

Traditions of the Home Life and Training of Omaha Indian Children



House of Noah La Flesche, Omaha Indian



House of Nebraska Hallowell, An Omaha Indian



Chief Rabbit Morris



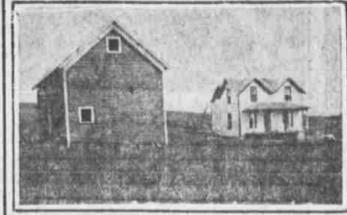
House of Guy Stabler, Omaha Indian



House of Woodtick, Omaha Indian



House of Minnie Hamilton, Omaha Indian



House of Elwood Harlan, Omaha Indian

THERE is a quaint folk-lore tale told among the Omaha Indians about the origin of fire and the consequent founding of a home, ever since which time, the tale goes on to relate the marriage and well being of humanity, as well as order have existed as the result of the establishment of that first fire.

An open fire is always conducive to reflection we know. To me it calls up a series of vivid mental pictures of the home life of the Indian, of the family circle gathered around the campfire in the tent, and as a child, I received here, striking and undying impressions of the intense love the Indian has for his children.

The strong love of home is found in every race, in none is it stronger than in the Indian. We find in him the same human nature we find in the white man, the same cardinal sins, the same cardinal virtues and I have been able to find only one difference. Sometimes you may find the Indian treacherous to his own interests, the white man, never!

From an Indian's point of view exceedingly unfortunate and deserving of pity is that home that has no children in it.

An Indian has three names, one for childhood, one for youth and one for manhood. A baby receives its childhood name when 4 days old, being named after some animal or something in nature. His name is changed again when a youth and again in manhood, this time the name denoting some great achievement he, as a man, has accomplished.

A child is considered of so much importance that all through babyhood and childhood we find tribal ceremonies connected to the children. Some of these are mystical and very beautiful. "The Turning of the Child," where the medicine man, takes the child and turning it to the four points of the compass, invokes first the aid of the Great Spirit in blessing the child, appealing in turn to the four winds of the earth to blow upon him and make him grow, then invoking the aid of the clouds,

everything in nature, so that the little one may have all the blessings of heaven and earth to make him good and great man. We have the beautiful and wonderful Calumet dance, in which every bit of decoration, of feathers, paint on pipes, gourds, and decoration of child and dancers is symbolic, in which the ear of corn from the planting of the seed to its harvesting represents the little human life, from birth to manhood. The whole ceremony forming one beautiful, sublime prayer for the blessing of the Almighty, that throughout life the child may receive protection from the Great One, the ceremony taking four days for its performance.

There are ceremonies connected with the putting on of the first moccasins, with the first cutting of the hair, etc., and a boy is given lessons in bravery from his earliest childhood days, while a girl receives lessons in the domestic arts.

Before he was 14 a boy was taught to accustom himself to exposure, to eat raw meat, so if left on the prairies in a blizzard with his bow and arrow he could sustain life; he was taught to shoot small game, then to go out with the rest of the

warriors after large game, until he became accustomed to the use of bow and arrow and gun. He was taught to cultivate his physical nature so he might be able to cope with nature in all its moods.

A girl was taught to prepare the food, to help in the tanning and preparation of skins for clothing, to sew moccasins, to get water and wood, to be self-reliant and independent of man's help in all these preparations, for often the man had to be away for days, hunting for food in all kinds of weather.

When these hills were all prairie, I remember the cultivating of patches of ground for the planting of Indian corn, squashes and beans, all the work being done by the women. The corn was pounded between two stones or in a wooden

mortar and pulverized with a pestle, and made into cakes and baked by an open fire. The squashes were cut into strips and dried by the sun in open air and put away for winter use. It always had a good flavor and was sweet. The women gathered wild grapes and raspberries and dried them for winter use, wild cherries were pounded, seeds and all, made into cakes and dried, and eaten mixed with the corn meal. In the fall the wild sweet potato was dug by the women it has a flavor and color not unlike the cultivated sweet potato, and formed a welcome addition to our menu. The wild beans were eagerly sought after. They taste like the lima bean, only sweeter, with little bulk. We had no dyspepsia in those days; now that the tin can is in evidence, we have

much, as the prescription blank book can testify.

The Omahas were a peace-loving thrifty people and taught their children accordingly. A child was given strict lessons in etiquette, to treat all old people with deep respect; never to interrupt a speaker; to give strict obedience to father and mother, and never to eat with hands and faces unwashed.

Marriage was considered as binding as among the white people and there were no separations without cause. (Since we have advanced (?) into civilization we have suits for alienation of affections.) There was a betrothal ceremony. A young girl received strict chaperonage from the age of 10 years, never being without the presence of a grandmother, an aunt or a married

sister, and a love had to be very watchful and skilled in eluding the chaperon and getting an uninterrupted interview with the maiden. These interviews usually took place at the spring where the girl went to get water, and I knew of one young man who said he laid in wait in the tall grass and shrubbery all one hot day in summer, without dinner or supper, only to go home disappointed, for every time the girl appeared her chaperon accompanied her. The young man always took his bride to his home. It was always an elopement, and a few weeks later she was sent back to her family with gifts from his family.

The white people have received an erroneous idea of the selling and buying of wives among the Indians. If a young man or his family desired a certain young woman for his wife he gave or sent to her family a certain number of gifts, of horses, goods, etc., and if his suit was rejected these were sent back. If accepted, when marriage took place the young woman's family always sent back a like quantity of gifts to signify that the two families were now one. It was no commercial barter or trade.

The child's moral nature received careful cultivation. He was taught ownership and possession, the property rights of others to be honorable in all his dealings with his fellowmen—and to be truthful. One who

took things that did not belong to him, or who told what was not so, became the butt of ridicule and was given a name suggesting his shady transactions, and he was made to feel that he was held in odium by his fellowmen.

The Indians are very proud of their children, and are now sending them to school not only on the reservation, but to Genoa, Neb.; Haskell, Lawrence, Kan., and to Carlisle, Pa., and Hampton, Va., and are taking a great deal of pride and interest in their standing and accomplishments at these schools. They are building good comfortable houses all over the reservation. Some are modern as to the conveniences, not only for their own comfort, but because they want these children who are away to have a good home to come to. They all have a desire for a good home. It leads to the cultivation of thrift and saving and is a most encouraging indication of their willingness to adopt the new customs of the white people. It will in time develop civic pride.

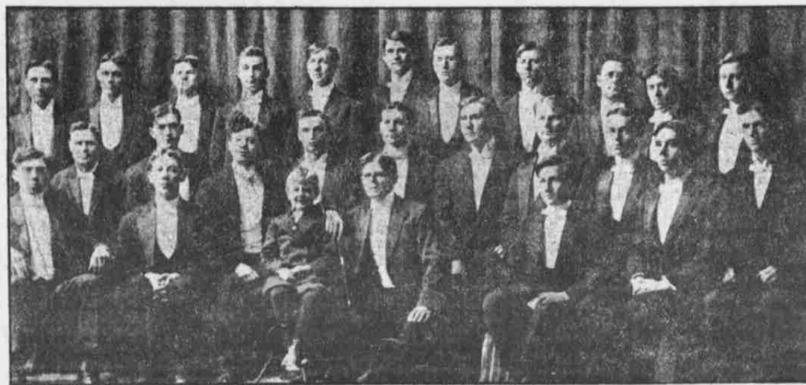
There are many good houses such as you see in the pictures. The Omahas are working far better than for twenty years past, and are building commodious barns and corn-crisbs and buying machinery to work their farms. With the establishment of good homes and all that means in organized society, and work with all its incentives to thrift and morality, with education for their children, the Omahas are beginning to solve their problem, and as they are a part of our state, the white people must do their part by encouraging and protecting them as far as possible whenever possible. SUEAN LA FLESCHER NICOTTE, M. D.

Sweet Singers of Nebraska Who Are Making a Fine Public Record

A COMMON idea of a glee club is that it is an aggregation of voices who sing a few simple songs as occasion demands, but the Peru club is a fully equipped and efficient musical organization of a much higher order. The club, with its present organization and equipment, dates from the beginning of last year, when it was organized, with Dr. H. C. House as its director, and had a membership of twenty-eight students of musical promise and ability.

The club began its work by having frequent rehearsals and built up an elaborate repertoire. It gave a local concert in Peru and concerts at Nebraska City and other neighboring points before Christmas. During the spring vacation the club made a tour of southwestern Nebraska, ending with an engagement at the Southwestern Teachers' association meeting at McCook.

The personnel of the club at the beginning of this year insured an enviable year's work. Ross House, at present a private voice teacher in Peru and formerly a member of the famous Adelphi quartet, which was known to the public in this section of the country as one of the rarest lecture course numbers, added very much to the honor and of the organization. Dr. H. C. House was also a member of this well-known quartet. The work of the year was begun early and pushed hard. An exceptional repertoire was built up within a few weeks. The club sang at the Nebraska State Teachers' association and was repeatedly honored. Concerts have already been given in a number of north-



The members of the club are shown in the picture as follows: Upper Row (standing from left to right)—Lee Roberts, Charles Moulter, Jacob Schott, Ward McDowell, Arthur Johnson, Samuel Gathers, Owen Lincoln, A. P. Belloli, Joseph Loidstein, Harold Humphrey and Carl Crook. Middle Row—Rose House, Rex Trueman, Floyd Ralston, L. P. Garey, Audubon Neff, Arthur Vance, W. S. Bosler, George E. Campbell and Harry Sanders. Lower Row—Roy Ralston, Russell Whitfield, Kingsley House, Harry Johnson and Dale Whitfield.

eastern Nebraska towns, among which was the one given Thanksgiving day at Nebraska City under the auspices of the Otoe county corn show. An extended tour is now being arranged through central and western Nebraska. Dr. House, the director, who is the head of the music work in the Normal, has given much individual coaching in tone production to the members of the club, making possible the mellow effects of tone coloring so seldom seen in the work

of college glee clubs. The work of the club is characterized by fire, dash and precision. Its repertoire is varied, including standard part songs and many light pieces imbued with college spirit and life.

Music critics who have heard the club at its concerts regard it as the best equipped and best trained musical organization in this section of the country.

Getting Down to Hard Pan

At the annual convention of the National Good Roads association held at Topeka, Kan., December 14 and 15, J. S. Tustin, freight claim agent of the Missouri Pacific, delivered an address on "Roads and Railroads," and said in part:

"People usually think of the operation of American railroads in terms of billions of tons and millions of dollars, figures of such startling magnitude that the average individual seldom connects himself in his daily thought and living with the factor of commerce that finds expression in our transportation agencies. The statement that carriers administer largely to the necessities, comforts and luxuries of life reaches the human mind with many other economic propositions without making due impression of the extent to which this is true, and to the further extent that things that were formerly luxuries are now in daily use in modest homes.

"To illustrate this proposition I invite you to a review of the commonplace subject of my breakfast in Kansas City this morning, consisting of half a Florida grape fruit, in the center of which was a cherry from Oregon, colored red by chemicals from Mexico. Whitefish which a few days before had been swimming in Lake Superior appeared on the breakfast table garnished with a lemon from California. Coffee was from Brazil and the sugar may have come from far away Hawaii.

Arriving in Topeka, I bought for 10 cents three times as many dates as a hungry man would care to eat. These dates were grown in Arabia, carried on camel-back to the Persian gulf, then by sea, canal, ocean and rail to the Kansas capital. The farmer to whom fishing has grown to be an art must market his fish for his sport a Japanese pole, an Irish linen or oriental silk line and a supply of English hooks, carrying as a product of America a can of worms, with some doubt on the ancestry of the can. It would be interesting to figure on the freight cost of this fishing outfit, but the amount would be so infinitesimal that we must take our bearings on something of greater bulk."

Mr. Tustin then gave an inventory of the clothes that he wore to the convention, including each article from shoes to overcoat, with their cost value, and said if these garments had been purchased in Topeka from stock bought in New York the freight charge would be less than one-half of 1 per cent of the amount.

As a contrast with other inland transportation, he said, that in connection with a neighbor he bought a car of Arkansas coal for domestic use paying for the rail haul of approximately 300 miles less than \$2.50 per ton, for the wagon haul of a mile and a half from the switch track to his

home 75 cents per ton, and to the wheelbarrow men from the gutter to his cellar window, a distance of sixty feet, 25 cents per ton, adding facetiously that if the engine had earned as much as the wheelbarrow in proportion to distance the railroad tariff would have exceeded \$200,000, and if the wheelbarrow had been paid on the engine basis, the cost of carriage for the carload of twenty tons from gutter to cellar would have been about one-ninth of a cent.

"How much work would a farmer perform for a cent? How far would he haul a ton of freight, or do any labor connected with it, for that price? A child buys a penny stick of candy in a moment of passing fancy, yet the American railways receive for the carriage of the average ton of freight per mile, about three-quarters of the retail price of the child's purchase, a cent with a substantial segment removed, yet laws are passed and agitation encouraged to make the penny segment larger and the mutilated remnant to the rail carrier smaller.

"If the Missouri Pacific had averaged the retail price of a penny stick of candy for hauling each ton of freight one mile during the last fiscal year, millions of dollars would have been added to its treasury, labor would have continued without interruption and the public business would have felt the impetus both from the purchase of supplies and from a more ample service to commerce and this without appreciable tax to the ultimate consumer who pays the freight. Can the human mind think of a service so colossal for a reward so meagre? A copper cent is the actual standard of railway finance in lieu of dollars by the millions."

Christmas Reunion of the Cope Family Made a Most Joyous Occasion

FORTY members of one family helped Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Cope of 214 Hickory street celebrate on Christmas day the fortieth anniversary of their marriage. A family dinner was served at the home, where, for the first time, the sit-

tle family, consisting of grandfather, grandmother, sons, daughters and grandchildren had assembled. Mr. and Mrs. Cope have been the parents of fourteen children, seven sons and seven daughters, eleven of whom are now living. There are eighteen grandchildren.

Mr. Cope is a veteran of the civil war, a survivor of forty battles or skirmishes and is a veteran employe of the Union Pacific railroad. For many years he has been passenger director at Union station, where his son, C. C. Cope, Jr., is his assistant.



YOUNG FOLKS WHO MAKE THE SENIOR COPE HAPPY.



"GROWNUPS" AT THE COPE FAMILY REUNION.