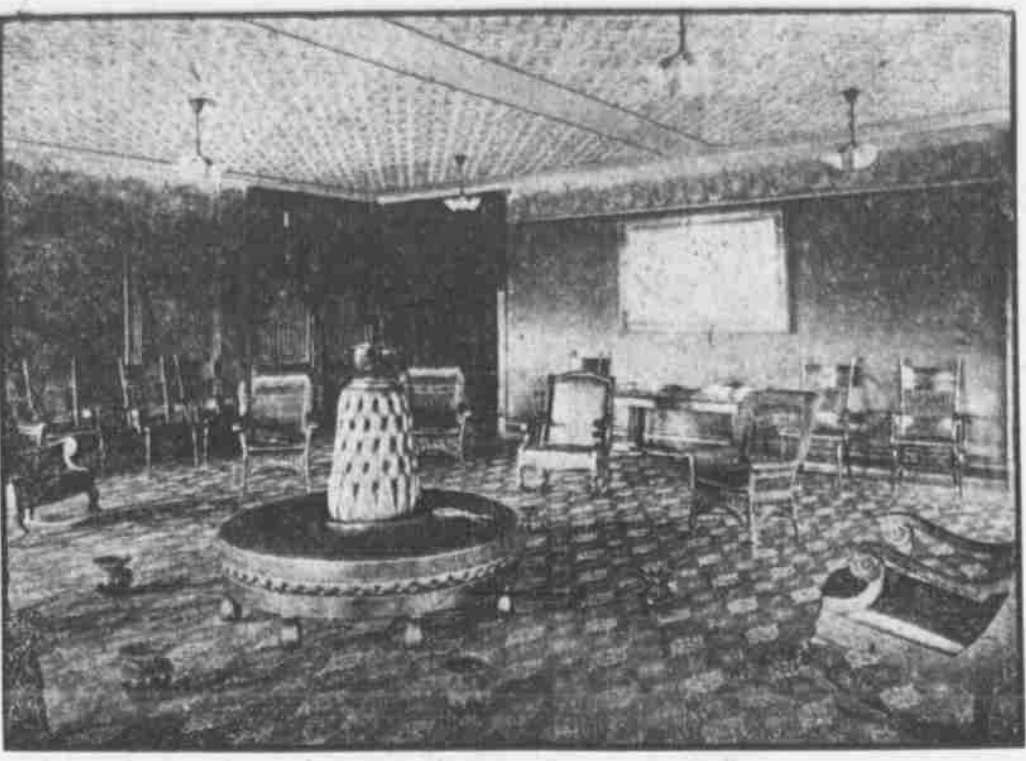


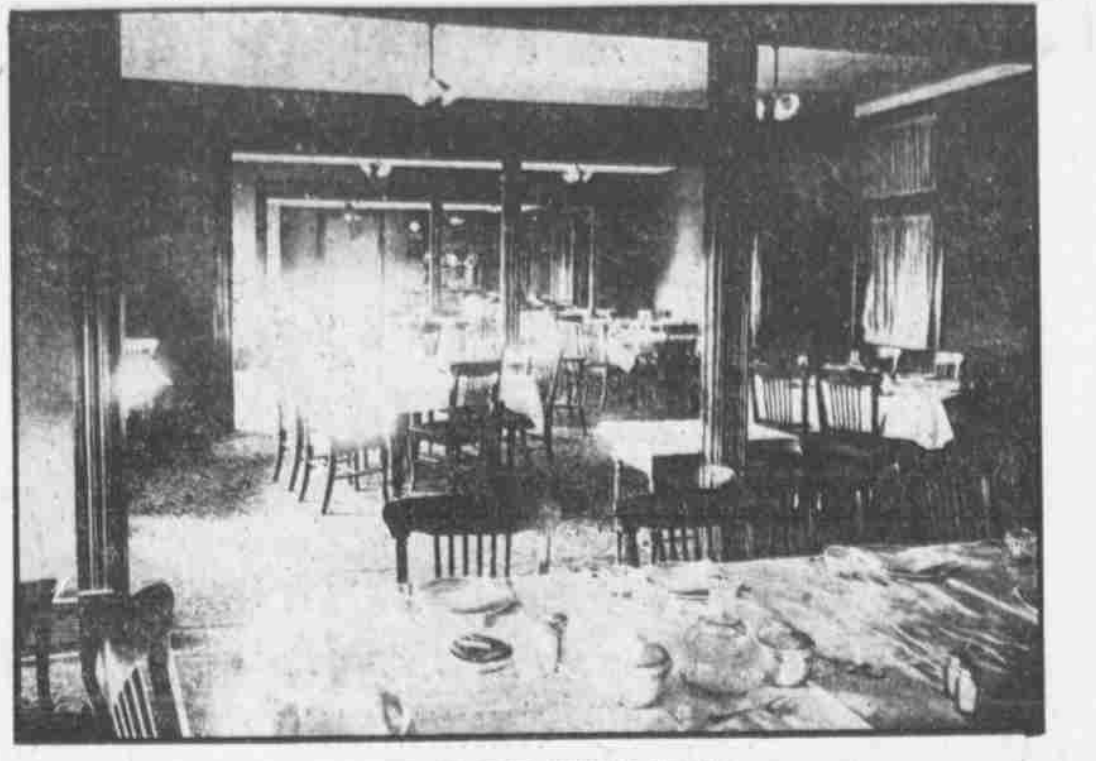
Omaha's Rejuvenated Commercial Club and Its Present Activities



IN THE BILLIARD ROOM.



SMOKING AND LOUNGING ROOM.



GLIMPSE OF THE DINING ROOM.

NOT long ago Chairman F. W. Johnson of the executive committee of the Commercial club was in Minneapolis, where he formerly lived. He heard much complimentary comment on Omaha and the club.

"Omaha is coming right along, I hear," said the man. "You are doing a big job. Business down there now and your city is rapidly growing. I understand more buildings are going on than in twenty years. We hear about your Commercial club and what it is doing quite frequently here now, and understand that you are an enthusiastic bunch."

Co-operation is the watchword of the club and the secret of its success. "Get the Omaha religion," is its motto. Whenever a proposition arises involving the interests of the city, the membership of 500 men stands together on it. Their work, too, is pushed with the zeal which characterizes devotees of the "Omaha religion."

In direct contrast to the brightness of present conditions, history writes the fact that a year ago the club had only between 300 and 400 members. The club was deeply in debt and was going deeper every day. The restaurant was not paying for itself. It is not to be denied that the organization was a benefit to the city, but its history of the last year has been so much more brilliant than other years are not to be compared in any way.

New Birth of the Club.

The spirit of rejuvenation infused itself into the leading minds of the club last summer. They started a movement for an increased membership, an improvement of the club quarters, and secured as commissioner E. J. McVann, a man of experience in the railroad business and informed in every phase of the rate situation. Mr. McVann entered upon the administration of his office with a vigor which since has been largely responsible for the commercial victories of the organization. A campaign for membership was started in which there was great rivalry between members of the club to see which could get the largest number of recruits. All through the winter the list increased until at the beginning of the last week in January it contained 587 names. With this number of members it was proposed to suspend the free list, for those who came in during the campaign did so without initiation fees, and to charge a \$2 membership fee. With this incentive to get into the fold at once, 108 names were added to the list in the last week of January and the free list was suspended. The present membership is about 900. All are paid up and very much alive. At the election in January W. S. Wright was elected president of the club and F. W. Johnson was later made chairman of the executive committee.

Fitting the New Rooms.

An important improvement of the winter was the entire refurbishing of the club-rooms on the fifth floor of the Board of Trade building. At an expense of between \$5,000 and \$6,000 the rooms were thoroughly renovated and furnished with new carpets and furniture. The rooms are such that any city might be proud of them. The north room, used for receiving purposes, and smoking room, is finished with Flemish furnishings, relieved by a green color scheme. The next room south, the women's dining room, is furnished with weathered oak furniture, art glass and two fine mantles. The other rooms are fitted up in a splendid manner. Especially in the big dining room a slight pleasing to the eye. The completion of the new home was fittingly celebrated on the evening of January 15, 1908.

Curious and Romantic Capers of Cupid

Kidnaped After Wedding.

S. ALEXANDER of Eastport, Me., is waiting impatiently for the Board of Trade building. He is waiting for the next one of his bachelor friends to be married that he may retaliate for the treatment he received at his own wedding. At his wedding reception he was kidnaped, handcuffed, hidden through town, imprisoned in two watermelon crates and was liberally wet down and covered with paste on route. When he was finally released his dress clothes were a mess of flour paste.

Alexander has been a leader in a set of practical jokers, who made life unhappy for any bridegroom of their crowd. When the reception was in progress at the home of the bride's parents the conspirators hustled Alexander suddenly to the kitchen, gagged him, handcuffed him and tied his feet. Then they boxed him up in the watermelon crates and put him in a dump cart. The cart was driven all over town, and flour, rice and water were thrown on him.

Novel Wedding March.

In Jasper county, Mo., last week, a bride marched to the altar to the tune of "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree," played on an accordion by her uncle. Her future life may be just as liberally sprinkled with the rousant brand of cannibal bliss as if she had glided down the aisle of a great church to the notes of Mendelssohn's wedding march played by a high-salaried organist.

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