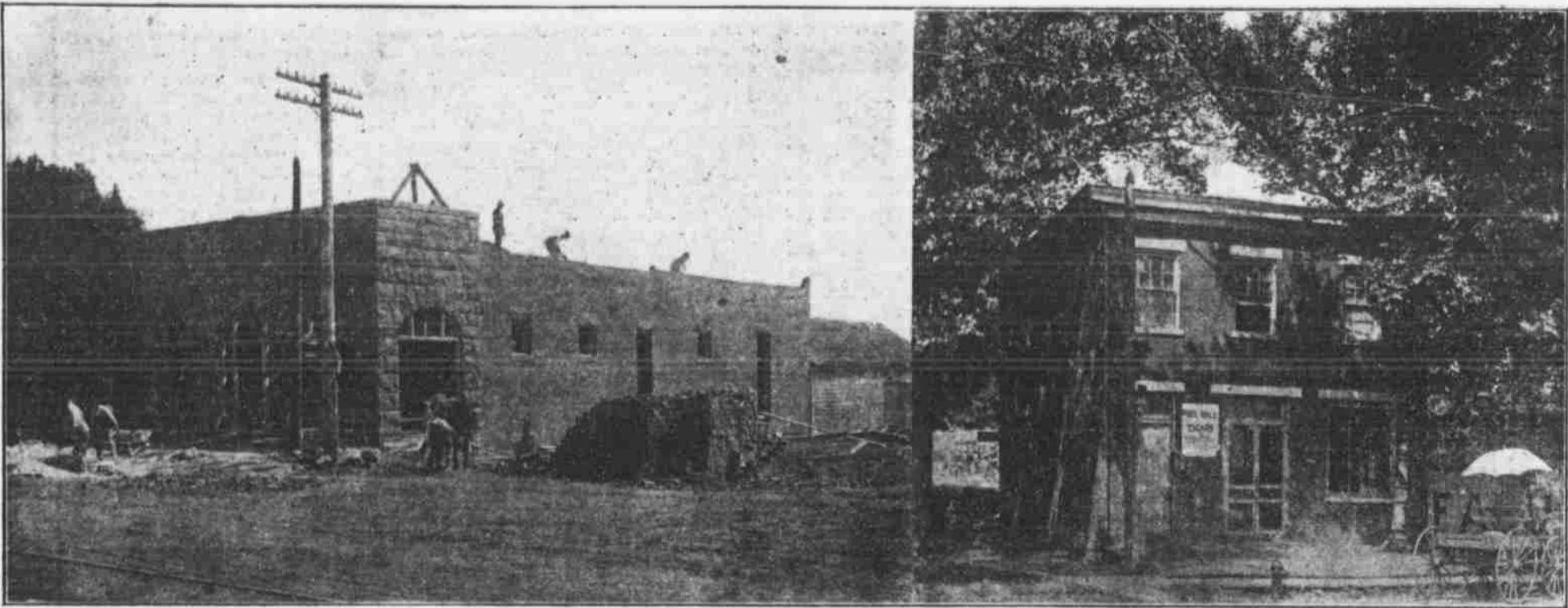
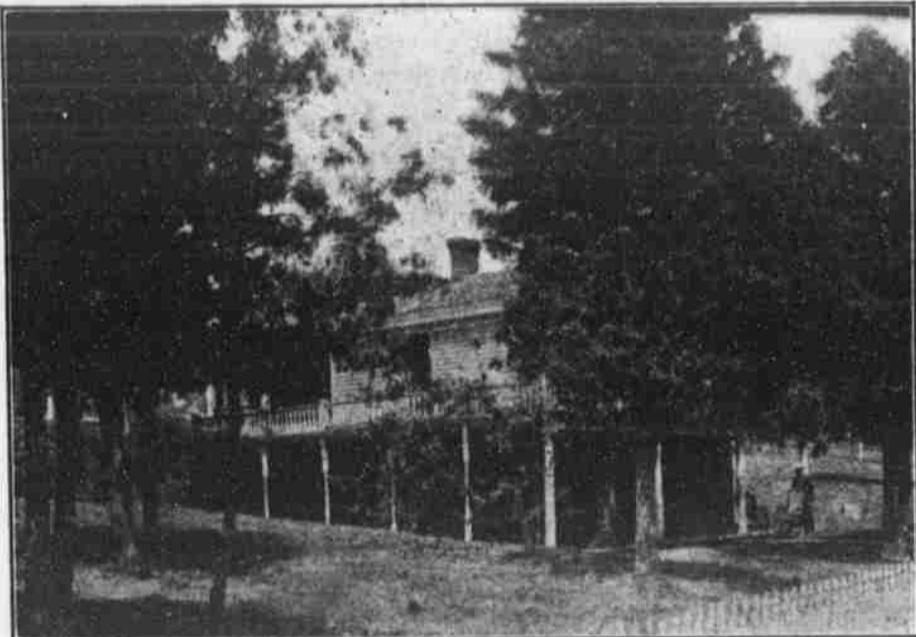


# Florence Shakes Off Slumber

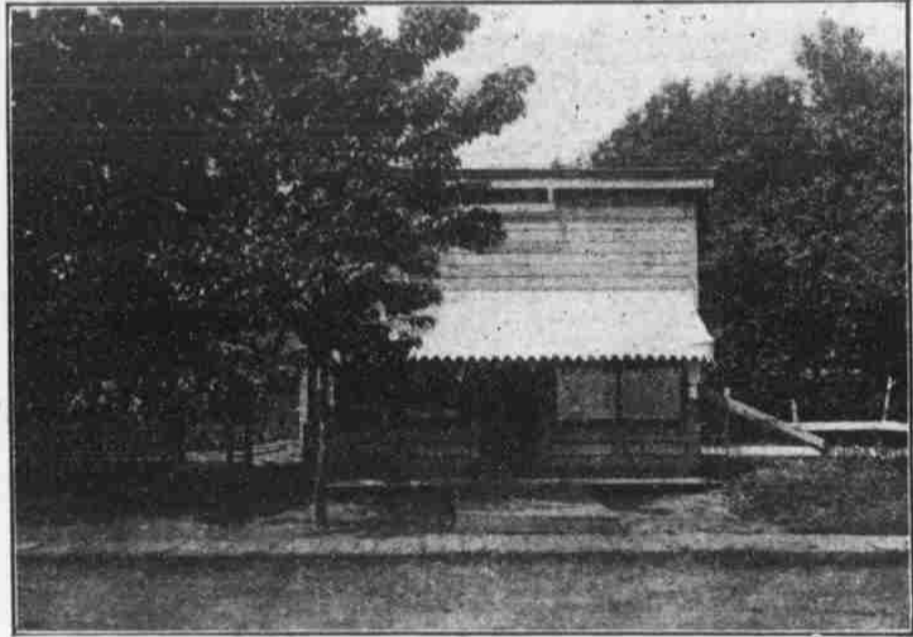
Pictures from Photos by  
a Staff Artist



OLDEST AND NEWEST BRICK BUILDINGS IN FLORENCE.



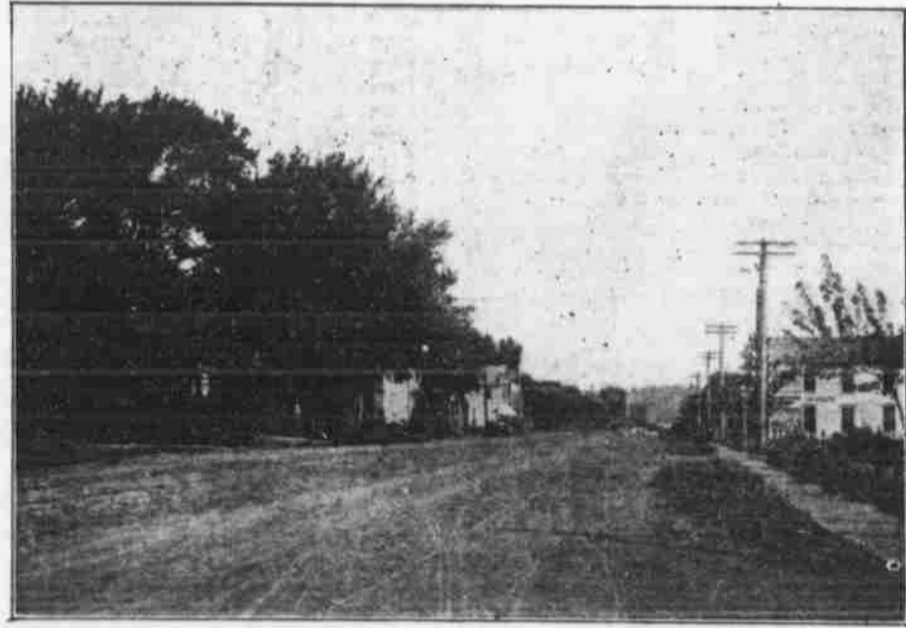
ONE OF THE FLORENCE LANDMARKS.



POSTOFFICE AT FLORENCE.



MODERN MEETING HOUSE AT FLORENCE.



MAIN STREET, FLORENCE, LOOKING NORTH.

**F**OR the third time within its history that part of the imperial state of Nebraska embraced within the corporate limits of the town of Florence has responded to the quickening touch of commercialism and immigration, and in this case as with the proverb it is believed that "the third time is the charm," for conditions in and around Florence promise more for permanent good than ever before, although it is improbable that the town will ever see again the tide of immigration which came to it the first time.

Florence was then unknown, but the Missouri river in its course to the sea had no better crossing than that which was to be found under the bluffs where the town was later started, and the rolling hills, with the two creeks which flowed between them, gave the ideal camping place, wood and water in abundance, with excellent pasturage for flocks and herds. The first to appreciate the natural advantages of the site were the Mormons, then on their way to "the promised land." The Mormons had been driven from the places where they had hoped to remain. From Ohio they had gone to Missouri, from Missouri back to Illinois, and then to Iowa, ever pressing to the shores of the Great

Salt lake, where civilization was to spring magically almost while all of that country between Mormondom and the Missouri river was a wilderness. It was in the fall of 1848 that Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders, among them father of the junior senator from Utah, decided that they should proceed across the waters of the Big Muddy to the land of promise. They started from Kaneshville and came to the crossing on the river at what is now Florence. They crossed to the Nebraska side of the river and then occupied what was denominated by them "Winter Quarters," by which the town was known as long as it had existence. While calling the place "Winter Quarters," it was the intention of the leaders of the Mormon movement to make the stopping place west of the river a permanent station on the route followed by their converts from the older portions of the United States to Utah, and with this idea in view a number of permanent buildings were erected, while the larger part of the first inhabitants lived in hastily constructed shelters or in tents, of which there were a number owned by the party. For a year the town was inhabited by these Mormons, but the United States, then as now, jealous of its prerogative, took exceptions to the en-

trance of the Mormons into Indian country without specific authority. Complaint was made by some of the inhabitants of western Iowa and some of the other western states to the general government, with the result that the Mormons were ordered to leave the territory of Nebraska and to break up their town on the western bank of the river.

This order was followed by immediate desertion of the spot. The first of the Mormons to reach Utah left by the time the United States was ready to eject them, while those who were not prepared to make the western trip moved across the river and took up their residence in Council Bluffs, from which they afterward outfitted themselves for the Utah trip. A number of those who recrossed the river remained in Iowa, where their descendants now form a considerable part of the population and maintain the organization of the "Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," while a number later came across the river again and settled in the neighborhood of Florence, so that when the second attempt was made to colonize the land they were among the first colonists, and the Mormon church was, probably, the first to be erected in the town. With the Presbyterians they

had the first resident preacher. During the year and a half of the Mormon settlement these devoted people laid plans for a large city. It was currently reported at that time and since repeated that there were at least 6,000 people in the town. A sawmill was constructed in which the native timber was prepared for houses and other necessary articles of lumber.

The Mormons left in 1849 and the town was deserted from that time until September 22, 1854, when the Florence Town company was organized. This company had for its manager J. C. Mitchell, who went to the new town to live. The other incorporators of the company were J. B. Stutsman and B. R. Pegram. The latter ran a general store at Council Bluffs and made the town site company a side issue, the active operation of the company being in the hands of Mitchell, who upon that date advertised for the first time the sale of town lots in the new town of Florence. This advertisement was carried in the Omaha Arrow, and the week following its first insertion J. W. Pattison, the editor of the Arrow, made a trip to the new town site. Writing in his issue of September 29, the editor said:

(Continued on Page Fifteen.)