

# Plans of the New Omaha High School Furnished by John Latenser, Architect

About thirty mechanics and laborers are now at work laying concrete foundations for the new wing of the Omaha High School. Before snow falls, it is expected the building will be reared to the top of the first story. Contracts have been let for the brickwork and the cut stone work, and a contract is to be let in the near future for the steel work of the first story and the voters will be given a chance next November to determine as to whether steel or wood will be used for the construction of the upper floors and roof. One of the perspectives presented shows the wing which it is proposed to erect at once, in order to relieve the pressing need for more room and provide a safe building for the rapidly growing High School. The view showing a monumental tower gives an intelligent idea of the appearance of the entire building when it shall have been completed, probably several years hence.

The matter of providing additional High school facilities has been before this community for the past twelve years. Every Board of Education during that period has taken some action in this direction and up to the time of the present board all these efforts have come to naught. The first efforts were directed towards extending the old building to the south, and a bond proposition was submitted to the people about ten years ago for the purpose of providing funds to carry out this idea, but the people of Omaha registered an emphatic objection, even at that early day, to perpetuating the old building in this manner, the bond proposition being defeated. Shortly after this the board essayed to erect separate buildings on the High school grounds for the accommodation of the pupils of the graded schools. This movement was defeated by a permanent injunction based on the claim that the grounds had been dedicated for High school purposes only. In 1891 bonds were voted for the erection of the present Central school building to relieve the pressure upon the overflowing High school. Within five years the High school building was again overcrowded, and in 1898 bonds were voted to provide additional High school facilities.

The bone of contention has always been the double question of preserving the pres-



OMAHA HIGH SCHOOL WHEN COMPLETED.

John Latenser, Architect.

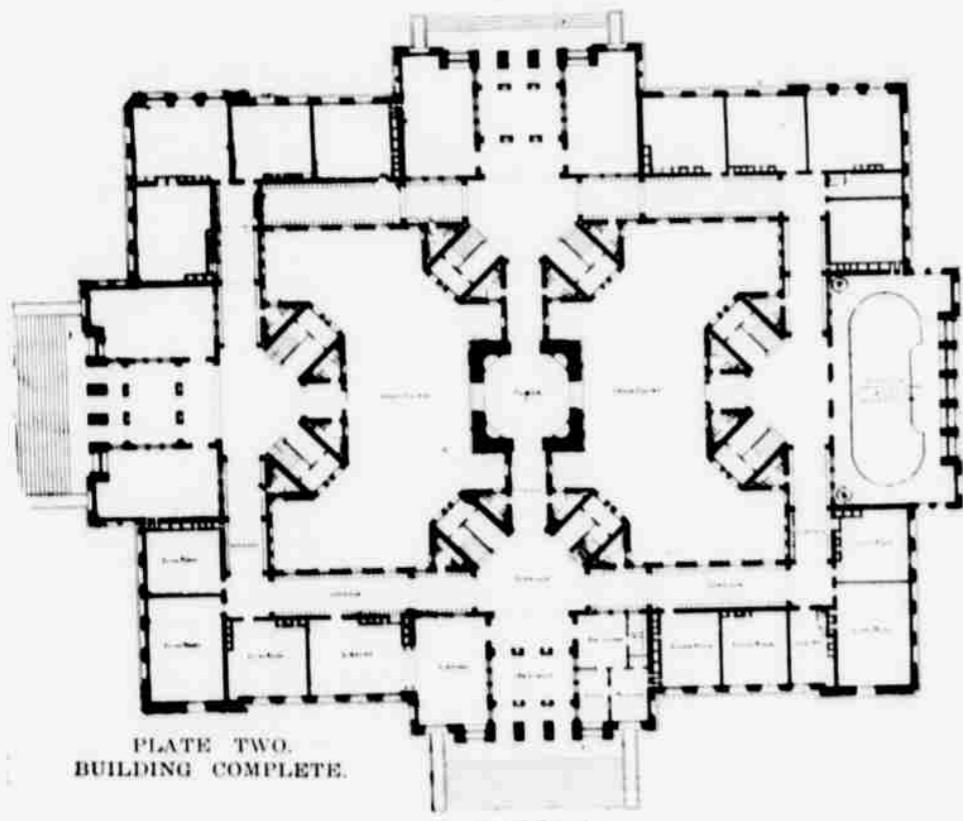


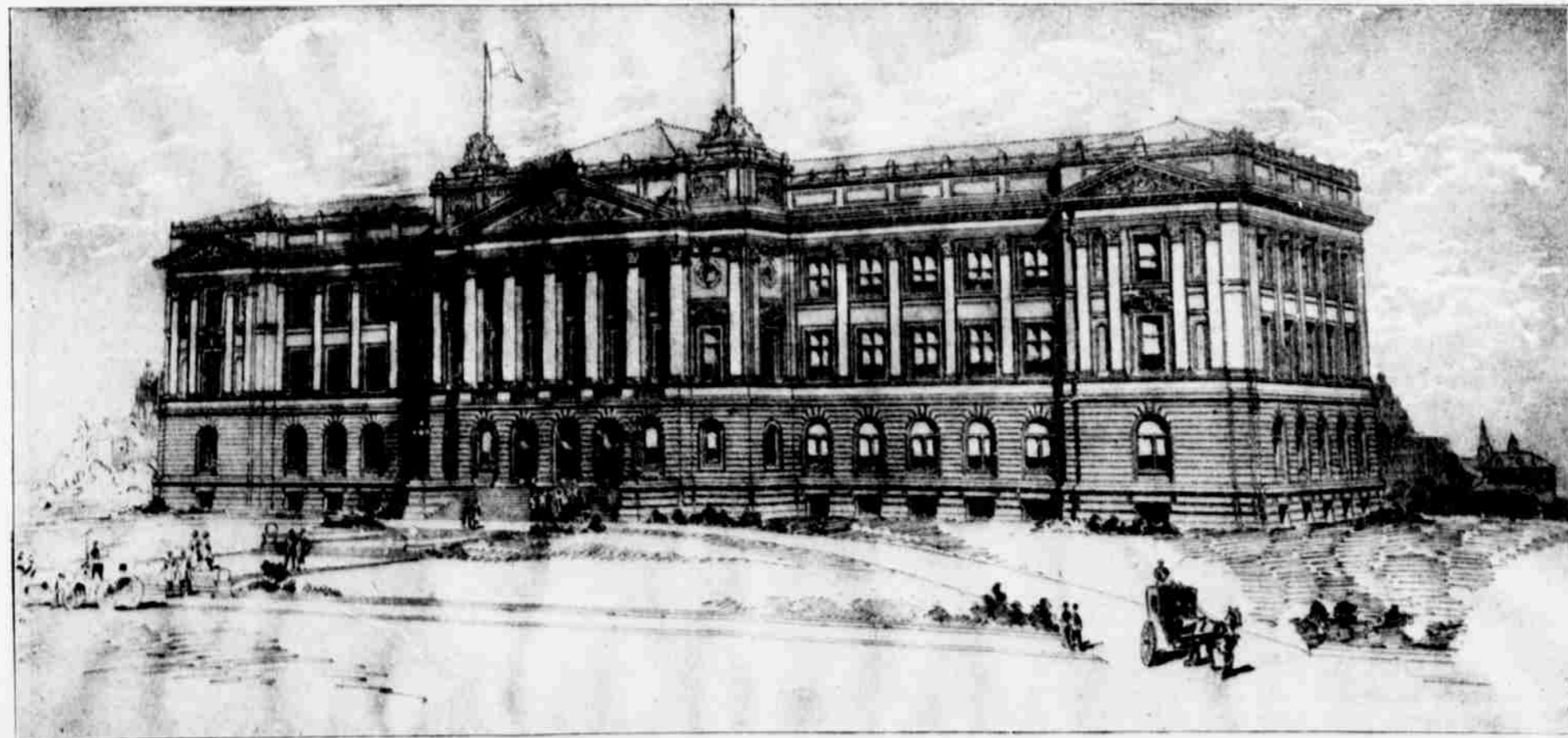
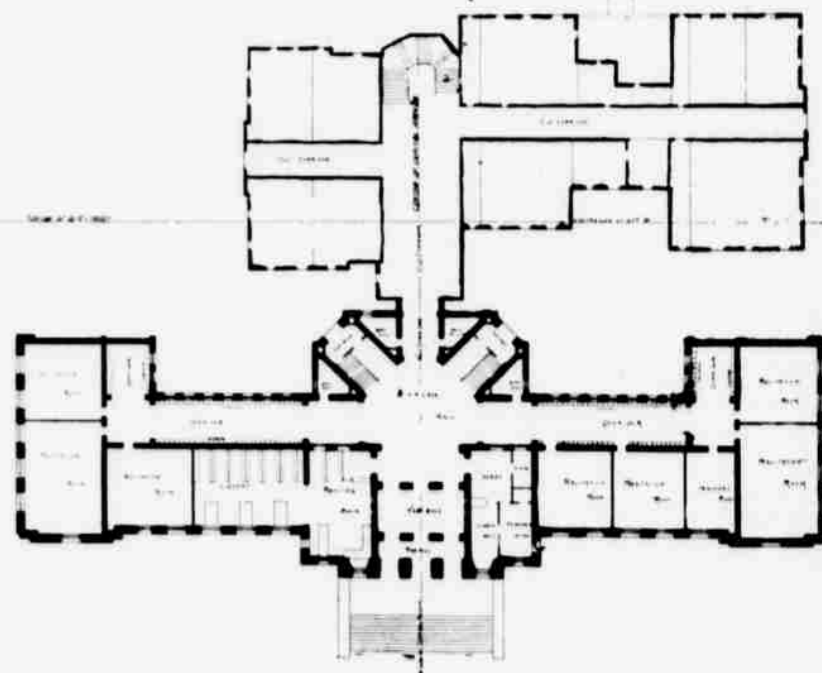
PLATE TWO.  
BUILDING COMPLETE.

ent building and of avoiding making any radical change in the topography of the grounds.

The topography of the High School grounds will be maintained, except at the rear, as only the ground within the quadrangle made by the completed building will necessitate grading to accommodate the tower building and the connecting archways. Plan No. 1, which appears on this page, gives the reader some idea of what it is proposed to do in the way of building at once. Directly to the east of the present High school building will be erected a three-story stone structure connected with the old building by covered hallways on each floor. When the crowded conditions make it necessary to provide additional room, a south wing to the new building may be constructed without removing the present old building. When it becomes necessary to remove the old building, then the entire new building may be finished, as shown in plan No. 2.

The proposed new wing will be 250x75 feet and three stories high. The completed building will measure 250x225 feet, three stories high and if the people desire it, fire-proof throughout. Built of stone and highly ornamented, with an imposing tower rising from the center, on one of the most picturesque and highest points along the Missouri river, it cannot help but be the pride of every Omaha

PLATE ONE.  
WING OF NEW BUILDING AND OLD  
HIGH SCHOOL, CONNECTED.



WING NOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION.

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citizen and enlist favorable comment from thousands of tourists who pass through this metropolis every year.

There will be sixteen recitation rooms in the proposed new wing, each one accommodating thirty pupils. In addition to these, two study rooms will be provided, accommodating 250 pupils each. Biological, chemical and physiological libraries and accessories, also a library and reading room are arranged for. A gymnasium is provided for in the central extension, with separate dressing rooms, shower-baths and lockers for boys and girls.

The imposing tower rising 250 feet above the foundation may be considered an independent building; it is purely ornamental, but must strike the reader as necessary in order to complete the architectural effect. Architect Latenser defends this feature of the plans solely on the ground that Capitol Hill is the only place for a tower in the city. On general principles he is opposed to towers on school buildings, but considers this an essential in this particular, to combine the idea of a school building and a fitting monument to Nebraska.

Seventy per cent of the children in Omaha are today attending school in school buildings made from plans provided by Architect Latenser. The buildings heretofore erected under his supervision have received very flattering commendation from educational and engineering journals alike. The history of the past warrants the assumption that the plans of the new High school building, if carried out as Mr. Latenser would wish them, will provide Omaha with an edifice second to none in the cities of the United States.