

# Beginnings in Lincoln Brought Forth Much Good Fruit

By P. A. BARROW.

**T** WAS a cool, pleasant afternoon in autumn, along in the early states, when a group of men appeared on a hill a short distance north of what is now the city of Lincoln in the then territory of Nebraska, and looked across the valley before them with interest. The shadows warned the new comers that they must soon seek a camping place for the night.

As they stood there discussing the scene before them two prairie schooners, drawn by teams of mules appeared on top of the hill and as they neared the group the tired mules stopped of their own accord as if willing to join with their masters that it was time to look for a camping ground.

"That little grove along the banks of that stream over yonder looks to me to be a good place to pitch our camp," said one of the number as he pointed across the valley a couple of miles to a grove which looked inviting, "and besides we will probably find water there."

"You are right," answered another of the men, "and I believe we better get across as soon as possible."

**Planned with Prospect.**

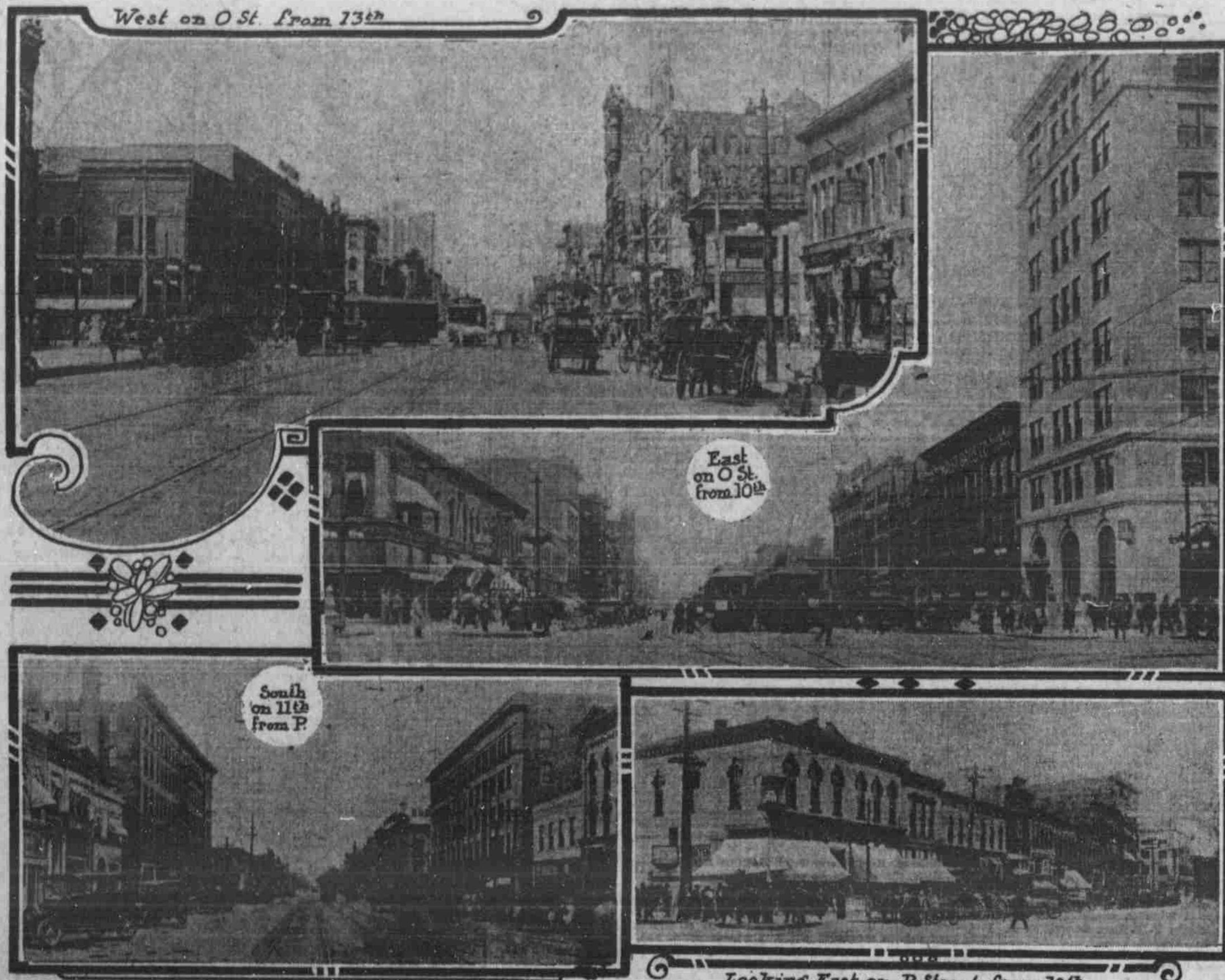
"It looks to me boys," said a third that this valley would be a mighty good place to locate and take our claims," and as he spoke the men mounted their horses, led the way across the valley and pitched their camp for the night.

The party consisted of Elder J. M. Young, Luke Lavender, Jacob Dawson, John Giles, and others, seeking a home on Nebraska's fertile prairies. Thus begins the story of Lincoln and its growth. A story which has become history. A story always interesting because of its many sided character, amusing at times, at other times almost tragic, yet in the whole a tribute to the character and stick-to-it-iveness of the men who did so much to make Nebraska what it is today, and Lincoln the lively hustling and pretty city which is the admiration of all who pass up and down its busy streets and do business with its up-to-date live business men.

**Naming the Town.**

Lincoln has not always borne the name of Lincoln. Away back in 1856 it was known as Lancaster. At that time one of the greatest political fights ever staged in Nebraska was fought to take the capital from Omaha and locate it at Lancaster. The state seemed equally divided, and A. E. Sheldon says in his book lately published:

"It was a long fight between the sections of the state known as the North Platte and the South Platte. The latter being nearer to the settled states and farther from the hostile Indians, had outgrown the North Platte section, and had more votes in the legislature of 1856, which passed an act to remove the capital from Omaha. The new capital was named after President Lincoln and was given to it by its enemies. Otoe county had led the fight for removal from Omaha. Its members of the legislature had been opposed to President Lincoln. The North Platte members who wished to keep the capital at Omaha moved to make the name Lincoln, hoping that the Otoe county members would refuse to vote for a capital so named, but the ruse failed, and the new town was named



Lincoln instead of Douglas, the name put forth by the opposition.

The legislature selected Governor David Butler, Secretary of State Thomas F. Kennard and Auditor John J. Gilligan as a committee to secure the land and make arrangements for the building of the capitol building and through their efforts the land on which Lincoln now stands

was secured at so small a price that it would hardly purchase one lot now on most any of the business streets.

About half a dozen buildings comprised the capital city at the time of the location, and as soon as the committee advised that the purchase of the land was completed, the committee advertised for bids for the erection of a capitol building and the contract was

award to Joseph Ward for \$40,000. Work on the excavation began in November, 1867, and in December of the following year the building had so far been constructed that the state officers moved in.

An interesting item in connection with the relocation of the capital of the state was that the location of the capital so near the great salt basin would be a

source of great revenue to the state as it was expected that the salt springs would prove of value, but this has not panned out as was expected. Of course, the salt waters have proven of great benefit from a standpoint of giving relief to those who seek its health giving qualities, but as a manufacturing project nothing has ever been accomplished and salt river stands only as a natural drainage for the city and surrounding country.

**Growth Its Element.**

Founded upon such history, the city of Lincoln has continued to grow. When the commissioners laid out the city they looked far into the future. But as far as they looked, they were unable to see

the great city, which would some day stand upon the tract planned by them. It is true that they made its streets wide and set the capitol of the state on a beautiful tract of four blocks in the center of the city, but they could not look far enough to see the great possibilities of a future university and the four blocks set aside for that institution long since have proven inadequate to the demands of time.

The march of half a century, has seen the little village of Lancaster with a population of less than half a hundred grow into the beautiful and prosperous city of Lincoln with a population of nearly 60,000. It has seen the hills and

valleys where once fed the antelope, deer and buffalo, grow into beautiful suburbs covered with beautiful homes and beautiful towns. It has seen the prairie schooner give way to the iron horse and the long steel track, until it has become the universal expression of every visitor, "What a beautiful city and how I would like to live here."

**When the Railroad Came.**

In January, 1870, the people of Lincoln celebrated the arrival of their first railroad, the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, with a big banquet. Since that time the Union Pacific, the Chicago & North Western, the Missouri Pacific and the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific railroads have built into and through the city, a portion of these being through lines direct from coast to coast. Interurban lines, both operative and in prospect in the near future, lead out to join sister cities and towns, making Lincoln the hub of the state and the natural location of great industry.

The question has often been asked why Lincoln is so peculiarly a good place to live and bring up a family. It has been answered in various ways. Some have said it is a big overgrown country town with none of the vices of the city and many of the advantages, and this to a certain extent may be the answer.

Lincoln is not a town of vices. Perhaps the reader may better understand that proposition when he knows that Lincoln has never had a police force larger than twenty-one men, which includes captains, sergeants, plain clothesmen and patrolmen. Such is the size of the force at the present time, and up to a couple of years ago got along very nicely with considerably less than that number. It is said that there is not a city of more than 20,000 people in the country with as small a police force or so well governed in its police department. Eight patrolmen are sufficient to guard its welfare at night and it is well guarded, too.

**Its Municipal Management.**

A few years ago Lincoln took over the city water plant and it has proven a success in every particular. One year ago the water department was estimated to be worth \$1,500,000 and the lighting plant about \$1,000,000. The water department has over eighty miles of water mains and the water supply comes from artesian wells. Additions are constantly being made to the mains and the water supply is inexhaustible and of the purest kind.

The street lighting system is said to be as near the acme of perfection as it is possible to get it. For its size Lincoln is said to be the best lighted city in the United States. The business streets are lighted with powerful incandescent lights placed on ornamental poles, while nearly 40 arc lights light up the balance of the city. Its lighting wires are either placed under the ground or in the alleys and the main streets are practically devoid of the wire nuisance, as telephone wires are also prohibited from the main streets and like the lighting wires are in the underground conduits or are placed in the alleys. No unsightly wooden poles, except those necessary to carry high wires across the streets at intersections are allowed on the main streets, and the wires of the street car company are carried on extensions of the ornamental lighting poles.

Lincoln's principal street, "O," is a beautiful parade, 130 feet wide and with twenty-five foot walks, all of its principal stores with modern plate glass fronts, always brilliantly lighted, makes it almost a sunlit street in appearance; the ornamental lighting posts at close intervals on each side, each with four powerful lights, adding greatly to its appearance and making O street in the evening a pleasant place to promenade, and no mat-

(Continued on Page Ten.)

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