin was born in Cincinnati about thirty years ago, and went to St. Louis with his parents when less than five years of age. His father, Michael Bergin, engaged in a business in St. Louis, and succeeded in building up a large and paying establishment. His reputation for honesty and integrity won for him a large circle of friends, and he lived a successful life. Mr. Bergin and his wife were devoted members of the Roman Catholic church, and when John, their eldest son, was old enough to attend school he was sent to the St. Louis university where he remained for about six years, proving a very successful student. He showed a strong desire to become a priest, and his wish was readily granted by his parents. He was admitted to the novitiate at Florissant, where he completed with commendable success a course prescribed by his father in charge. By way of continuing his studies for the holy office, he was next sent to the Jesuit college at Woodstock, Md., afterwards to Creighton college in St. Louis and Creighton college in this city.

While at the St. Louis university in the cultivation of the professional and scholastic he was made prefect and placed in charge of the playgrounds and study-hall. While in this position he merited the respect and admiration of his fellow students. He was a member of the university at that time. Ever kind and courteous, and willing to help along all the students falling behind their classes, he established a reputation for himself. He was commended by those attending the institution at that time. On completing his theological and other studies, and attaining the requisite age, he was ordained to the priesthood together with several other scholastics, by Archbishop Kenrick, the solemn ceremonies taking place in the cathedral of St. Louis on Ninth and Christy avenues. In the summer of 1885 arrangements were made to place Father Schapman, who was the vice-president of St. Louis university, in charge of the Jesuit church at Kansas City, and the newly ordained Father Bergin was selected to succeed him. The position was one which required precise judgment and ability to perform considerable work, and no one was thought more competent to fill it than Father Bergin. Although not quite thirty-one years of age, he was well qualified for the position, he being the youngest father ever placed.

IN THE VICE PRESIDENT'S CHAIR. The same zeal and industry which carried him so successfully through his career as a scholastic, entered into his work as vice president, and the manner in which he discharged the duties of the position has been a source of pride and esteem of professors and pupils. He was a thorough scholar and an eloquent and able speaker.

On the 17th of August, at the very threshold of a useful career, his death will be regretted by all with whom he ever came in contact, either as a scholastic or priest.

Father Bergin was connected with Creighton college in this city for three years. He had charge at different times of the second and first humanities, and the class in logic and rhetoric. The latter was the class with which he was last associated, when in 1884 he left the city for St. Louis. He was one of the most valuable professors which Creighton college has ever had. His knowledge of the classics was complete in all its details, and he was able to give instruction, while