

CHURCHES YIELD TO BUSINESS

Daily Two Left in District of Downtown Trade Activities.

KOUNTZE MEMORIAL BEGINS TO MOVE

St. Philomena's Catholic Cathedral, One of the Very Oldest, Stands on Old Site on Ninth Street.

Demolition began this week on the tower of Kountze Memorial church, Sixteenth and Harney streets, marks the destruction of another of the old downtown churches. With the growth of the city and the changes of the business and residence districts the churches which were once the pride of Omaha worshippers are sold to make room for business blocks.

St. Philomena's is one of the oldest churches in the city. In 1856 the Catholics were first organized and the same year began foundation trenches at Eighth and Howard streets in what had been laid out for a public park to extend from Jackson to Davenport streets.

The first of the downtown churches was the First Methodist Episcopal. It began in a small room at Eleventh and Jones streets, later used the capitol building, was later given lots by the city at Thirteenth and Dodge streets, which were sold and a brick church put up in 1866 with borrowed money.

Trinity Comes Next. Trinity parish began its existence in 1868 and its first church was in the fashionable center at Ninth and Farnam streets. This was on ground leased for ten years. In 1868 the vestry struck for the cornfields and bought the ground at Eighteenth and Capitol avenue, where the cathedral now stands.

The First Congregational was organized in 1856 and met in the statehouse and the dining room of the Douglas house. In 1867 a 14,000 church was built at Sixth and Farnam, then a quiet blue grass patch, and used until 1880, when it was sold and became part of the city hall.

The First Presbyterian had a hard time in getting to Seventeenth and Dodge streets. Organized in 1857, it gradually dissolved to an end. The second church began life in 1861, and after using the Congregational church, later the Baptist and the courthouse, finally in 1870 took into the basement of the present church and became the First church. The upper part of the church was finished in 1880.

The First Baptist church is now far enough from the business center, but after being organized in 1858 it worshipped in a 200 frame church on Douglas street between Fifteenth and Sixteenth. It suspended for a time, but in 1866 built a fine frame church at Fifteenth and Davenport streets. Both Eden church branched out and built on Park avenue, and after the first church burned, lots were bought on upper Farnam. Later they united in Beth Eden church and are now building again.

Methodist of First Christian. The first Christian church has been getting away from downtown since 1885. A little church was built on lower Harney street, but the society later disbanded. This was leased in 1893 they took into the Methodist house on Seventeenth street, and later put up the frame structure at Twentieth and Capitol avenue, which was lately torn down.

St. Mary Magdalene, German Catholic, is another church which had business thrust upon it in its old location. When the Douglas street house was destroyed a rather small brick church was built on the same location, and when two years ago the land became valuable this was sold and a move made to Nineteenth and Dodge streets.

The matter of location is now a very serious question for the Board of Directors of Kountze Memorial church. Some of the members feel that since the church has twice been forced to move, now is the time to get out in the deep, sweet smelling clover and the \$40,000 residences, and place a fine church where it will not be bothered by traffic. Others point to the fact that on both occasions when the churches were sold a very handsome profit was realized and the society was able with the money gained to build creditable churches. These people favor a move of only a few blocks. There is probably a majority in favor of the neighborhood of Twenty-fourth and Farnam streets. Yet there are members of the church who feel that this is away in the country.

First Translucensist Lutherans. The first Lutheran church west of the Mississippi river was organized in Omaha in 1858. Rev. H. W. Kuhns had been sent west as a missionary by the Allegheny Synod of Pennsylvania, and during his first year here he succeeded in forming a church with seventeen members. Of these two only are now alive, these being Mrs. Fred Drexel and Mrs. Clara Roeder, both living in Omaha. The church was first called the Emanuel Lutheran. Mr. Kuhns remained as pastor until 1870, and his three sons live here still. Of these Rev. Luther Kuhns is secretary of the Luther league and Paul and John Kuhns are connected with the First National bank.

In 1861 the congregation built at 1219 Douglas street what was for that time a fine brick church, which would seat about 150 persons. The church during the first two years saw many hard times. Mr. Kuhns went east to raise money, but the civil war was at its height and his was a severe task. It is said of Mr. Kuhns that at one time he carried a letter about with him for days because he had not the money for the 3-cent stamp. When Henry G. Harris reached Omaha in 1868, however, the church had forty members and was in a fairly flourishing condition. After the death of Mr. Kuhns the church had only irregular supplies for eighteen months, and then came, in 1872, Rev. Mr. Billheimer. Two years later the pastorate was tendered to Rev. A. W. Iape, who arrived in the spring of 1874, and continued in the pulpit until 1888. After this came Rev. H. L. Blaugher, D. D., late professor in the Pennsylvania college at Gettysburg. He held the charge from July, 1889, for one year, and was succeeded by Rev. G. E. Stelling.

D. D., who was largely instrumental in building the Sixteenth street church.

Given War to Millard Hotel. A month before Dr. Stelling reached his pastorate, the old church was sold for \$12,000 to the builders of the Millard hotel, now covering the western half of the lot. Dr. Stelling worked hard for the new church, but died before its completion. When the lots at Sixteenth and Harney streets were bought, many of the congregation thought that a very foolish move had been made in going so far out of town. The lots must have been considered in the outskirts, for they cost only \$2,900. Later the north third of them was sold to Shubert for \$28,000 and the recent sale to Judge Neville brings \$90,000, so that from the original investment of \$3,900 the church has realized \$114,000. This is the argument used by those who think it lucky to court business encroachment.

The new church was not built just as it stands now, because it stood twelve or more feet above the present grade. The original cost was \$40,000, but when the basement was built under the church, \$200 more was spent. The door at the south of the entrance which was only a foot or two above the street was left high in the wall and no steps built to it. About three years ago the church was remodeled, frescoed and otherwise improved at a cost of \$10,000. The building of the church had created a debt of \$20,000. This became very burdensome and during the hard times the northern forty-four feet of the lots were sold and the money applied on the debt. Of this only \$4,000 now remains to be deducted from the \$50,000. The church was built in 1851 and this was the time when the name was changed from Emanuel.

Period of Prosperity. When the church was built the membership was 125. The Sunday school which had been organized had grown to 200 members. Dr. P. E. Leisenring was at this time superintendent. J. S. Drexler was the first pastor in the new church and there followed a period of considerable prosperity. A mission Sunday school had been started some years before and maintained near Tenth and Castellar streets. During this pastorate two new Lutheran societies branched out from the older church. These were St. Mark's, which began its existence with the blessing of the parent body about fifteen years ago, and Grace, which was organized about two years later. Grace church absorbed the mission Sunday school. After Mr. Drexler came Rev. A. J. Turkie, who was followed in turn by Edward Frederick Trefz. After his resignation the pulpit was vacant for months and Rev. J. E. Hummon has but lately assumed its charge. The membership now numbers about 350.

The congregation has been growing dissatisfied with the old church for some time. It was felt that it was too far down town and for this reason too expensive a property to maintain. There was also no room for a more modern building was desired, so for these reasons the board has been as willing as Barks for a long time, the only thing being a bidder who would pay the price.

The board has not yet decided on the new location nor as to whether a meeting place will be rented and work begun as soon as possible on the new home or whether a stucco tabernacle be erected and used for twelve or eighteen months while preparations for a fine new church are made with deliberation. The work of demolition will be hurried and Easter seen the last Sunday service. A farewell reception has been planned for the evening of April 11 and then the church will end its existence as a place of worship. The Women's Helping Hand society is having a number of large photographs of the church printed and will swell the fund by selling them to members who desire souvenirs.

JAPAN'S HEART IN THE WAR

What an Omaha Girl Who is at Osaka Writes Home to Her Friends.

F. W. Foster has just received a letter from Grace Anne Hughes of Omaha, Japan. Miss Hughes graduated from Omaha High school in 1895. She has been in Japan four years. She gives these bright little touches from real life in central Japan during these times. She writes:

"We were formally declared on the Memorial day (February 11), called Rigensetsu, celebrated each year in memory of the ascension to the throne of the first emperor of Japan, Jimmi (tenno). The naval victories of the three or four days previous put the people in just the right mood for a very exciting celebration, but they seemed to keep well in mind that this was the beginning of a great unknown end, and they were very moderate, at least in Osaka."

"We get most of our daily news from the Japanese daily. The Jap papers try to keep things moving by getting out extras several times a day, but news is scarce. Last night (February 25) the extra was sent around after midnight. People got up, thinking something important had happened, but there was nothing worth reading."

ESTABROOK TO BE THE ORATOR

Will Deliver the Principal Address at the Omaha Semi-Centennial Celebration.

Henry D. Estabrook has written from New York to Edward Rosewater, accepting the invitation to deliver the principal address at the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the passage of the Kansas Nebraska bill, which will be held in Omaha on May 31 next. At Lawrence, Kan., on May 29 the same event will be celebrated, at which place Hon. William H. Taft, secretary of war, will be the principal speaker. An effort is being made to secure Mr. Taft for participation in the Omaha celebration also.

Whaling Bark Goes North. SAN FRANCISCO, March 25.—The whaling bark Gadhead has sailed for a cruise in the Arctic. It will be the only sailing vessel in the northern waters this season in search of bone and ivory. The day head for years has cruised in the south sea in the early spring and along the Japanese and Siberian coasts in the summer and fall, but this season it will take chances in the waters where either Russian or Japanese war vessels are likely to be encountered.

FIFTY-TWO IN THE FAMILY

Birds and Animals at Riverside Park an Interesting Lot.

KEEPEE ANDERSON HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD

Watches Over His Speechless Wards with Vigilance, but Falls to Allow Ways Preserve Peace and Goodwill.

One of the most interesting families in Omaha undoubtedly is under the care of N. P. Anderson at Riverview park. Although not human in makeup, this family of fifty-two has its little likes and dislikes that must be catered to; little aches and pains that must receive attention from Keeper Anderson, who watches over his charge with a zealous care. And it is doubtful whether the return of spring has more significance with any other family in Omaha than it has with the fifty-two animals and birds housed at Riverview park.

Keeper Anderson was distributing a pall of meat to the carnivorous animals and birds and exchanging pleasantries with his dumb friends the other evening when the question, "How have the animals and birds passed the winter?" was asked of him.

"Quite nicely, thank you; they have had a few colds and have been off their feed at times, but generally they have had an exceptionally pleasant winter," was the reply received.

The herd of buffalo, four noble relics of the plains, appear to take their incarceration with becoming grace, and making 150, 15 years of age, the senior member of the herd, feels his position and makes "Roosie," "Bossie" and "Bridget" tend to their knitting. The keeper says some days he is particularly cranky and refuses to be consoled. The herd was formerly with a wild west show.

Some Domestic Intelligences. Little family differences appear to arise in the animal world even as they do with human households. The domestic harmony of Keeper Anderson's family has been marred by the coyotes, three in number, mother, father and son. The latter became so unruly that his parents objected to his presence in the same cage with them, so the keeper had to place the offspring in a separate cage, which seems to have settled the trouble.

It is the usual custom for the keeper to name his pets, but in the case of the young coyote no name has as yet been selected. Asked the reason of this, the keeper said the young coyote was foolish and irresponsible that he had not yet found a suitable name to give it. The unnamed coyote paces up and down his cage from dawn to darkness with no plans, nor purpose, he doesn't seem to have enough sense to get in out of the rain, so his master affirms. The old folks, though still retaining the coyote characteristics, receive their meals with at least some show of decorum.

The proudest of all the Riverview park family is the peacock, which had a grand "coming out" a few weeks ago with his new Easter tail, a gorgeous affair. His pride would be pardonable were it not for the fact that he lords it over his companion, the peahen, in a manner that is a trifle to behold. He struts and stares around the aviary, looks ever in a boasting way to his helpmeet, standing in the corner with a go-away-back-and-have-a-chair expression on her face. He realizes that there will be no Easter for her and he takes delight, apparently, in reminding her of the fact that she is not an Easter egg; she will have no crowning glory, no fine fall feathers.

Wild Cats and Mountain Lion. The two wildcats, "George" and "Elizabeth," and the mountain lion, "Prince Victor," are in a double cage, the cats and the lion being separated by a heavy wire netting. This does not prevent the two species from having little factional differences now and then through the netting. They get as close as they can through the wire and snarl and spit back and forth. The lion, it is said, being the aggressor. This can easily be explained. The wildcats are mates, while the lion is alone, the only animal in the park that is not mated. This fact seems to rankle in his bosom. He seems to realize that it is not good to be alone, at least all of the time, and he is pining for a companion, so Keeper Anderson states. It is stated that the Park board expects to secure a female mountain lion as soon as possible and then it is expected that the present differences between the wildcats and the mountain lion will have been adjusted.

The eight wolves, four gray and four black, are kept in the same cage, with no separation whatever. They usually live in peace and happiness, but occasionally indulge in a dispute, which is short lived, the keeper says.

The only animals to have gone "abroad" to spend the winter are the twelve Guinea pigs, which were sent to the hothouse at Hanscom park last fall to escape the rigors of a winter in Riverview. They are expected to return when the violets peep again.

The eagles, hawk and owl, a pair of each, have passed the winter in an uneventful manner. The owls continue to look wise and say nothing, the hawks grab their portions of liver from day to day, while the eagles have a faraway look as if liberty is denied them a meaningless word.

The two Arkansas travelers of the park are the pair of raccoons, brought from Arkansas. They eat their bread and meat without much ado and appear to be glad they are alive and well.

The four elk, thirteen deer and three foxes all fill their niches in the animal world at Riverview.

"You should hear the coyotes and wolves make the welkin ring every time a train passes the park at night-time," said Keeper Anderson. "Usually one of them will start the concert and the rest will join in with a grand refrain, filling the woods with their howls. They stop when the train has passed."

Kennedy on the Stump. Kountze Memorial church will have a great finale April 2 upon the evening of that day Mr. William Kennedy, the versatile advertising manager for the best next company, will deliver his popular lecture, "Through Redland with Scott," under the auspices of Clan Gordon, the local stronghold of the Scots.

Mr. Kennedy has a double barreled opportunity for a big success—his admitted platform superiority and the fact that his appearance on the Kountze Memorial church platform will be the last public entertainment in that edifice.

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