

## Men Who Have Climbed High by Means of Pothooks



JOHN E. BUCKINGHAM



FRED PHILPOTT



EUGENE DUVAL



GEORGE W. LOOMIS



H.B. BOYLES



"JACK" FRANCIS



WM. H. HATTEROTH



"BOB" SMITH

**E**XPLANATION of why railroads and some other big corporations are giving to men exclusively the positions of responsibility where a knowledge of stenography is necessary can be found in the fact that in these positions the clever men get a chance to show their ability to handle more important duties. Many of the pioneers in the field of stenography are today holding high positions with corporations and concerns in whose employ they have worked themselves up from the taking of dictation to the point where they not only dictate themselves, but take a large part in framing the policies of the companies with which they are identified.

In sending out notices of civil service examinations the United States now specifically sets forth a preference for male stenographers in nearly every department. Possibly the shining examples of Cortelyou, Loeb and others now high in the business world have had something to do with this attitude of the government. At least, it is true that the heads of government departments find men stenographers more useful and to be trusted with heavier responsibilities than women. Students of psychology have offered explanations to account for this, but the fact remains that women stenographers can hold good jobs, can be trusted with confidential correspondence, and sometimes reach a fairly high place so far as pay is concerned—but they remain stenographers to the end of the chapter. On the other hand, any man of good ability, who makes his mark as a faithful, accurate and reliable amanuensis, can feel pretty sure of being advanced to something better. "There is always room at the top" applies, in this case, almost exclusively to men.

The history of railroading and other big business in Omaha is full of instances of men who were once stenographers who have been advanced in duties and responsibilities steadily from the moment they gave evidence of capacity.

"Tom" Orr, now assistant to President Mohler, learned to "serve and obey orders"—the first rule of every real railroad—a fairly long spell ago. He was then the secretary and stenographer for General Manager Callaway, and that must have been before Grover Cleveland ran for president the first time. Since those days Mr. Orr has attended strictly to his knitting, gaining fine experience, accumulating knowledge, absorbing wisdom and, all combined, properly used, have brought him to a ruling desk in a nice, comfortable office, where he can work as hard as he wants to without anybody ordering him off on a vacation for his health, and where he can, if the spirit moves, do a little dictating himself.

George W. Loomis, now assistant general manager of the Burlington, operated as a stenographer here in Omaha in the office of G. W. Holdrege; that was almost a quarter of a century ago, and, like others who traveled far along the line of promotion, he had a keen realization of the opportunities for training in system and accuracy offered by his position. This training has been put to good use in the greatly enlarged responsibilities he now shoulders.

"Bob" Smith, the head of the advertising department of the Union Pacific railroad, also some colonizer for the western garden of plenty, is a jaunty, ever-smiling youth today. Those who were in Omaha when the world was a quarter century younger assert that Robert A. Smith was even then a stenographer of well established reputation,

Which would seem to put Mr. Smith in the class of those who cultivate perennial youth along other lines than those sought by Ponce de Leon. Common report has it that the Smith boy, in those happy days of youth, took dictation so acceptably, and showed such an intelligent grasp of the duties imposed on him, that he just naturally had to be pushed along the line of promotion. With the increased responsibilities he became an increasingly valuable man, but he has never grown fat. He was private stenographer to E. L. Lomax for several years.

The only man of prominence in Omaha, probably, who never "sat" for a photograph is "Billy" Whittaker of the Union Pacific law department. He boasts of this fact with such a grin of triumph that someone ought to make it a point of honor to get him. Whittaker came to Omaha straight from Detroit in the year 1896. He brought with him street car fare and a trifle to spare, and having devoted some attention to shorthand in his father's office and after school hours at home, on arrival here he picked out W. N. Babcock, then general western agent of the Northwestern railway, and said in a confident voice, "You're it." The guess was good, for Whittaker got the job he needed and has been working ever since. "Not on your tinfoy" is his favorite expression when unduly excited, and the only thing he dodges is a photographer. He dodged even on his wedding day, not only the camera, but the rice throwers as well. He was then working for the late Judge Kelley, and before that had been the stenographer for John M. Thurston. Now he is an important man in the law department of the Union Pacific, but still feels he is cousin germane to the hentrack craft.

"The stenographers of Omaha were and are a great bunch," said Mr. Whittaker. "They are as faithful as the day is long, and very naturally the confidence reposed in them begets a high sense of responsibility. In their work, too, they acquire a knowledge of direction and management of large concerns that proves exceedingly valuable and equips them for much more important duties later on. Some day I may have a picture taken, but the occasion will have to be quite important, I assure you."

It was reported, in the course of the talk with some old-timers, that "Ike" Miner, secretary of the Elks' club, used to be a stenographer—which, if true, would make him the oldest in the world, very likely. It took Miner only a moment or two to disabuse the inquirer's mind of this impression. "No, sir," he said, "all the good speeches I wrote for various people as a reporter were done in long-hand, but so cleverly that lots of people undoubtedly thought I was a shorthand man. Even today I do all my best work by main strength, with a pen and a large sheet of paper. The only man who wrote larger than myself in those days was Gillan, now manager of the Auditorium. He could sometimes get six or nine words on an ordinary sheet of paper, but not always."

T. H. Smith, in his younger days known as

bly marry late in life, when the sewing on of his own buttons becomes really tiresome.

James Hodge, chief clerk in the general manager's office of the Burlington in Omaha, had been but a brief time out from Scotland when he landed in the office of Mr. Holdrege, back in 1881. He has stuck to his work like a major and was his way of hard, faithful work. He is a Glasgow man, and despite this dignity attaching to that fact, he is quite approachable, being known familiarly as "Jim."

J. M. Barr, now general manager of the Chicago Belt Line railway, back in the '80s, was a stenographer in the office of General Freight Agent Miller of the Burlington. He gained a substantial reputation in his chosen field long before he left Omaha.

"Jack" Francis, general passenger agent of the Burlington, has held that position so long that only those who knew him in the old days can recall that he was once a crack stenographer. That was prior to 1880, when he was confidential secretary to D. E. Thompson at Lincoln, and before that he had held a job as stenographer in Omaha. He shone as general passenger agent in Omaha before going to Chicago, where he has been located for a good many years.

James Dewar—you all know "Jim," who was assistant superintendent of the Union station for so many years—was stenographer for C. L. Mellen, Thomas L. Kimball, Ed Dickenson, Horace G. Burt, "Tom" Orr and Vice President and General Manager Holcomb, as late as 1889. He wanted a change from making notes and sought work in a branch of railroad work where he could get more exercise. He has now graduated into the field of fuel, with the Havens-White Coal company, and assists other people to burn up their money instead of letting it all go for railroad travel.

H. M. Waring, "Hank," long a successful court reporter in Omaha, has taken up his home in Denver, where he is vice president of a growing fraternal insurance company. Another old-time shorthand man who has moved west is "Bill" Messick, now in the automobile repair business at Los Angeles.

"Jimmy" Haynes worked with pencil and notebook as a reporter in the courts several years before taking up newspaper work with The Bee. He gave up this strenuous avocation a dozen years ago to become a promoter of publicity.

H. B. Boyles, familiarly spoken of as "Billy" by the elder generation of court reporters, was a master hand at the stenographer trade for a good

many years. He quit court reporting to start a school, which has developed into Boyles college. Its growth and increasing success has made Mr. Boyles a man who has money to cultivate automobiles and draw a goodly income from rents.

A. C. Van Sant is a typical pioneer who saw the opportunity for business schools and established a successful one. He is now living in retirement, Fred Sanborn of the Standard Stock Food company used to do stenographic work at the Burlington headquarters in the early '80, but he pined for wider fields of effort. Now he ships to all parts of the world a product that is helping to sustain the fame of Omaha as a growing center of trade and commerce. He is understood to be making money enough to prevent much worry about next winter's coal.

"Joe" Megeath, now living in Salt Lake City and counted in the millionaire class as a mine owner, used to be a shorthand shark in Omaha in 1885-86. He went west to grow up with the country about 1888.

"Joe" Sykes and "Gene" Duval are two active railroad men who were wont, in the old days, to sit and imbibe language from the dictation of other men some years ago, and then transcribe the same with accuracy and dispatch. Duval is now assistant general western agent of the Milwaukee railroad, with headquarters in Omaha, and Sykes holds a responsible position in the head office of the Union Pacific.

W. H. Hatteroth, now practicing law here, was a stenographer with the Union Pacific law department up to about ten years ago. Others of the craft who took up the law were Silas Cobb, now practicing in Kentucky, and Orvando Cowles, who is now devoting his whole attention to scientific farming in Valley precinct, Douglas county. Deputy United States Marshal Nickerson, who administers law to some extent, acted as stenographer for the late Ben White for several years.