

Popularity of the Driving Horse Unabated---Members of the Tri-City Amateur Driving Club and Their Horses

Snap Shots Made at the Sprague Street Track, Omaha, by a Staff Photographer During an Afternoon of Practice for One of the Racing Matinees

WHILE Omaha has in past years boasted of the number of fine horses owned by residents of the city, there are today more good horses owned and kept in the city than ever before. The residents of Omaha who first invested in fine horse flesh naturally turned their attention to racing stock, and on the grand circuit and in the minor racing clubs an Omaha horse was no novelty, but the investment never paid from a racing standpoint, and it never does, as a business. Racers, either of the harness or saddle class, are only valuable an establishing families or breeds which produce good individuals which can be used as roadsters and drivers, and while the training for the track is necessary in order to establish the eminence of a breed or family, it is in the sale of horses which have never made remarkable records, but which possess many of the qualities of the good race horse that the breeder finds remuneration for the large expenditures he is required to make in order to prove the quality of his stock. The Omaha horse fancier has passed the stage where he desires to own a phenomenally speedy horse, whose sole claim to notice is that upon an especially arranged course, under the hands of a trained jockey or trainer, it can "do a mile" in a few seconds more or less than 2:25. What the admirer of horse flesh today is an animal which, possessing speed in more than average degree, has other qualities which make him a useful horse on the road and an attractive individual from an aesthetic standpoint.

With the increase in the interest in fine horses among the residents of Omaha and vicinity, and some of these false conceptions of the horse to combat, a number of horse fanciers a year ago conceived the idea of forming a club or association which would have for its object the improvement of the quality of horses owned in the city and a dissemination of information on the subject of horses, especially those used in harness, and as a result the Tri-City Amateur Driving club was organized, with mem-



BERT WILKINSON AND WIFE.

bers from the cities of Omaha, South Omaha and Council Bluffs, to the number of about seventy-five.

The amateur feature of the club is provided for and protected by three rules, which are rigidly enforced. The first provides against the selling of any pool or the permission of gambling in any other form on the races. This removes the great danger of professionalism, and holds the racing events of the club to the interest that grows out of the pure sport afforded. Another rule forbids the sale of any intoxicating liquor on the grounds. This is not essentially a feature of professional sport, but it is thought wise by the members to remove every objectionable feature possible, in order that the standing of the club may be maintained at the highest. A third rule provides that each horse in a race must be driven by the owner, or by some member of the club acting for him. These three rules preserve the amateur spirit in its purity, and have operated to remove every possible suspicion of professionalism. They have also added much to the interest of the races among people who love to see a good horse race, but who do not care to watch the maneuvers of professional drivers for advantage. Club members are well pleased with them and feel that they will do much to perpetuate the club.

Not every member of the club is a horse owner, but among the seventy-five there are owned about fifty horses which are considered by their owners as of sufficient speed to enter the contents of the club. These contests, or matinees, as they are called, are held on the second and fourth Saturday of each month, for five months. The Sprague street track, at Sprague and Twentieth streets, has been leased by the club for these events, and has been refitted and improved in many respects, so that it now has one of the best half-mile tracks in the west and



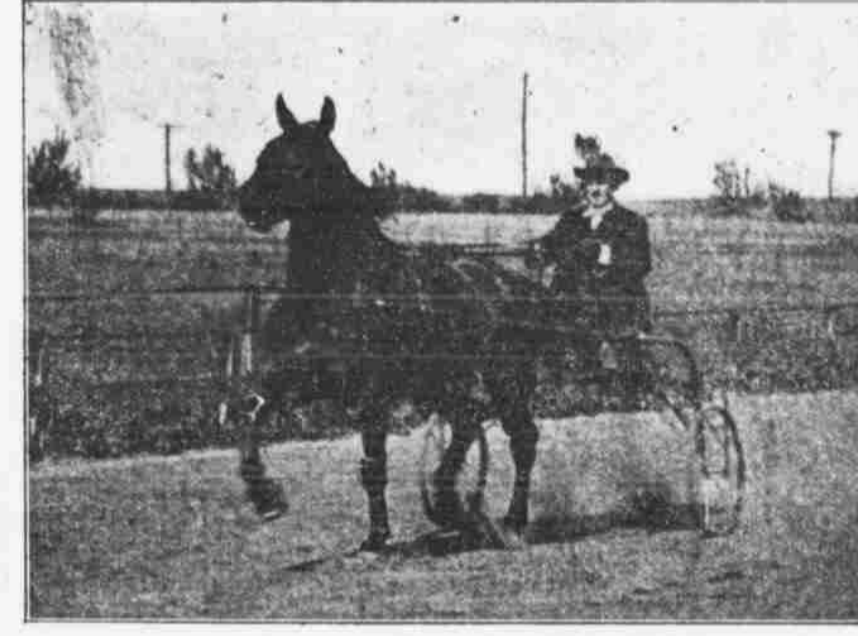
FRED PAFFENBERGER AND THE KID.



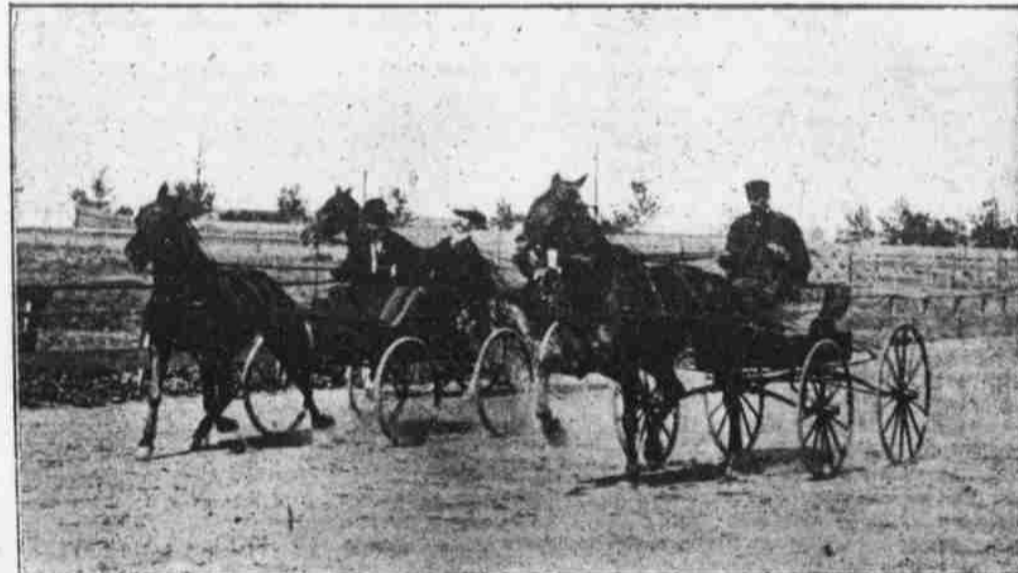
TOM DENNISON AND JIM BEATTY.



CLINTON BRIGGS AND MACDINE.

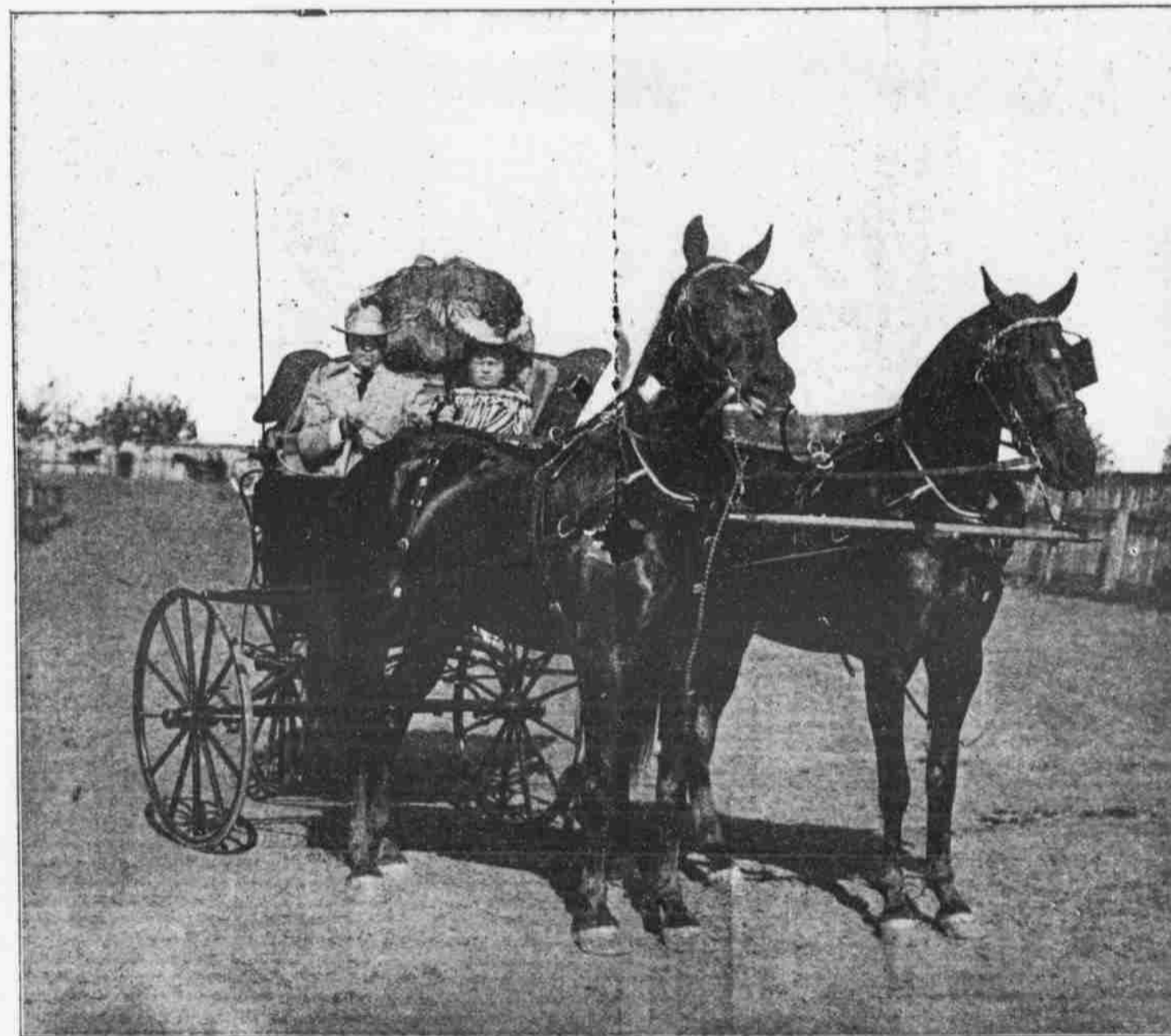


FLOYD J. CAMPBELL, SECRETARY OF THE CLUB, AND ROY F.



NORCOTT AND IREY WITH BLACKSTRATH.

DR. BOQUET WITH MAYDAY.



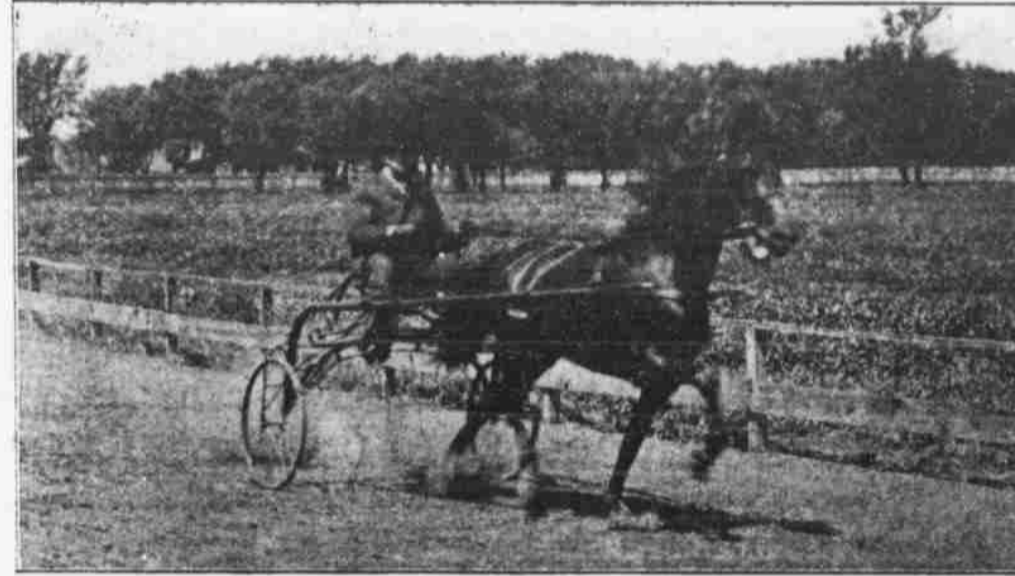
ONE OF THIR MANY HANDSOME EQUIPAGES SEEN AT THE TRACK.



CLOSE WORK AROUND THE EAST TURN.



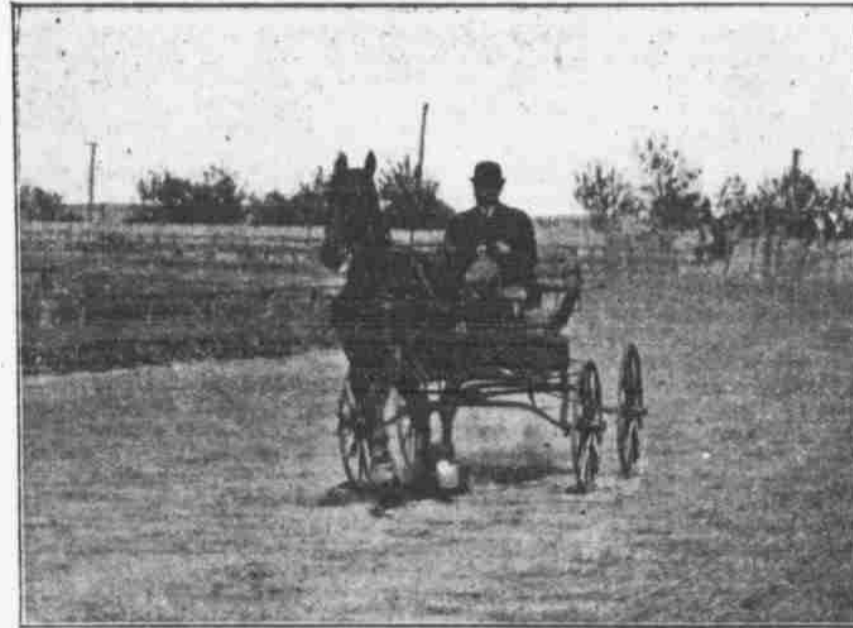
C. E. MACKAYE ON ANOTHER TACK.



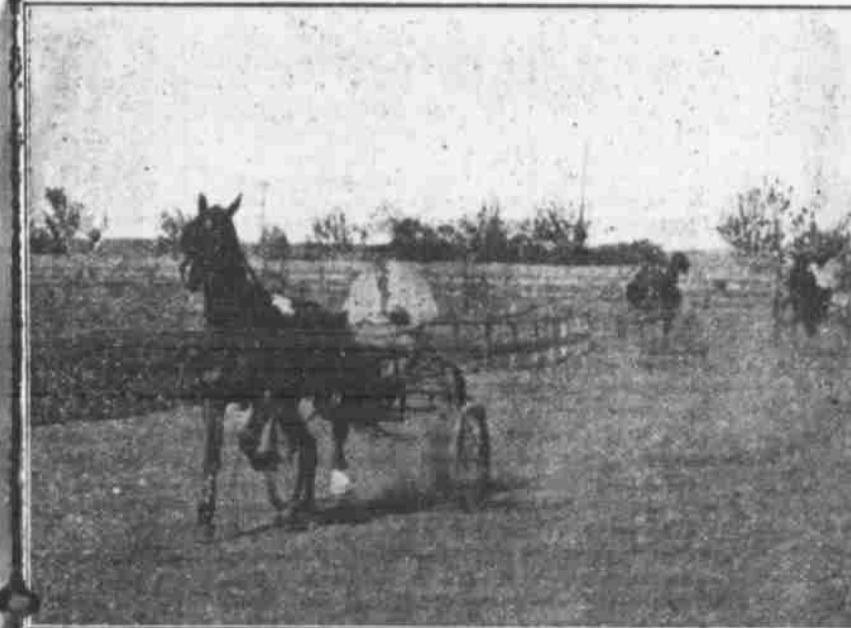
AL. RUSSELL AND POVERTY.



L. F. CROFOOT AND GOVERNOR TAYLOR.



C. E. MACKAYE AND TONY W.



CLINTON BRIGGS DOWN TO BUSINESS.



C. C. KENDALL AND BLUGEN.

ample accommodations for all who desire to attend the bi-weekly matinees.

One of the interesting facts that have developed since the formation of the club is that among the members, as also among horse owners of the city who have not yet enrolled their names upon the books, the pacer is much preferred to the horse whose natural gait is a trot. This is explained by the fact that all of the horses which are owned by people interested in this form of amusement and recreation are used as driving horses in the city, where the paved streets injure the feet and legs of horses. It has been found that the pacer can travel longer upon these hard roads without injury than the trotting horse, as the former strikes the pavement with a sort of gliding movement, while the latter pounds it squarely, the shock being much lighter in the former case than in the latter. For this reason the greater number of horses entered in the contests of the club are pacers, although, as a rule, there is no discrimination, all events being open equally to trotters or pacers.

In the matinees of the driving club there are no classes as upon the regular race track and "marks" and "records" do not receive consideration in making up the races. In lieu of this the horses are divided into groups known as "A," "B," "C," etc. Previous to a matinee the members of the club are requested to enter as many horses for the races as they may desire, and then the board of managers, who take the place of the stewards upon the regular race tracks, inspect the animals and from what they know or can learn of their ability place the horses in one of these groups with other horses of equal ability. In placing a horse in group the speed of the horse is not alone taken into consideration, but the ability of the driver. Some very fast horses are driven by men who cannot get the speed out of them on a race course. For this reason a horse owned one year by one driver may be in a high class when the next year after passing into the hands



W. W. UMSTED AND WIFE.

of another owner it may be in a lower one. This plan is in keeping with the idea of training, not only the horses, but the drivers, in the care and management of horses, and with but one year of the plan in operation it has already produced results which might never have been secured had the owners not been brought into direct contact with their fellows.

Since the organization of the club there has been something of a change in the ideal of Omaha horse fanciers. When the club was first organized there was a tendency on the part of many persons to look to style as the thing to be required of all horses purchased for driving in the city. Today there is no discrimination in the desire for style, but coupled with it and equally insisted upon, is speed. With style and speed a horse can be sold in Omaha to advantage, and size, that which a few years ago was considered absolutely essential to a driving horse, is not so much required. For this reason some of the most admired horses in the city are between 15 and 15½ hands high, and a roadster does not have to be at least 16 hands high to find a purchaser. Taking the list of horses entered for the matinee yesterday it will be seen that color is another feature which is considered immaterial. For many years the dark bay was the fashionable color for driving horses, but today there are almost an equal number of blacks, while the browns and sorrels combined are almost equal in number to bays.

The affairs of the club are handled by a board of officers, which at the present time is not complete. J. M. Arnold, who was elected president this year, having removed from the city and his successor not having been chosen. The vice president of the club, who is now filling the office of president, is E. S. Harroll of South Omaha; Thomas B. McPherson of South Omaha is treasurer, and Floyd J. Campbell of Omaha secretary. Each matinee is in the hands of a special committee, which is appointed at the close of the preceding matinee.