

Building Omaha's Sky Line

Big Problems Involved

How Efficiency Is Achieved

Cities, like everything mortal, pass through set stages of development. Time was when Mark Twain very truthfully called the national capital a "city of magnificent distances." Who wouldn't if the city of Washington had flashed across his mental vision some forty years ago, when cattle usurped the muddy streets and hovel sat at the right hand of palatial residence. New York once was limited to a half mile of lowly buildings below City Hall park, and youths and maidens strolled picturesque Maiden Lane within a stone's throw of predatory Wall street of today.

Omaha is "beating the time" of older sisters among the important cities of the United States. She is acquiring a sky line, a ruggedly outlined galaxy of many storied structures which, dotted here and there, are a challenge to supercilious visitors from the "effete east" and a matter of pride to the local booster.

To the stranger who comes to Omaha nowadays, to the Omaha which is the buckle of the corn belt and a progressive of progressivism, it may well be that the thought shall come, "If this be Omaha, who be I?" Times change, stranger, and things go on apace. Swift elevators and not shanks mare are incident to daily life this year of 1916. You are as likely to find the lawyer, the business man, or that old acquaintance ensconced upon the sixteenth floor of a big modern building, as to find an auto-rat in helmet and brass buttons regulating traffic at a busy corner adjacent thereto.

Omaha is there in the march of progress. The aeroplanes which negotiate the air lanes of the Gate City had best fly high, else the luckless pilot will come to grief on the jutting pile of some big business building or soaring hotel. Yet, given a safe aerial landing, he would not fare so bad; for Omaha is kind and, if proud and a bit cheery, no one can say that we are not hospitable.

Suppose an aviator breezed into Omaha of a dark foggy night and knocked a few bricks from off the coping of Omaha's latest hostelry, the Blackstone, rising eight stories in the air at Thirty-sixth and Farnam? It would be "welcome to our city" and "now what are we going to do." For when you have a sky line and some one does you the honor to encounter it, why not be agreeable? From a mercenary viewpoint it would be good advertising, to say nothing of proverbial kindness of heart.

And in this latest addition to Omaha's sky line one may find surgeses from most of the ill and trials of modern life. Servants cease to trouble and cookery to vex. Nowhere in the whole United States is life more pleasant. Stephen Phillips wrote of the River Lethe, where to drink of charmed waters was to forget all earthly troubles. Well, at the Blackstone one may forget all the troubles that are not worth while. And there is a distinction and a difference.

The Bankers Realty Investment Company sent the Blackstone Family Hotel skyward and in the finished pile is epitomized what the modern builder of a city's sky line can do. The Blackstone boasts every comfort and convenience known to modern building science. It is physically and psychologically without a superior in the hotel buildings of the country. The huge white Plaza which is at once the social mecca and mentor of the family hotels of the country, and situated on Central Park, New York, has nothing more to offer in actual comfort than the Blackstone. True, it is a little taller, a little more expensive and has the fangs of maturity and brassy self-conceit, but its silken draped and jeweled habitues know no more luxury or comfort.

But more important than the perfect facilities the Blackstone affords luxury-loving Omaha, more significant than that servants answer beck and call, more to be desired than the beauties of a wonderful ballroom and a delectable cuisine, is the fact that here, in Omaha, is the organization which can and will put up the city's coming "Woolworths," "Singers" and "Metropolitans." No need to go abroad for the colossal sky line which Omaha is creating by leaps and bounds.

Once the mails to Chicago and New York carried requests for figures on steel and stress, on foundations and adequate planning, on engineering problems and furnishings. Now, instead, such problems can be answered in Omaha. The buildings which involve such inquiry can be erected by local enterprise. The material to be used, most of it, can be had in Omaha. And as the city fulfills its promise it will be more and more a local business, in entirety, when the new sky scraper has been built in the Gate City.

And for that matter a large territory is coming to depend on Omaha for its big buildings. Missouri, Iowa, Kansas and outlying Nebraska are in line. Kansas City, be it noted, comes to Omaha for a new building to cost a million dollars, and many other cities look to the same source for other structures of varying importance.

When Horace Greeley said, "Go west, young man, go west," he foresaw a virile country where self-sufficient men might find reward for effort. In a famous building at Twenty-second and Broadway, New York, there is a big building company which has fathered many a skyscraper. In Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, San Francisco and other cities the steel and sinew of the multi-storied structure are conceived and the force generated and directed which makes them actualities.

But not for Omaha, not for the Gate City of the future. Now, and for the coming years she, or her citizens for her, has created building facilities second to none. In the Bee building there exists the counterpart of the big construction companies which have given older cities their sky lines.

Visit there some day, especially if you have in mind some big building. Ask questions, be inquisitive. Suppose you want to know just how much iron-work there will be required if you are to erect a twenty-story building. Suppose you want to know just what sort of materials for a hundred and one purposes will be necessary to secure the best possible building for your money. Suppose you want to know

just what your building will cost when it is finished.

High pressure information will be forthcoming if you are serious in your inquiries. Construction engineers, architects, purchasing agents and every human factor in the business of big building will be at your service. Of course you can't expect to have all your questions answered off hand; for intricate calculation, painstaking investigation of your personal problem, study of the future and what it means to your project, how to create a building which will provide a revenue adequate to the investment—all these questions must be considered. But definite, trustworthy information will be forthcoming.

Few people, perhaps, realize the huge responsibility incident to the building of a city's sky line. Whoever undertakes the work must be competent even beyond the well developed modern idea of what competence means. Assuming that a building might be erected which would possess the necessary strength and serve its purpose, there is a hundred fold more than this demanded.

When the engineers and architects and construction experts figure on a modern building they do so with the idea in mind that it shall be just right, accurately balanced as to strength of girder and floor. They would have done less than their duty to make it too strong, for instance, since that would mean an unnecessary expenditure for materials. They would have been derelict if not conversant with the very latest improvements in materials and equipment.

The Bankers Realty Investment Company in handling the problems of big buildings employs the services of men who are experienced and expert in all necessary fields and branches of the building business. The prospective building owner may feel assured that upon the turning over to him of his completed structure it will be a modern of the moderns. Moreover he may rest assured that it will be so planned that it will be as much in style years hence as the day upon which it was completed.

This feature of permanence is one that is given serious consideration by the big construction companies of today. The architecture carries out this idea by embodying proven styles only. Away with the freak, is the note of caution. There are, says the architect, many enduring styles of architecture to select from and beauty of a permanent character is best obtained by sticking close to the formal.

Then another thing which the construction company sees to is that the interior, and not the exterior of the proposed building, governs its evolution. That is to say, the interior arrangements are carefully planned to meet the needs of the prospective tenants, or the owner, if the owner is to be the occupant of the building. If it is intended that the building shall attract a general class of office renters, then the appointments are considered from a wide point of view. It is the policy in this case to suit the many. Of course, if a bank, or a building for stock brokers, or lawyers, etc., is contemplated, there will be special needs that must be considered.

Most important of all the characteristic efficiencies which make the complete building organization a blessing to building owners is the centralization of responsibility and the guarantee which such an organization gives of the ultimate cost of the building. Once a capitalist has a building erected he is, under old time conditions, prone to encounter a sad experience. In other words, what might be called the old method involves an estimate from the architect of the cost of the building. But the architect merely estimates. He does not guarantee. And having to set his figure without the essential collaboration with the construction engineer, the purchasing agent, etc., it transpires, in the great majority of cases, that he places this figure too low by a third.

But the complete building organization, one which, like the Bankers Realty Investment Company, operates under the "single contract" plan, departs entirely from the idea of "estimating" and ventures into the realm of fixed guarantee. It can do this because it has at its finger tips all the data and information necessary to forecast the exact cost of the work. Then it merely adds its legitimate profit and advises the building owner that his building will cost him such and such a figure.

Of course in the case of the big construction company such an agreement is never violated. In the first place it is financially able to back up its statement in regard to cost and in the second place it has a reputation to sustain for service and capability. No deal with the modern building organization is regarded as complete which does not result in the entire satisfaction of the building client.

An interesting prediction is made by those familiar with the conditions in Omaha, I. e., that it will be a city of wonderful sky line. That prediction is based upon the fact that the business district is confined, and must be confined, in a comparatively small area. And when such conditions obtain, a city grows vertically and not laterally, tall buildings are the rule instead of low rambling structures which cover a great deal of space.

So the Bankers Realty Investment Company seems to have been wise in the establishment of its business in Omaha. It seems to have been wise because Omaha is going to have great demand for its services, for one thing, and because Omaha, being a central point for a vast territory unequipped in modern building facilities, will undoubtedly be the point of call for a widespread clientele of building owners.

Perhaps Mark Twain would say that Omaha was still a city of magnificent distances. But that would only be because of and in case of his avoidance of Farnam street. The great author, or anyone with an eye open to the progress of cities, as cities go, must concede that Omaha is advancing with the best of them. Not New York, not Chicago, not boastful Atlanta, not Kansas City, nor any of the important centers of population in the United States is forging to the forefront of big buildings and sky lines faster than old Omaha.—Advt.



The Tools of Big Building==

Huge derricks, powerful hoists, clamorous concrete mixers, the ubiquitous wheelbarrow—all these are the tools of big building. But they are relatively unimportant. Busy hordes of workmen, delving deep into the earth for foundations, or clinging dizzily aloft in the fabrication of a giant steel skeleton—they are tools of big building. But still we have not reached the heart of the matter.

It is "ORGANIZATION," spelled with a big "O," and given resounding emphasis, which most nearly expresses the idea of modern building. Not one profession, but ten; not one trade, but 46, have part in the completed whole of a big building. Not one, but hundreds of materials and appliances entered into the finished structure. Not one, but a thousand problems arise to vex the creators of that twentieth century monster dubbed the skyscraper.

Enter Organization worthy of the name; enter the genius and energy to gather into a single unit the elements of a great organization which surely and certainly fashions to a given end the steel sinews of a big building, and to these sinews fits a gloss of adamant concrete, scintillant glass, decorative plaster, speeding elevators, glowing lights, facade, pilaster, carven marble, decorative brass and all the hundred and one appurtenances which burgeon forth in the multi-storied Titan of modern need.

East, west, south and north, the country has its big construction companies, exponents of efficiency, doers of stupendous tasks. Dominant in the Central Western States is the Bankers Realty Investment Company, forging steadily to the forefront in its chosen field.

Time WAS when the West went East for big building service. Time IS when the West can confidently call upon its own. This is not a boast, but a condition. A few years ago the Bankers Realty Investment Company entered the field of building construction from the angle of creating an organization competent to undertake any building, from a modest home to the most elaborate business structure. Today its ideals are realized.

A staff of architects has been recruited from the best men of the profession, construction engineers, estimating experts, the most competent purchasing agents, highly efficient building superintendents, a permanent group of artisans and laborers—these and many other factors, human, mechanical and executive, have been welded into one strong, competent construction engine which guarantees to clients the very best building that ingenuity can evolve for a stipulated sum.

Financially we are able to guarantee any contract into which we enter, legally we subscribe to the terms of an agreement in the simplest, most understandable language; as a business proposition we bend every effort to giving satisfaction. As an evidence of the faith we keep, there is the almost unprecedented extension of business which is enabling us to extend operations not only throughout the State of Nebraska, but into many of the adjoining states.

Finally we feel that we may truthfully assert that it will pay prospective building clients to get in touch with our organization before contracting for any work of whatever character, for we are prepared not only to render building service of the highest character, but we are also equipped to render financial assistance in the shape of a first mortgage loan to such of our clients as desire it.

Bankers Realty Investment Company

(Assets Over \$1,500,000)

Architects — Building Contractors

Office, Ground Floor Bee Bldg.,
Omaha, Nebraska