PART III.
HALF-TONE SECTION
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THE OMAHA SUNDAY BEE

No Filthy Sensations
THE OMAHA BEE
Best in the West

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ANDREW J. SIMPSON PIONEER BUSINESS MAN OF OMAHA

How a Young Scot Faced Many Trials and Endured Severe Hardships Before Reaching Omaha, Where He Entered on a Business Career That Has Been Successful More Than Fifty Years

HALF a century in the same business in the same block in Omaha is the record of one of the sturdiest of the city's pioneer citizens—Andrew J. Simpson—president of the A. J. Simpson & Son Company, carriage and wagon manufacturers. The firm now occupies the large building on Dodge street, between Fourteenth and Fifteenth streets. There it has been for about thirty years. For twenty years before that it occupied a frame building just around the corner on Fourteenth street, where Mr. Simpson started in a small way in 1858, just after he returned from the California gold fields.

Typically Scotch is Andrew J. Simpson. Look at that face. It shows earnestness of purpose; it shows cautiousness and astuteness; it shows boldness and enterprise; it shows in his gray eyes a deeper thoughtfulness on things beyond the material world. The lines of the face indicate sterling honesty, solid morality and deep religiousness.

These are all typical Scotch virtues. In no other nation are they combined to such good advantage and with such an admirable ensemble effect. If you were to go down to Mr. Simpson's big factory on Dodge street and meet him personally you would find the virtues impressed even more thoroughly upon you. A tiny space is partitioned off in one corner of the big building as an office and there in a dilapidated old chair before a little old table sits a little man in a brown suit. That is Andrew J. Simpson, head of the big factory. He will talk to you as though he was only one of the workmen. He is entirely without pretensions, and pride and vanity have no place in his makeup. He treats one man like another and believes in the words of the great poet of his native land, that no matter what one's condition is in life "A man's a man for a' that."

Energy and Thrift His Heritage

A study of the life history of Andrew J. Simpson impresses upon the mind more indelibly than either his picture or his person how thoroughly Scotch he is and in how thoroughly and typically a Scotch manner he has acted. He was born in bonnie Scotland in 1834. He came of the vigorous, ambitious, courageous, Godly stock which is such a common product of that bleak and mountainous country. His parents struggled against poverty and exhibited a decided Scotch characteristic when they gathered enough money together to pay their passage across the Atlantic ocean to the land of promise—America. Andrew was only a small boy when that perilous trip was made in a sailing vessel. After six weeks on the ocean, they landed. After living for a time in the east, near the seacoast, they moved to what was then the frontier, just west of the Allegheny mountains in eastern Ohio. There Andrew grew up. At the age of 12 years he went to Cincinnati and became an apprentice in the carriage manufactory conducted by Charles Dewey, father of Charles Dewey who in after years was a member of the firm of Dewey & Stone, furniture dealers in Omaha.

As boys, Andrew and young Dewey became fast friends. One of the other apprentices in that shop was to become governor of Iowa. He first made his appearance at the shop as a boy with a coon skin to sell. He proved so bright and apt that Mr. Dewey offered him a place, and his advancement was rapid.

As an apprentice young Simpson showed those characteristics which won for him success and honor in after life. He exhibited all his inborn Scotch virtues. His industry, skilfulness and ambition brought him rapidly to the front in the shop. He might have become one of the leading business men in Cincinnati had he not had in his blood that other Scotch characteristic, a spirit of enterprise and adventure. Prof. Blackie, the keen analyst of the character of his countrymen, gives the following vivid picture of the Scot abroad in the world in quest of adventure or fortune.

"The Scot abroad is a character well known, whether in German wars of religion or French wars of conquest, whether scaling the cliffs of the Crimea or quelling a rebellion in India, whether dictating commercial treaties in slippery Chinese, tracking the source of the Nile or forcing a high road through the wilds of Central Africa—you will always find a Scot with determination for his companion and progress for his pioneer. Like the Greek he has a strong expansive power. And like Wordsworth's peddler he carries not only his wares, but his wisdom with him. I have found a Macdonald sleeping quietly after years of honorable activity in a remote churchyard of Hugh Town in the Sicily islands. And I have no doubt that whoever shall first reach the North pole will find a Scotsman already there, snugly sheltered under a snow palace of his own construction."

Joins the Argonauts of '47

The gold excitement in California is what drew Andrew Simpson out in quest of his share of adventure. The son of his employer determined to go with him and in the spring of 1849 Andrew Simpson and Charlie Dewey set sail from Philadelphia in a small barque, bound for far off California. It was a long and tempestuous voyage, filled with many hardships. But it was the delight of the young Scot to meet hardships, for he knew he would overcome them by the force of his industry and his indomitable determination.

The barque stopped on the east coast of the Isthmus of Panama, the adventurers disembarked and prepared to make their way across the wild country to some indistinct point on the west coast, where, perchance, they might find a ship to take them up to the land of gold. The adventures of that short trip across the narrow neck of land were themselves more than fall to the lot of many a man in a lifetime, but they formed only a short chapter in the life of this daring Scot. At times they were in danger of fever. The heat of the tropical sun was fearful upon their heads, unused to it. At places they found crosses set up where people had met death at the hands of robbers. But they pushed on and finally, after weeks, they reached a steamer and embarked for California.

It was more than four months after their departure from Philadelphia when they reached San Francisco. They disembarked and went into that city, the oddness and the wierdness of which made an impression on Mr. Simpson's mind not forgotten to this day. Everything, he says, was new except the ground and the sky. It was a city of tents and shacks, populated by gamblers, adventurers, outcasts and a general ruck of men. Flour sold at $4 a pound; tin pans, $6 each; rum, $30 a quart; picks, $18 each; good boots, $96; and eggs, $20 a dozen.

Stopping but a short time in the city, the two young companions went out into the ravines and gulches, where men were seeking the gold. There worked there with true Scotch industry for many months, undergoing unbelievable hardships, sleeping at night on beds of branches, harrassed by poisonous ants and lizards, by cold and heat alternating, by rain and all the vicissitudes of a strange and capricious climate. They lived on hard bread, sometimes mouldy, on flour, half cooked; on salt pork. They alternated between high hope and deep despair. In short, they lived the typical, hard, life-sapping life of the early California miner.

Hard Work and Disappointment

A few months of this served to show young Simpson that it was not the way to get wealth. Some days they were rewarded for the hardest toil by taking out 50 cents worth of gold. Sometimes they did not take as much. Andrew Simpson decided to go into business and he returned to San Francisco, where he did work of various kinds and lived for a time in the midst of the strenuous and exciting scenes of the day. It was a life lived at high pressure, under which many of even the best men succumbed, not only physically, but morally. But the Scotch piety and sturdiness of Andrew Simpson upheld him and he came through the ordeal unscathed. He removed from San Francisco after a time and went to Sacramento which was a city of much the same nature.

He remained in California until 1857. Then reports reached him of the new country opening up just west of the Missouri river in the Territory of Nebraska. He saw a future there which the mountains of California with all their gold could never equal. He determined to become a citizen of Nebraska. In the spring of 1857 he bade goodby to the companion of his youth and the partner of his young manhood, Charlie Dewey, and set out upon the perilous trip across the 2,000 miles of mountains and plains to the east. In the early summer of that year he arrived in the little frontier town of Omaha and started upon the building of the clean record for honesty, public spirit and unselfishness which has made him one of the city's most honored citizens today.

He had exercised Scotch thrift as well as industry in California and had a little money when he arrived here. The panic was just past and this money bought a great deal in Omaha. Mr. Simpson erected a two-story frame building on the east side of Fourteenth street, just north of Douglas street. The front part of the first story was a blacksmith shop, the rear the carriage shop proper, while the second floor was devoted to carriage trimming and painting. At first Mr. Simpson did all the work. Then he began hiring others as the business expanded until he now employs about thirty-five men,

ANDREW J. SIMPSON.

Among the present citizens of Omaha who were in his employ in the early days is Martin Dunham.

The large business which Mr. Simpson has built up in Omaha is due to the lines of sterling honesty upon which he has conducted it. "He has always done an honest piece of work for an honest dollar and has put skill and fine judgment into his work," said a pioneer citizen, who has known him all his life.

Public Spirited and Enterprising

As a public spirited and entirely unselfish man, Andrew J. Simpson has made an enviable record. In work of a public nature to be done for the public good and without remuneration to the doer he is conspicuous, while in offices or positions of emolument his name is not seen. Probably the first small enterprise in which he appeared was the opening exhibition of the Douglas County Agricultural association, which was held October 1 and 2, 1858. Mr. Simpson was one of the exhibitors there.

He is best known as a veteran volunteer fireman. During twenty-five years of its early history Omaha's protection against fire consisted of the volunteer department, which was made up of a number of citizens, who served absolutely without pay and held themselves ready at all hours of the day and night to go out in all kinds of weather and fight any fire which might break out. Among these Andrew J. Simpson was a leader. He was one of the eight citizens who banded together and first organized the volunteer company in 1860. This company contained no laggards and it was distinctly understood from the start that it was not organized for the purpose of dress parade in bright uniforms on the Fourth of July and similar occasions. These eight citizens were William J. Kennedy, P. W. Hitchcock, Benjamin Stickles, J. S. McCormick, Henry Grey, Henry Z. Curtis, M. H. Clark and Andrew J. Simpson. It was incorporated May 2, 1861.

Some of His Activities

From the first Mr. Simpson was a leading spirit. The new organization bought a hook and ladder and a goodly supply of buckets, for hose had not been heard of then. Several cisterns were constructed under the street in the business district. To many an alarm these self-sacrificing men responded in those early days and with their buckets put out the flames. In 1866 the city had grown to such an extent that it was decided to buy a hand fire engine. Andrew Simpson was selected to go to Davenport, Ia., and make the purchase. He did so and the "Fire King," as the crude hand engine was proudly christened, was installed in the house on Twelfth street, between Farnam and Douglas streets. Mr. Simpson was chosen foreman of the company. In the same year he was elected chief of the department and continued in the position until 1869, when he resigned and returned to the ranks, where he did excellent service during all the time the volunteer department was in existence. When the Veteran Fireman's association was organized in December, 1887, Mr. Simpson was unanimously elected its president.

Mr. Simpson was a member of the school board, another unpaid office, for three years and was president of that body in the middle '60s, when some of the most notable work toward building up the educational system of the city was done.

He joined the Odd Fellows lodge in 1860 and has been elected seven times to the office of grand treasurer.

In business, aside from his own, he has been a heavy but conservative investor and the weight of his cool counsels has been sought in some of the biggest enterprises of the city. He was a stockholder and director in the Sperry Electric Light & Power company, which was the progenitor of the Omaha Electric Light & Power company. He was one of the early stockholders in the Omaha National bank and is now and has been for many years one of the directors of that big institution.

When the Omaha Real Estate Owners' association was formed in 1891 Mr. Simpson was one of its members and was made a member of its advisory board.

Remembers Burns' Caution

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of this strikingly typical Scotchman is his reticence about himself. If you were to go in and ask him for personal reminiscences you wouldn't probably learn a thing. He follows unconsciously the advice given by Robert Burns:

> "Aye free, aff-han', your story tell
> When wi' a bosom crony;
> But still keep something to yoursel',
> Ye scarcely tell to ony:
> Conceal yoursel' as weel's ye can
> Frae critical dissection;
> But keek thro' ev'ry other man,
> Wi' sharpened, sly inspection."

Consideration for the feelings of others is a characteristic of Mr. Simpson. He was never known to discharge a man in his employ. If he saw that the man was undesirable he merely met him sometime when no one was in hearing and told him that business was slack or made up some other kindly story to get rid of the employe. His consideration of his men is witnessed by the long terms of service of some of them. One man has worked for him continuously for nearly forty years. There are others with records nearly as long.

Another of his traits decidedly Scotch also is his serious attitude toward religion and toward the mysteries of the spiritual world. He has inquired into these and thought deeply upon them.

Mr. and Mrs. Simpson live in their comfortable home at 130 South Thirty-first avenue. F. C. Simpson, their son, lives with them. Mr. Simpson is as active as ever, though he is well past three score and ten. He is in his office every day and for long hours at that. He is also a valued counsellor in the other business enterprises in which he is prominently identified. He has attained that distinction and solid respect which the admirable Scotch virtues gain for their bearers in all parts of the world.

National Library Growing in Quality and Quantity

WASHINGTON, Nov. 28. — The five great libraries of the world, so far as mere mass of material is concerned, are the Bibliotheque Nationale at Paris, the British Museum library in London, the Library of Congress at Washington, the Imperial library at St. Petersburg and the Royal library at Berlin.

Their relative size is probably in that order. There is no doubt about the first two. About the others there may be some question; but the Congressional, with approximately a million and a half printed books and pamphlets, almost a hundred thousand maps and charts, half a million pieces of music and a quarter million photographs and prints, would probably lead if libraries were classed by bulk alone.

But American pride in the National library should not be too rampant. Of the number of volumes it contains, hundreds of thousands are duplicates. Of separate titles there are probably not more than 800,000. And with apologies to the book makers of this pen driven people, a great many of that 800,000 would not be admitted to the shelves if the copyright law did not place them there.

Why, Harvard has a better library in quality than the one at Washington. So has Boston, New York will have one when the Astor and Lenox are brought together. Each of these institutions —Harvard, Boston and New York—boasts about 600,000 volumes, and they have not accumulated by copyright deposits, either, but by years of careful selection.

But though the Congressional may not lead as a library for general research, it does stand foremost in certain lines, and is fast becoming a great library in quality as well as in mere quantity. For instance, the law library is the largest collection of strictly law books in the world. It contains over 120,000 volumes, and is in constant use by the judges of courts and members of the national government.

The fact that the library is primarily the library of congress is one which will govern the lines on which it is to be developed. According to present plans, it will in time lead absolutely in collections on jurisprudence, social science and all questions of public administration.

It will be strong in books dealing with industrial problems and sociological matter of all kinds. It will be the mecca of every student of social science.

It will be only less strong in some of the physical sciences, such as chemistry, biology, the development of electricity, etc. It will be rather light on agriculture, for the reason that the Department of Agriculture is cultivating that field with all the energy at its command.

It will almost entirely neglect medicine, because there is already at Washington, in the surgeon general's library, one of the greatest medical libraries in the world. In the department of literature, while it will not be a meager, it will not perhaps be as strong as some other libraries.

The idea is not to make it a repository of belles-lettres. It is to be a working library, where the nation can study its problems, sum up what the world has accomplished and build ideals for greater achievements.

Another strong department is that of music. A copy of every piece of music copyrighted in this country must be deposited in the library.

It may be thought that this brings only a worthless mass of ragtime melodies and coon songs. On the contrary, almost all the world's great music comes in under some detail of copyright, either a new fingering, a new arrangement or something of that sort.

The library contains also the most notable collection of public documents and the largest collection of publications by societies in all parts of the world. The Smithsonian gets out a magazine of its own, which it exchanges with those of other scientific institutions of all countries. These exchanges of public documents and the largest collection reports of scientific experiments, are all deposited in the Library of Congress.

In America the Congressional is not so strong as the John Carter Brown library at Providence, the Lenox at New York, or any one of several collections. It lacks the funds of these heavily endowed institutions.

The John Carter Brown library, for instance, can pay thousands of dollars for a single work. As the Congressional is trying to become a great library in other and perhaps more practical directions and has less than $100,000 a year (this year it has $94,500), with which to accumulate treasures, it is not buying things simply because their price is high.

That the library is a national institution is true in ways that most persons know nothing about. It is no longer for the use of congress alone. Any person from any place may examine any book in its possession and may do this freely without introduction or credentials.

It is not a circulating library, although within the District of Columbia any person engaged in serious research may have the home use of books if it is required. Better still, books are lent from Maine to California to assist students and investigators who cannot go to Washington to carry on their work.

These books are lent only through another library. It is done on condition that the book is an unusual one, which it is not the duty of the local library to supply, that it can for the time being be spared from the Library of Congress, and that the risk and expense of transportation be borne by the borrowing library.

Another service to the public at large is performed by the bibliographical department. The walking encyclopedias which preside over this department receive about 10,000 letters of inquiry a year.

They come from all over the country and they ask all manner of questions. Most of them ask for lists of books on various subjects. To meet this demand the library publishes these lists from time to time as new matters occupy public attention. In 1906 ten new lists were compiled and seven reprinted.

These included lists of works relating to mercantile marine subsidies, to child labor, to government regulation of insurance, to government ownership of railroads, to the Germans in the United States, to the consular service, to the negro question, to immigration and so on. The preparation of these lists is only one of the many ways in which the student has his path smoothed for him.

In making things easy for the reader this country is probably doing more than any other, unless it is England. Mr. Putnam, librarian of the Congressional, says that England is using up to date library methods, just as we are, but that we make more noise about it.

Perhaps there is no more careful or complete classification of books anywhere, though, than there is at the Library of Congress. By the decimal system the finest shade of distinction in the subject matter of books on the same general subject may be recorded in an almost infinite number of subdivisions. For example, 4,000 of these subdivisions are provided for under the head of American history alone.

With such a minutely analytical classification the reader can find what he wants, and just what he wants, without wasting time and trouble in digging it out for himself through endless futile delvings.

The difficulty and expense of making these elaborate classifications has led to another service undertaken by the National library, as the Congressional is coming to be called. To classify a book may cost, in the time taken and the expense of setting up and printing the catalogue card, from 2 or 3 cents to as many dollars.

It may be necessary to hunt out the authorship or the full name of the author, while as for analyzing the subject matter with a view to accurate classification the service of a trained expert is necessary.

The Library of Congress does this work on all books it receives. Then it supplies duplicate cards to other libraries at a nominal price, 2 cents for a single card, or five cards for 4 cents.

The value of this service is something only a trained librarian can appreciate. There are now

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