

Present Locations of Buildings Erected in Omaha Long Ago



OLD U.S. PRISON - NOW 123 N. 13TH ST.

SHOULD you want to locate any of the buildings which were erected in Omaha in the '30s and early '60s, call on J. Fred Behm. He was engaged in the business of moving buildings in Omaha for twenty years following the close of a little jaunt he took down south with a musket and a knapsack, which trip consumed the years from 1861 to 1865.

Scores of these original buildings that decorated the site of Omaha and were considered very fine in their day were moved, at one time and another, from the original location to others. In certain cases two or three moves were made before the building found a permanent location. The old buildings stood moving in good shape, for, as Mr. Behm says, the sills and studdings were very generally of hand-hewn timber, sound as could be secured.

"And in those days people did not tear down the buildings as readily as they do today," said Mr. Behm. "A good building was sold property, to be kept intact and used, if not for one purpose, then for another; and as people prospered and wanted better homes they either moved the old ones to other lots or sold them to other people."

This statement is borne out in the case of the old home that stood on the site of the former store of Dewey & Stone, now 1115 and 1117 Farnam street. This store, still standing, was the first four-story building erected in the state of Nebraska. W. I. Kierstead superintended the erection for the owners, and when asked what became of the house that used to stand on the site Mr. Kierstead took the inquirer over to North Twentieth street. There he pointed out a very comfortable-looking cottage. "That's the old house," he said, "and you can see for yourself that the builders of the old day used to put up real buildings. No one could afford to build a new house every few years, and when a home was built it was built for keeps."

Behm a Walking Directory.

Getting back to J. Fred Behm, it may be remarked he possesses a wonderful memory for the different jobs of moving he did. He will almost instantly name the present location of several score more or less pretentious buildings of the early day. Even though he may not have moved them all himself, he has been an observing man, and has kept pretty close tab on what was going on about him.

"General I. M. Palmer, who commanded Fort Omaha thirty-five or forty years ago, built himself a residence that was considered something of a mansion in those days," said the chipper old veteran. "Afterward, when he was leaving, he sold the house and we moved it to Twenty-first and Burt, where it stands today. From the looks of it now that house is good for a long spell of years yet."

"I noticed in a recent issue of The Sunday Bee mention of the St. Charles hotel that stood on the north side of Harney, between Twelfth and Thirteenth. Well, the building is still standing down on Dorcas street and is being used as a residence. Of course, the early hotels were not nearly as large as even the small hotels here today. The landlords of taverns like the St. Charles did not prepare to accommodate beyond a comparatively small number of guests. Hotel life was not as popular as it is today."

"The building in which the Omaha Nebraskan newspaper was gotten out is still in use, as a residence, on Marcy street, between Fifteenth and Sixteenth. A man named Clark was the editor, and at one time I used to help him get out his paper. Every issue was eagerly watched for and used to provide topics for conversation until the next one appeared."

Old United States Prison.

At the southeast corner of Thirteenth and Capitol avenue is a stucco-covered, old-fashioned house that could tell some sorrowful tales, if walls could talk. It was used for two or three years, in its younger days, as the United States prison for this district. Colonel Lorin Miller, father of Dr. George L. Miller, was the man in charge, and the prisoners sent there by Uncle Sam knew the feel of a ball and chain. In those days the officers took no chances with the prisoners in their care, especially if they were accused of anything very serious.

What is now known as 2004 Burt street was originally the home of A. J. Hanscom. It was built in 1856 and stood on Douglas street, on the north side, between Fourteenth and Fifteenth. "I moved it for Mr. Hanscom to the block bounded by Sixteenth and Seventeenth and Capitol and Davenport," said Mr. Behm. We set it in the middle of the block, facing Sixteenth, and the location was at first considered pretty well out. Afterward St. A. D. Balcombe bought the place and lived in it for some years; then we moved the house again, to its present location.

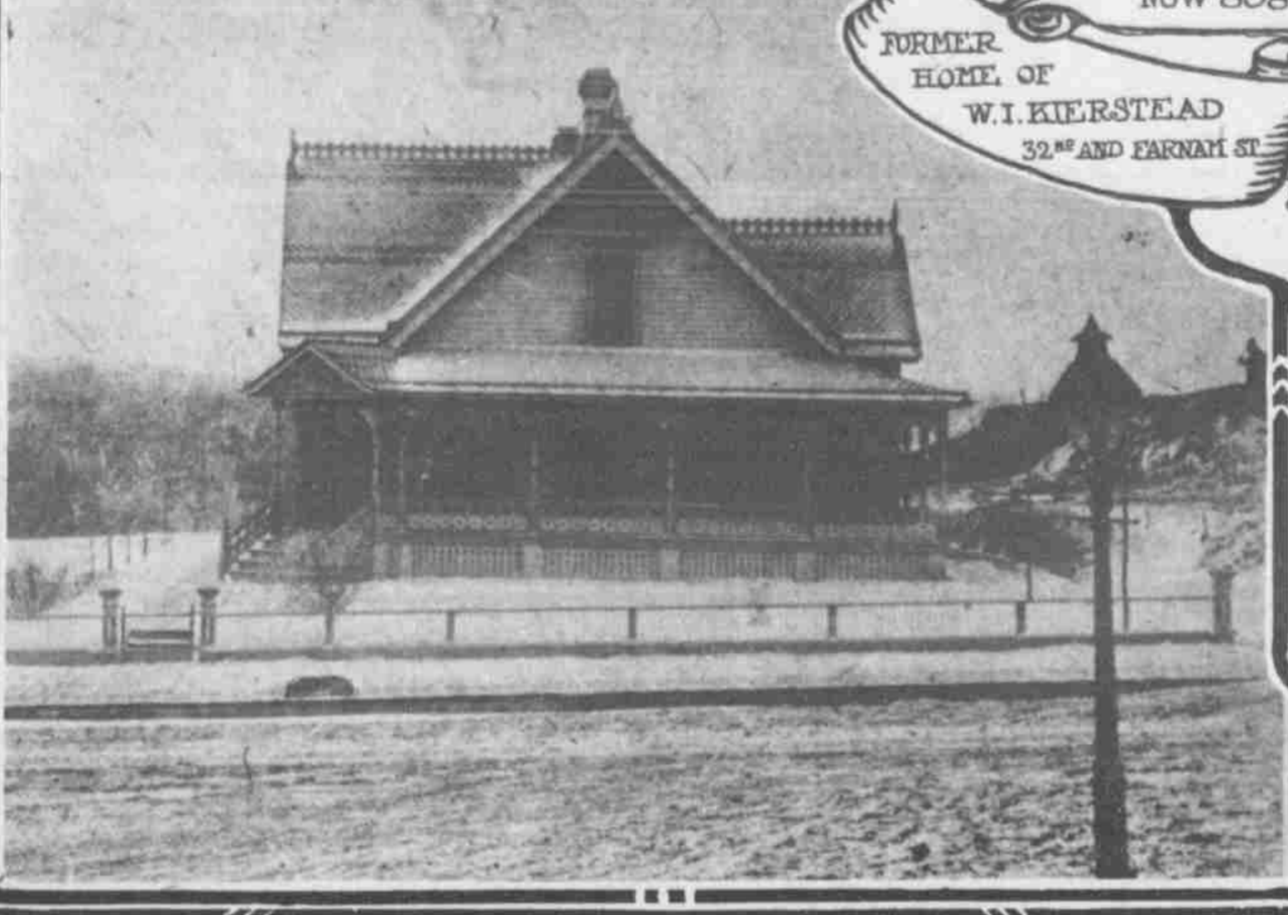
"In 1857 or '58 Herman Kountze built himself a modest home at the foot of Davenport street, on the edge of a bluff that was there in those days; later, when Mr. Kountze built another home, I bought the old house, soon selling it to Paul Nelson. It has stood the wear and tear of all the years since and, as will be seen, is quite presentable today; it stands on the west side of Sixth street, just south of Leavenworth."

Old Mansion Now a Laundry.

"Another popular home in the ante-bellum days was that of General Gilmore, who came to Omaha as a government officer under appointment of President



OLD HERMAN KOUNTZE HOME NOW 808 SO. 6TH ST.
FORMER HOME OF W.I. KIERSTEAD 32ND AND FARNAM ST.
OLD DEWEY AND STONE STORE. FIRST FOUR STORY BUILDING ERECTED IN NEBRASKA



HOUSE THAT STOOD ON SITE OF OLD DEWEY AND STONE STORE

OLD HANSCOM AND BALCOMBE HOME 2004 BURT ST.
OLD HOME OF GEN. PALMER NOW 2104 BURT ST.



Buchanan. That residence was a brick one, built, as I recall it, about '56; it was a fine house in its prime, and still holds a place on the map, on the north side of Harney, between Tenth and Eleventh. Recently I noticed the old Gilmore place, and a Chinese laundry holds forth where the fashionables of Omaha were frequently found assembled in the old days."

One of the well known old homes of Omaha was that of J. H. Kellom. The pioneer educator built the house in 1855, on Chicago street, between Nineteenth and Twentieth. It is still standing, and Mr. Behm believes the building holds a record for standing pat where it was first put.

"Over in the neighborhood of the shot tower is a small building," said Mr. Behm, "that has had under its roof Brigham Young and other men who have taken their places in history; it was originally used for a postoffice in Florence. Along about '64 the building was moved to Twelfth and Chicago streets, in Omaha; later I bought it and moved it to Fifteenth and Marcy, afterward selling it to my partner, Baldwin; he moved it to the present location on South Seventeenth. It really is surprising how those ancient structures stand up under the attacks of time."

A building that is now standing in Omaha, in a fine residence section, Mr. Behm asserts has as its nucleus the two stories that constituted the first pretentious saloon in Omaha. It was run by "Dick" Kimball and was called the Apex; it stood on Harney street, across from the St. Charles hotel, and was afterward moved to Farnam street and turned into a residence; later it was sold again and moved. "It would not be recognized today," says Behm, "as a former saloon, for nearly all the men who used to quench their thirst there have passed on or gone away."

First Home on West Farnam.

W. I. Kierstead, who built the first pretentious residence in the West Farnam district, west of Thirtieth, insists that nowhere in Omaha has such great changes been accomplished as in that section. "When I built my house out there in 1852," said Mr. Kierstead, the street was not improved in any way. I bought the ground, 100x180, of Dr. Miller, paying him \$1,200. That was the top price paid for property in that neighborhood up to that time. After living there until the street began to be built up I sold the place in 1851 for \$12,500, and the growth in values since far surpasses that of the '80s. When the late Christian Hartman built his beautiful home, Laura Villa, just above Thirty-fourth, on Farnam, in 1889, it was the third house erected in the district. Surely it would be hard to find a city in the land where such tremendous progress has been made in twenty-two years as in that particular section.

"When we moved out there Turner's cow pasture,

comprising twenty-four acres, was right opposite our door. Where the Farnam school stands a cut of twenty-seven feet was made, when the street was improved, and a cut of thirty-three feet was made at thirty-second and Farnam. At that time the city line was at Thirty-sixth street, and we had only six wards."

Early Business Men Advertised.

A glance through the issue of the Omaha Daily Republican of February 21, 1867, brings before the mind's eye a pretty accurate picture of the business bunch then hustling in the young city. Every last inch of space on the sixteen long columns of the first and last pages was given over to advertisements. On the two inside pages ten more columns were filled with ads, thus leaving six columns for news and editorial matter. Of this, two columns was given up to a speech of L. N. Hascall, delivered in the state senate, and half a column was devoted to telegraphic news. One item in the telegraph column told how the United States senate had passed "a resolution extending aid and facilities to citizens of the United States engaged to survey a route for a ship canal across the Isthmus of Darien." And today we are preparing to celebrate the opening of a canal at a very different location. On the same day the national house of representatives fixed a tax of \$5 per thousand "on cigars, cigarettes and cheroots of all descriptions."

The Nebraska legislature was in session at the time, and note is made of the fact that the senate reported to the house the passage of "An act declaring the assent of the state of Nebraska to an act of the congress of the United States for the admission of the state of Nebraska into the union, passed February 9, 1867."

On third reading of the bill in the Nebraska house a motion to postpone consideration was supported by only six votes, and the half dozen opponents stuck to their position on final passage, the vote being 20 to 6.

Old Advertisers Yet Living.

Of the several score individuals and firms which had advertisements in the old paper of 1867 very few are still living in Omaha today. Joseph Millard was in the banking business, the firm name being Millard, Caldwell & Co. A. J. Simpson was in the carriage business, as he still is. Dr. R. C. Moore was practicing medicine, and is still at it. Henry W. Yates was cashier of the First National bank; Samuel Burns was in the crockery business, the firm name being Ketchum & Burns; Harry P. Deuel was a member of the commission firm of Porter & Deuel; George T. Hoagland & Son were in the lumber business, and the name still attaches to that line; Schneider & Burmeister were in the stove, tin and sheet iron trade, and Adolph Burmeister, father of Councilman Burmeister, is still at it with his son; S. D. Barkalow was in the stationery business with his brother; Henry T. Clarke, sr., was

in the lumber business at Bellevue; Frank Del was active as a contractor and was on the commission asking bids for erection of the Catholic cathedral. The paper carried a column of cards of St. L. business men, and also advertised a great lot drawing in New York, at which "\$150,000 in prizes" was to be distributed. The capital prize was \$50,000.

One of the firms doing business in the dry goods and gentlemen's furnishing line was Stephens & Wilcox, Lucien Stephens, son of one of the proprietors, is in the trade. He tells of an Indian council held in his father's store that was attended by Red Cloud, Blue Horse, second to Red Cloud in command of Brule Sioux, and Red Dog.

Fun at an Indian Council.

"This council was held on the second floor of store," said Mr. Stephens. "For the occasion Cloud, a magnificent specimen of savage manhood was provided with a black broadcloth suit and a hat. Red Dog became jealous of the splendor of head chief and insisted on being similarly dressed. He was very fat, enormous in fact, and we had a bothersome time trying to get clothes to fit him. He didn't succeed, either; but Red Dog took the big suit available and drew it together in front. Strings as much as he could. He was a sight for men in that rig, but his solemnity was not disturbed.

"We had laid down carpets for the Indian squat on, and only Red Cloud had a chair. He wrapped in the glory of his new clothing, Red Dog, sisted that he, too, must have a chair; so I had to the downstairs and lug up the biggest office chair could be found. I got tired even now when I think of that struggle to get the big chair upstairs. Red Dog got his body down between the arms after I effort, and was happy.

"When the council was over, the trouble, or fun, really began. The Indians apparently saw I ing to laugh about, but the fat chief couldn't get of that chair and his friends couldn't pull him. Finally we were compelled to break the arms of chair, when Red Dog arose and went away with the loss of even a tall feather of his dignity."

Mr. Stephens also tells a story on Blue Horse indicates the simplicity of mind of the warpath rors. "Blue Horse came once with a pipe tl wanted. He gave it to me, and my father surge the chief should have a present in return. W. him pick it himself and he selected a little blue sol, about like the little girls use for their dolls. He opened and, taking me by the hand, he parade Farnam street with a staidness and lack of consciousness that was most admirable."

Ancient Coronation Customs

THE crowning of the king of England has usually been accompanied by what was regarded as the still more solemn rite of anointing with oil, which dates from the days of the ancient Hebrews. And in England, before the Norman conquest, the term used was "hallowing," or consecration, rather than that of coronation.

But from old records it seems that the ceremony as then performed at Winchester was in all essentials the same as that which now takes place in Westminster Abbey. Few people seem to be aware that the coronation ceremony is the only religious rite of the Anglican church which escaped the pruning policy of the reformers. Hence its impressive ritual and gorgeous pageantries.

The last coronation at which every old world ceremony was duly performed was that of King George IV. At his crowning a coronation banquet took place,

there was a procession of peers, the herb strewer scattered flowers and the challenge of the champion of England was included in the ceremony. But at the coronations of William IV, Queen Victoria and King Edward these old customs were for various reasons omitted. Still, much remains that is of deep interest and stately splendor. The dean and chapter of Westminster claim the right to instruct the sovereign in the duties of this solemn service, and on coronation day the regalia are delivered into their custody.

According to old records \$500 is paid for the anointing oil supplied by the royal apothecary. The coronation chairs are of interest. That of the king is the chair of Edward the Confessor, used by every British sovereign since the time of Edward II. It is of oak, and is recovered with fresh crimson velvet on each occasion. Beneath it is placed the stone of destiny, an ancient relic which came originally from Ireland.