

WHEN OMAHA WAS A VILLAGE

Little Similarity Between Business Houses and Firms Then and Now.

SOME OF THE OLD TIME STOREKEEPERS

Tenth Street the Broadway of Twenty-Five Years Ago—Trade Moves Westward and Pioneer Tradesmen Disappear.

If a former inhabitant of Omaha, one who had touched foot on this soil in the latter part of the '50s, or even the '70s, and had then disappeared to come back again, like a Rip Van Winkle, he would have been compelled to rub his eyes not once or twice, but many times before he would be willing to believe his eyesight. Today he would stare at the tall buildings, hear the paved streets ringing with the hoofs of horses, wonder at the network of wiring and the busy crowds and demand of some one what had come across the face of the earth. And if he had seen one who met about the earlier sadder's jovial fire on a long winter's night, or done business of those days, he would find himself lost, when he looked about to see a familiar face which he could recall as that of a former merchant prince.

The business changes which have taken place in a quarter of a century in a large town are not less remarkable than the changes in the outward aspect of the streets and buildings. A constant stream of new buildings, a city of Omaha size and seems to sweep away the older merchants, until the names merely are remembered and treasured up in the minds of the old timers. The new buildings are torn down, new ones, more pretentious in size, take their place and the center of business slowly but surely moves from point to point, until the business which was once done in Omaha west of Fifth street on "Farnam street" is forgotten. Such a statement seems strange to those who have not seen the old time storekeepers, but it is true. The old time storekeepers were not numerous and their names are not to be found who can give the parties' names.

Among the earliest storekeepers in Omaha was a man named John Rogers, who was a fortune in Omaha and pinned their faith to its destiny, before there was a store in the place at which to buy goods, was S. E. Rogers, vice president of the Merchants' National Bank. Mr. Rogers came to Omaha in 1857, when the town lay between two creeks, known in that time as Otce creek and Omaha creek. By the succeeding years, the town had claimed a number of pretentious structures, one being "a sort of old shanty," according to Mr. Rogers' best recollection of it. It was occupied by A. J. Pendergast, who had a branch home lived in a structure made by piling hay about two sticks stuck in the ground, and altogether there in the winter of 1854-55 sixty "smokes" in the future city as a starter.

Tootle & Jackson were at that time Council Bluffs merchants. They saw a future for themselves beyond the Missouri river, and for that purpose, they came here, said to be the first mercantile house in Omaha. They located in the neighborhood of Ninth and Farnam streets. For many years they were the place clustered together, and in fact, it was nearly a quarter of a century later before business may be said to have left lower Farnam street and traveled westward—the rest of the city.

In 1856 Mr. Rogers says that Meyer Hellman started a hat store in a wooden house which stood on the corner of Tenth and Farnam streets. The hat store was later removed across the street and was located on the corner, still known as the Hellman block, until the time of his death. Milton Rogers was another early merchant who began selling stoves in that early day, finally locating at the corner of Fourteenth and Farnam streets at a point opposite the post office, but so far beyond the recognized limits of trade as to be criticized for rashness. This old house has decided to retire, and this will take away another old firm.

THE PIONEER MERCHANTS. A number of old merchants, observed Mr. Rogers. "Many of them have gone out of business or died. For years Byron Reed was a prominent real estate dealer. He was a native of Canada and General Lowe, who was prominent in the early days, is still living. William Sexaur, who ran a saloon next to Hellman's, is still alive. John Horvath, who ran a saloon on his business on Thirteenth and Harney streets. Huberman used to run a jewelry business in a wooden building in 1857 and 1858, or thereabouts, on the corner of Thirteenth and Fourteenth streets. I remember Isaac was our first Omaha tailor, opening shop in 1866. In 1873 I bought a "reversible" overcoat from a man named O'Connell of Omaha land for it. This was the panic year and we did everything by trading. The Merchants' National bank bought the Burlington road, and the Merchants' National bank was located in the Caldwell block, and just after the panic took place to announce the fact that it had \$300,000 on hand, as a far as the recognized limit. John Green used to run a flour mill located somewhere near the present site of the Union Pacific depot. He is in the land of the living, but he is not here. Before this Peycke Bros. bought out Wirth and were running a restaurant at 207 Farnam street. The "Donovan" house then stood as one of the best hotels of the city and claimed to be able to accommodate 150 guests. Steele & Johnson had just moved across the street, and they were located in the old postoffice building at Fourteenth street. D. M. Steele of this firm died but a short time since. A. J. Simpson, who was a partner in the firm of Simpson & Co., was a partner in the firm of Simpson & Co. The firm of Range & Stein owned a good business on Farnam, between Tenth and Thirteenth streets. Range is dead, but Stein is still living. Stein was a merchant for many years, and Samuel Burns has long sold crockery. In 1866 the latter was running in partnership with Ketchum.

It is interesting to look over the official registers for the year 1865. One learns that the Board of Trade was started in that year and was pushing the subject of immigration by sending broadcast circulars favorable to Nebraska. At that time Alvin Saunders was general agent for the Omaha Loan and Trust company; Randall Brown, located on Douglas near Fourteenth street, since retired; Peter Gooch, who kept a hotel "where the hotel" hotel on Gooch street; John McCormick & Co., located on Farnam street, near Thirteenth street, who ran a big general merchandise business, the three brothers being now dead; George M. Mills, who was a leading retail clothing dealer on Farnam and Douglas, between Thirteenth and Fourteenth streets; M. W. Kenard & Co., who for many years ran a

store where Fleming has been for twenty years, on Douglas street; P. E. Her & Co., who for many years carried on a wholesale grocery trade prior to their distillery business; Dr. Ish, a leading druggist, located next to Milton Rogers, on Farnam street, now dead; C. S. Goodrich & Son, who are both dead; and the firm of J. H. Adams, a general merchandise business on Farnam, between Fourteenth and Fifteenth streets.

Stevens & Wilcox had a large retail trade, especially with the Indians and military reservations, in dry goods. Stevens is dead, Clark & Worden kept a large livery stable where Kelly & Stiger now are.

W. M. Morton & Sons, is one of the later arrivals though he, too, saw Omaha in the days before it became a city. When he came here in 1878, like other eastern men, he was surprised to see a herd of buffalo grazing in the streets. Omaha, he says, was then a typical western town, and one of the prominent places at that time in the west. Sixteenth street was then out in the wilderness. At Tenth and Farnam streets was the business center. The Meyers street, between Ninth and Tenth streets, was the main road, and just completed its new headquarters. Cruickshank & Co. were running a business at the "Falconer" corner, as it was afterward called. The street was the "Co," and later became the "Ex-Mayor Bemis, who had business interests in the city as early as 1853, and came here in 1868, permanently, has many recollections of early days. Where the now vacant Morse building stands he saw John I. Thibault, who had a general merchandise business, erect an opera house, incorporating within its unstable limits a church, all under one roof. Mr. Bemis has a valuable photograph of the opera house, which was probably the only piece of its kind extant. The town was then a mere village.

INSURANCE NOTES.

The St. Boniface Catholic Life Insurance company of Indiana has been dissolved.

The new Jersey legislature has passed a bill for the purpose of increasing the rate of interest on deposits in banks to 4 per cent. Half a dozen or more fraternal insurance orders have applied for license to Connecticut.

The local agents of Lincoln are all, or nearly all, members of a new local board organization.

The Farmers' Mutual has begun mandamus proceedings to compel the auditor to grant it a license to do business.

Abraham Altman has been sentenced to the Connecticut state prison for ten years, for the crime of arson.

Kansas City has increased its fire fighting facilities with enlarged water mains and an increased number of hydrants.

The policy holders of the Massachusetts Benefit Life Insurance association at Haverhill, Mass., are kicking about extra assessments.

The reorganized German Fire of Indianapolis has been licensed to do business. The kickers appear to have confined their efforts to the local agents.

Nobody seems to want the business of the deceased Omaha fire. It is probable that the Farmers' and Merchants' of Lincoln will get the business.

The Missouri insurance department wants a constitutional opinion upon the standard policy of that state, and a suit will be brought before the supreme court for that purpose.

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SOUTH OMAHA NEWS

At Saturday night's meeting of the Municipal league arrangements for a permanent organization were perfected. The officers will remain as they now are, and the next meeting will be held Tuesday evening.

The committee appointed to investigate the alleged irregularities in the Fourth ward on election day reported that there was ample evidence that gross irregularities were committed. A committee composed of B. S. Adams, D. S. Barrett and E. J. Seykora was appointed to accompany the committee to the county Attorney's office and take the necessary steps for commencing criminal action against Mayor Johnston.

The college for women of the Western Reserve university, which is conducted by many of the most successful college women as a part of the university, representing what is called the co-ordinate method of instruction, is to be opened at two at the forthcoming commencement. The address at the commencement of the college for women will be by Dr. M. Carey Thomas, president of Bryn Mawr.

The Western Reserve university is considering the question of the equipment of a pedagogical museum. It is hoped to have it partially equipped by the opening of the university of the city of Cleveland in the summer. The hundredth anniversary of the foundation of Cleveland is celebrated on the anniversary of the founding of the old Western Reserve at Hudson, which was removed to Cleveland in 1822. The university announces certain plans, which will commemorate the double relationship, which occurs June 14 to 17. Mr. Samuel Mather, who built the magnificent physics laboratory of the university, is also equipping a collection of minerals, which is given him for the purpose each year for the next three years.

About two years ago Mrs. Catherine Driscoll stepped on a loose board in a sidewalk and was permanently injured. She brought suit against the city for \$5,000, and the case would have come up for trial shortly had a settlement not been reached. Members of the city council and the attorneys treated together and agreed that the city should pay \$2,500, and at the meeting of the council this evening the city attorney will be instructed to confess judgment for that amount. The city will also be required to pay for the cost of the suit, which they had a splendid case against the city, as they were prepared to prove that notice was served upon the city council in due season. In spite of this notice no action was taken, and the walk was not repaired for over six months after the first accident.

Mrs. Driscoll is about 62 years of age, and has not been able to use her legs since the accident. A part of her body is paralyzed.

Plans for Organizing the Council. It has been agreed between the Democratic and Republican factions of the council that W. P. Mullaly, democratic member from the Fourth ward, shall be president.

The republicans have made up a committee slate, as have also the democrats. Both these slates have been presented to the mayor and council, who are now at work fixing up a slate of his own. He hopes to be able to satisfy both factions in the committee appointments. Naturally, the democrats want the chairmanships of the best committees, and the new members object to being frozen out, and taking what is left. The council will meet with Dr. Ensor today to consider the matter.

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of 250 new libraries and many traveling libraries (an idea borrowed from New York), with a total of 1,500,000 books.

Prof. Sylvester, F. B. S. of Oxford, the mathematician, has been elected to a chair at the University of Virginia and at Johns Hopkins, has been elected a foreign member of the Turin Royal Academy of Sciences.

President Thwing has been investigating the number of graduates of American colleges from the beginning. The number seems to him to be about 300,000, a number somewhat larger than is usually reported, of whom about 150,000 are supposed to be now living.

The founding of a chair of music is the latest gift to Columbia university; for the late Elizabeth Hartwick Howland has given to the trustees of the late Robert Center, her son, valued at about \$150,000. At the meeting of the trustees of the university, a most modest unknown friend sent in \$10,000 to buy books for the library.

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DEFENDS HIS CASTLE WELL

Pat Quinlan Stands Off Invaders with an Axe and Revolver.

REPELS AN ASSAULT BY THE BARNESSES

Squatters in the Missouri Bottoms Above Blair Go to War with the Aggressors.

BLAIR, Neb., April 12.—(Special Telegram.)—A family by the name of Barnes, that lives up in the new-made land on the Missouri river, has given the Burt and Washington county officers more trouble than all others put together. Today the old man and one of his sons got into a dispute over some land with Pat Quinlan and son. The Barneses attempted to tear down a shanty built by the Quinlans. The result was that the older Barnes had his shoulder broken by an ax over the head of one of the Quinlans and the younger Barnes was shot through the arm. No arrests have been made yet.

EXAMINER COWDERY IN CHARGE.

Chadron Banking Company Affairs in the State's Hands.

CHADRON, Neb., April 12.—(Special Telegram.)—Ben F. Cowdry, state bank examiner, arrived here this morning and at once took charge of the Chadron Banking company. The failure caused but little excitement and no run was made on any of the other banks in the city. The information can be obtained regarding the assets.

Celebrated Lee's Surrender.

EXETER, Neb., April 12.—(Special Telegram.)—The Grand Army of the Republic and Woman's Relief corps celebrated the anniversary of Lee's surrender last Thursday evening with a very appropriate program, followed by one of their famous suppers. The attendance was quite large and the evening was well spent.

Next Saturday evening the Wesleyan University quartet, composed of Frank W. Farmer, Charles Reid, Edward W. H. H. Brown, will be in Exeter and deliver one of its noted concerts at the Methodist church. The two former young men are Exeter boys.

Nebraska News Notes.

The town of Brock is sinking an artesian well for public use.

The Missouri river has risen six feet at Auburn and is still rising.

Work on the proposed canal on the Kearney canal will be recommenced today.

The citizens of Geneva raised \$25 by popular subscription for the purchase of a barometer.

The number of section hands on the St. Francis branch of the B. & M. has been materially reduced.

The Northwest Nebraska Sheep Breeders' association will hold its annual meeting at Atkinson on April 21.

John Gerber, a prominent young woman of Fairmont, was thrown from a horse and her broken leg is now doing nicely.

Frank Martin of Fillmore county, who has been under arrest on the charge of assault with intent to kill, has been acquitted.

The town marshal of Johnson was severely punished by four tramps, who resisted arrest. He succeeded in landing them in jail.

Commencing this week the B. & M. balancing train on the Black Hills line will run in and out of Ravenna, instead of Aurora, as heretofore.

John Sken shot and slightly wounded a fellow citizen at Nemaha. The fellow citizen was helping himself to Sken's coal pile and escaped in the darkness.

A prairie fire burned down the telephone line between Blair and Kimball, and all communication with surrounding towns and breaking the entire circuit.

William Felkner's horse ran away at Falls City, and in the excitement, William Heintz, a prominent citizen, was internally injured. He will hardly recover.

The old B. & M. roundhouse at Brownville, one of the landmarks, was recently leveled by a frisky cyclone. The fellow citizen was helping himself to Sken's coal pile and escaped in the darkness.

A 10-year-old son of George Simson in Duval county trailed a wolf two miles, cornered it and killed it with a club. The wolf measured 5 feet, 10 inches, from nose to tail.

A sister of Mrs. Strenk, at Bratton, was nearly burned to death recently, but the doctors saved her life. Since then they have treated 200 pieces of skin upon her body, but the new skin has all come off.

Mail Carrier Shaw of Murray is under arrest for