

# Union Pacific Shops, Passing and Prospective



GENERAL VIEW OF THE UNION PACIFIC SHOP YARDS IN OMAHA, WHERE THE GROUND IS BEING CLEARED FOR THE ERECTION OF A MACHINE SHOP TO COST THREE-QUARTERS OF A MILLION—Photo by a Staff Artist.

**S**O FAR back into the early life of Omaha does the history of the Union Pacific shops extend its anchoring roots that something approaching the reverence accorded antiquity is felt as one witnesses the demolition of some of the oldest of these buildings to make way for more pretentious and stupendous temples of industry.

That the hundreds of workmen who have devoted the last three weeks to razing to the ground structures covering some three acres of land are impressed with any sense of the indignities they are heaping upon the associations of two score years is improbable; but the piles of debris which these men build up and then cart away mean to them their daily bread, and they are excused from all censure for not experiencing the qualms of the onlooker who couples sentiment even with sand houses—provided the latter can establish their origin back through several decades and surround their existence with a certain halo of mechanical traditions.

The date 1854 alone does not carry with it the ring of remoteness. True, it is only thirty-eight years since, but at that time Omaha was but a frontier outpost, and only 3,500 souls flourished on this now cosmopolitan spot. But even then, despite that no railroad from the east ran nearer than Des Moines, and that all interstate connection was by water or wagon trail, there were pioneers who had every faith in the promise which Omaha's location held out, and at that early date the "Gateway of the West" was a title commonly applied to the town, as now.

## Earliest Ambition of City.

It was under such conditions, when the leading citizens of Omaha were waiting earnestly for the time when the Northwestern road would build in from Boonsboro, Ia., then its terminus, that the Union Pacific shops were begun. So these structures represent the earliest ambition and the earliest progress of the city.

So while every local nerve was straining for the future of the town, this project of building the railroad shops was launched. It was a tremendous undertaking, and the atmosphere was charged with the glory of it. One of the minor difficulties was the hauling of the seventy horse-power engine which was to run the plant from Des Moines by wagon, 133 miles.

In the fast flying stages the time required for this trip was only thirty-six hours that winter, even in the deep snow, and in the summer time this schedule was cut to twenty-four hours. But no such time was made with the many parts of the monster engine, and a week was consumed in bearing it safely to its destination. All the other machinery and much of the building material came by the same route. Not so the bricks, however, for these were baked in the new kiln on the Missouri river levee near the site of the shops. It kept six steamboats

on the river and 100 wagons on the Des Moines road busy for many months carrying in the lumber and other freight.

## Not Extensive Save in Name.

At that time Omaha's ambitions were centered about its one great possession, the Union Pacific Railroad company. This road at the time of the commencement of the shops comprised but fifteen miles of trackage, extending from Omaha west around the "Ox Bow" curve. It was already known as the Pacific coast connection to be, and people were in no wise disconcerted by the fact that not one two-hundredth part of the distance was yet spanned by rails.

So all the talk was of this railroad, and when the company determined to build the shops joy knew no bounds. It was in 1854 that the work was finally commenced, and in the next year the shops were completed. A local print of Friday, March 16, 1855, discloses the following brief description of the place:

"Last October the site of these buildings looked very little like being a hive of human industry. On that once desolate spot is now a magnificent Stationary Steam Engine, puffing and panting, breathing life

and activity into some half a dozen shops in its vicinity. These buildings are substantially built of brick and are remarkable for their economy of arrangement. They are capacious and well ventilated, and as machine shops more healthily located than such institutions generally are. There is a large tankhouse from which, by means of a force-pump, water is sent through all the buildings. There is a large well communicating directly with the engine house. A splendid blacksmith shop and machine shop standing side by side—the blacksmith shop containing twelve forges blown by machine blast. The machine shop is fairly supplied with machinery for latheing, turning screws, cutting bolts, nuts, etc. The building of cars and engines is progressing with and not impeding the perfection of the buildings themselves.

"Besides these, there are a roundhouse, an engine house and a depot. The depot will soon be replaced by a large and magnificent building, worthy of the connecting point of the great Atlantic and Pacific railroad. Materials are on the ground to build a carshop immediately. The building is to be a two-story brick, 150 feet long by 70 feet wide. From the present shop a very

comfortable car has been sent out this morning.

"Much credit is due to Mr. James A. Hough, the superintendent, for the judgment and dispatch he displayed in bringing this mammoth undertaking to its present advanced condition, and through his diligence and enterprise all the departments of engine and car building will be open for artisans and laborers."

## Nucleus of Twenty Buildings.

This half-dozen buildings, then, was the extent of the shops as first built, a nucleus for the twenty structures that could be counted in the group till four of them were torn down recently to make room for a new one.

But the development since that time has been a sturdy one. No mushroom growth has characterized the expansion of these shops. As the demands of progress compelled the furnishing of additional floor space it was added, and each new building was built better than the last. The enlargement has been gradual and steady from the first.

Starting with the tank house, machine shop, car shop, round house and blacksmith's shop, the next step was the erection

of another car shop, and then the former car shop was at once transformed into a second machine shop. With these two the company has run along till now, when it will build a new one larger than both together. Gradually a sheet iron shop and a tin shop were introduced between the machine shops and the round house, and then a foundry was built just north of the blacksmith shop. The capacity of this place was also increased, so that instead of the twelve forges with which it started there are now forty in full blast.

Then a pattern storehouse was set between the foundry and the car shop, and a detached office building was built south of the blacksmith shop. Away up north of the machine shops were added a paint shop and a locomotive carpenter shop. Then a long storehouse, an icehouse, a heating plant and a Dillon shed were built along the east side of the yards, near the river.

A sand house had been placed near the south point of the round house, and an oil house was built south of the offices. The last structure erected was the boiler shop, which now stands the furthestmost south shop of all, and in excellent condition.

## Work Now in Progress.

The changes now in progress involve the ripping out bodily of all the four buildings between the boiler shop to the south and the second machine shop to the north. The buildings were the sheet-iron shop, the tin shop, the round house and the sand house. Practically every vestige of them, save the tracks of the round house is now removed.

So old were these buildings and so decayed their walls that they crumbled like a sugar loaf when attacked. The action of the smoke and various gases had so disintegrated the mortar between the bricks that all its adhesive power was gone, and the bricks fell to the ground separately, instead of in chunks of ten or twenty as is usual when a wall is torn down.

In the place of these four decrepit buildings will now be reared a monster new machine shop. Of steel frame and immense piers, it will be modern in every way. The dimensions are 250x400 feet, giving a floor space twice as large as that of all four destroyed buildings combined, and far larger than that of the two machine shops still standing.

This immense structure will be supplied with modern machinery and tools to the value of many hundreds of thousands of dollars. At the same time the old shops are to be remodeled and their arrangement and facilities bettered. The new building, with its fittings, will cost \$750,000. It will be finished by January 1 next, if unlimited forces of men can accomplish the work in that time.

This will be the extent of this year's work. Much more is planned to come. It is said that \$2,000,000 additional will be put into a complete revision of the yards and more new buildings soon.



PULLING DOWN THE OLD UNION PACIFIC ROUNDHOUSE, TO MAKE ROOM FOR NEW SHOPS—Photo by a Staff Artist.

## Lights and Shadows of Bench and Bar

**A**N IOWA lawyer's letterhead, in addition to his name and office address, contains the following:

"He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man." Chancellor Solomon. Practices in every court on this earthy ball. Expert title perfecter and buys and sells mortgages and makes loans. Am the red-headed, smooth-faced, freckle-punctured legal Napoleon of the slope, and always in the saddle. Active as the nocturnal feline. Leonine in battle, but gentle as a dove. Fees the sinews of war."

A Pennsylvania correspondent, referring to the recent item relating to the notice to Adam before adjudication against him, calls attention to the following extract from an opinion of Sharswood, J., in Palairot's appeal, 67 Pa. St. 479, where, in discussing the question of taking private property by the exercise of eminent domain, the court says: "When the king of Samaria coveted the little vineyard of Naboth hard by his palace, that he might have it for a garden of herbs, and offered to give him a better vineyard than it, or, if it seemed good to him, the worth of it in money, he was met by the sturdy answer:

'The Lord forbid it me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.' Would any one be hardy enough to stand up in a republican country and claim for its government a power which an eastern monarch dared not to assume?"

General Collins, now mayor of Boston, has often said that in the law he has found that there has been hardly an incident of his early days but has proved of service to him in his profession. An instance of this occurred not so very long ago, relates the Saturday Evening Post, and is still fresh in many minds. He was appearing before a high court in a case in which a large amount of upholstery was in question.

The contention of his clients was that the work had been improperly done and that therefore they should not be called upon to take the goods.

The case went along at usual length, with no evidences of extraordinary exertion on the part of General Collins until the exhibit was put in evidence, when with perfect confidence he announced that he proposed to make his demonstration and thereon rest his case. Swinging one

of the chairs to the table in front of him he began to tear it to pieces till the disjointed frame lay naked before him. Judge, jury and lawyers were watching him with open eyes. Then with all the ease of a trained mechanic he began to assemble the parts and within half an hour he displayed the chair finished and complete as he thought it should be.

The difference was apparent at once, and the case was won. When the questioners came about him, with inquiries as to how he had been able to acquire so thorough a knowledge in so short a time as the case allowed, he replied that when almost a boy he had served his time at the trade.

Not many years ago, when he was a young lawyer, Congressman Watson of Indiana was one of the attorneys in a suit over a pig. Judge Goodrich, subsequently chairman of the republican state committee, was on the other side, and the case was before a portly magistrate of the name of Reverdy Puckett, who was running as a candidate for mayor of Winchester. "Puckett," said Mr. Watson to him one afternoon, before the case came up for trial, "I must win this suit. If I don't I

will fight you for mayor; I'll fight you to a finish."

Goodrich also got the magistrate's ear with a similar appeal and threat, he and Watson having arranged the matter between them to get some fun out of the situation.

"The day before the primary," says Mr. Watson, in concluding the story, "Goodrich and I thought we would go around to Puckett's office and ascertain how we stood. He was absent when we called, but his docket lay wide open on the desk. We couldn't help looking at it. There in the boldest characters he could write were the words:

"Disagreed, by thunder."

"There was no jury in the case, but that little matter hadn't bothered Puckett."

"Contrary to eastern impressions," said Judge Heyburn of Wallace, Idaho, to a Washington reporter, "we are developing quite a high state of civilization in Idaho. It is not so very long ago, however, that conditions were rather crude in our parts. We had a judge on the bench out there who was an unterrified product, I assure you. He had never read law, but had picked up

in some mining camp a copy of the statutes of British Columbia, and he adjudicated cases by that code, and some of his rulings were bizarre. One day a chicken peddler drifted that way from another state and was promptly arrested.

"You are fined \$50 for selling chickens without a license," said the judge, when he had heard the evidence.

"But I haven't that much money," wailed the defendant.

"Make it twenty-five, then," declared the judge.

"I haven't even that amount," faltered the peddler.

"How much have you got?" demanded his honor.

"Just thirteen dollars and 50 cents," replied the defendant.

"The prisoner is ordered to pay a fine of \$12.50," exclaimed the judge, "and his chickens are confiscated to the court."

"That night a penniless peddler went sobbing out of the village and an unworthy judge regaled himself and his friends on the appropriated fowl. I am glad to add that a higher sense of justice now prevails in Idaho."