

Groh's History of Omaha

All the truth and untruth that's fit to know

Chapter IV—Purchase of Louisiana.
Our history now leaps across nearly three centuries. We pass over the Revolutionary war almost in silence, because Nebraska did not take part in that. It was a war in which the thirteen colonies revolted against King George III because he tried to tax tea. They wouldn't stand for it. George Washington became famous in this war and is now "first in the hearts of his countrymen."

The famous Liberty bell was cracked during this war and there was some other damage to property and considerable loss of life, but the Americans came out victorious. The Liberty bell was never repaired. It is a total loss except as a curiosity. We come now to the purchase of the Louisiana territory by the United States. This vast territory was owned by France. Napoleon (see foot note) was afraid the English would capture it. So he sold it to the United States for \$15,000,000, probably the biggest real estate bargain the world has ever known.



Thomas Jefferson (see foot note) closed this deal, comprising 761,000,000 acres. The few acres on which Omaha stands today are worth more than Jefferson paid for the whole business. Of course, there were "knockers" even in those days and Jefferson's enemies made fun of him for buying the "great American desert" and paying out good money that could have been used in building postoffices or paying the salaries of additional government employment. But Jefferson paid no attention to them. He just kept the Louisiana territory and went on about his business. Of course, the British were very sorry when they heard that the United States had bought the territory, because they were just about to take it themselves from their enemy, Napoleon, and they wouldn't have paid him a cent for it either. They didn't try to take it away from us. They still remembered the Revolutionary war.

Little was known of this vast territory in those days. There were no



NAPOLEON SELLETH LOUISIANA

Little Human Interest Stories Picked Up About the Town

Run on Religion and Psychology.
Are the people of Omaha detaching their minds from sordid money matters and following higher ideals? Are they seeking for the better things in life?
Either that or they are turning over a new leaf and started on a program of reform, if credence is to be placed in the words of Miss Edith Tobitt, librarian. "Omahaans," says the librarian, "are showing a leaning toward religion and psychology. The demand for books along these lines is nearly swamping the library."
"Since the war began and the 'Billy' Sunday religious program was held, Omahaans seem to be reading with a definite end in view."
"They seem to be more sober minded," she said, "I don't know why they should take this attitude unless the war has sobered them up."
While many of the library patrons have turned their attentions to religion and psychology there still is a large number who do not consider themselves "high browed" and like to browse among the pages of a meaty novel or a magazine.

Then there is that class of people, Miss Tobitt says who have a technical turn of mind. "We have tried to cultivate the technical turn of mind in the public. We have recently added a large number of technical books of all kinds."
Omaha people can have any kind of books they desire if they make a demand for it, says the librarian. "When we see that the people become interested in certain subjects we usually try to get as many new books in that line as possible. Just now we are adding books on psychology and religion."

What Some Wives Are Up Against.
"I do hope you will succeed in locating him," were the parting words of a woman as she left the office of Mrs. Rose Ohaus at the Welfare board office in the city hall. The woman was referring to her husband whom she had not seen for more than a year. There was a bit of charm in her manner. She spoke without malice of the man who had made life so hard for her. She wanted to locate her husband and to placid with him to furnish money for the education of the two daughters he left behind, when he deserted his family. She wanted to send him a photograph of the girls, that he might see how they had grown.
The woman's life story, briefly told, was as follows:
"My father died when I was 3 years of age, but mother managed to keep me in school until I was graduated from high school at the age of 16 years. The summer following my graduation I met and married the man, who impressed me more than any other man of the entire world. My folks approved of the marriage. My husband was superintendent of construction with a large concern and our prospects seemed to be rosy. He was 26 years of age, well edu-

Comb Honey

Liberty.
An Omaha man says there is no such animal as personal liberty. Paradoxically, there is and there is not. People who abide in certain tropical climates probably enjoy personal liberty. They shake a tree and their breakfast falls into their laps. No prescribed rules of fashion or etiquette disturb their routine of the day. They do not have party telephones nor finger bowls. Their heat is not turned off at 10:30 p. m. by the engineer of their apartment building, nor are they kept in suspense by grand jury investigations. They do not have to kiss themselves good-by every time they go downtown, lest they should be run over by an automobile before the return to home and loved ones. They do not have to vote themselves wet or dry every now and then, nor run a marathon with their wives every Sunday morning to get to church before the collection plate had been passed. That is one form of personal liberty.

In the higher walks of civilization, however, liberty becomes more and more a chimera. From the rising of the sun until the going down thereof, personal liberty is but a fanciful something to conjure with.
Woman has more liberty than man. Man even talks in his sleep, because he does not have an opportunity to say his say during waking hours; at least, that is the complaint of the married man. It said that single men do not talk in their sleep, which seems singular. Woman can have the last word, but where is the man who can boast of having had the last word? Woman can wear any old-fashioned of fabrics and furbelows and that goes for style. She can wear as much or as little as she wishes and there is none to say her nay. That is personal liberty.

What liberty does mere man have, anyway? The Statue of Liberty on Bedloe's Island is the figure of a woman. Whether in painting, graven image, in song or story, liberty always is feminine. What further evidence is needed? Woman gives and woman takes away man's liberty. Man imagines he is a freedman, a free agent, with the right to pursue life, liberty and happiness. He just pursues liberty, but never quite catches up.

Some day man is going to be free, and then he will be allowed to eat chockers in bed, wear any kind of necktie he desires, go without a collar if he feels inclined, smoke a corncob pipe and eat raw onions whenever he has time and inclination. That will be liberty.

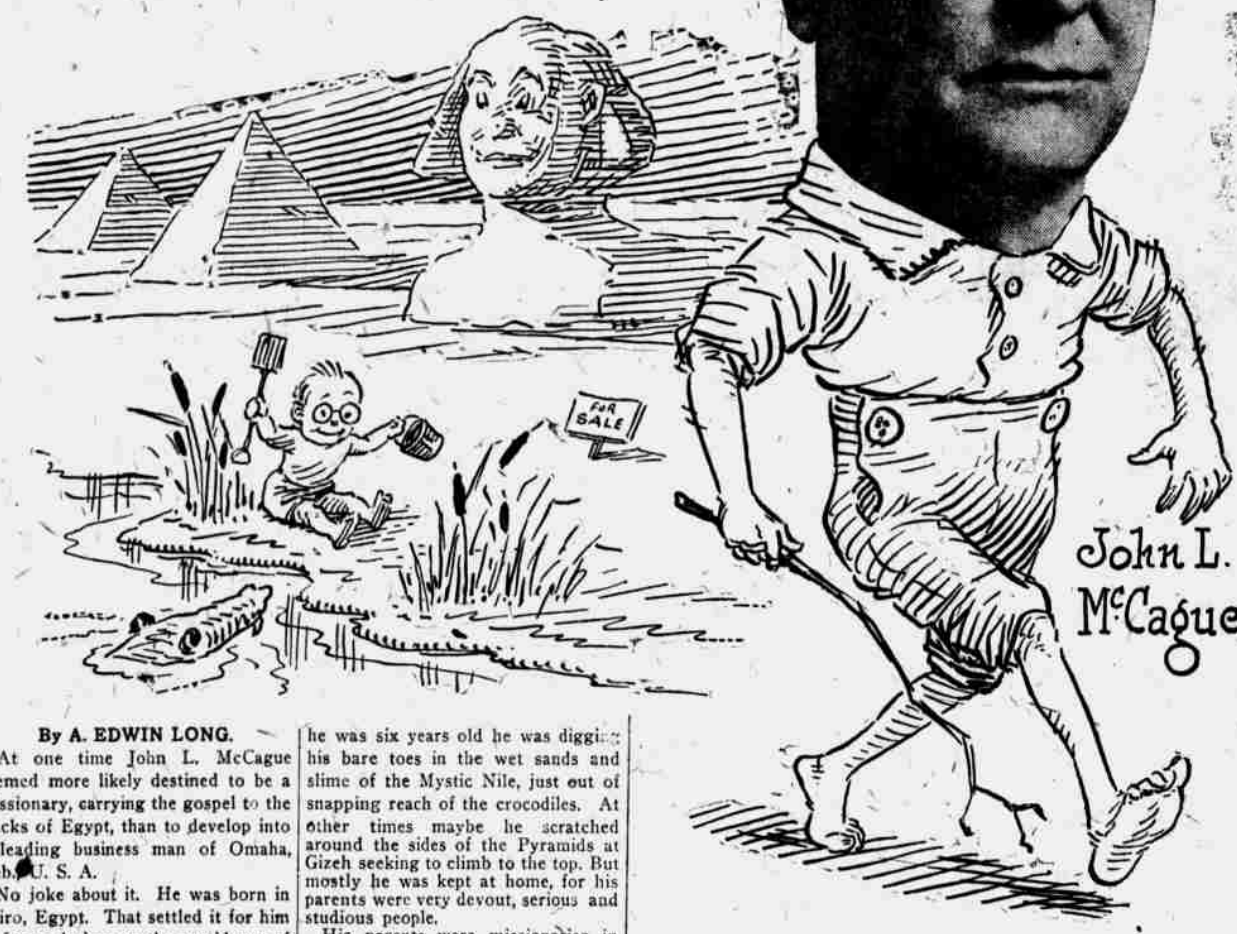
Groh with Groh-ing Omaha.
Heard at the Box Office.
Have you any good seats?
They're all good seats; we took the bad ones out.
I can't hear very good.
We will have the actors speak louder.
Will you be sure to hold those seats for me?
We have them nailed to the floor. Do you know, I nearly was an actor once?
Your secret is safe with me.

When does a man begin to feel that he is "getting along in years?"
The answer is: When he begins to read reprints of jokes he heard or read in the days of his youth.
We are getting old. During the last week we read two jokes we heard right here in Omaha twenty to twenty-five years ago.
In a national magazine for February, printed particularly for women, but read more or less by men, appears an old joke about a man who gave his seat in a street car to a woman, the latter remarking that she was sorry to deprive the man of his seat. The man replies, "No depravity, no depravity." We heard that on the Omaha stage more than twenty years ago.
Another joke which has been resurrected from the grave is the one about the farmer whose barn was afire. A lot of popcorn popped and an elderly cow mistook the white substance for snow, laid down and froze to death.

Free Advice.
Swat the fly.
Spit in the gutter.
Watch your step.
Count your change.
Overhead Bundles Are Dangerous.
In a "safety first" brochure, issued by the department of police, sanitation and public safety, the following is rule 4 of advice offered to "You Who Walk":
"Never attempt to cross a street

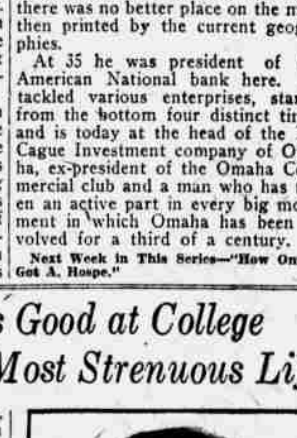
How Omaha Got Him

From the Muddy Nile to the Muddier Missoo He Came Naturally to Deal in Dirt.



By A. EDWIN LONG.
At one time John L. McCague seemed more likely destined to be a missionary, carrying the gospel to the blacks of Egypt, than to develop into a leading business man of Omaha, Neb., U. S. A.
No joke about it. He was born in Cairo, Egypt. That settled it for him so far as designs on the presidency of the United States were concerned. For Uncle Sam's fundamental law puts the skids under the presidential ambitions of any man not born within his borders.
"Johnnie" L. McCague was quite a slyer of a boy before he ever heard of Omaha, Nebraska, U. S. A. When he was six years old he was digging his bare toes in the wet sands and slime of the Mystic Nile, just out of snapping reach of the crocodiles. At other times maybe he scratched around the sides of the Pyramids at Gizeh seeking to climb to the top. But mostly he was kept at home, for his parents were very devout, serious and studious people.
His parents were missionaries in Egypt. That's how he came to be born there. In fact, it is said, his parents had not gone to Egypt, he might not have been born there at all.
At 6 years his parents brought him to America. The most noteworthy thing he brought with him from Egypt was a serious eye disease which during those early years dug its pestilential fangs into the eyes of half the people of Egypt. That gave him serious trouble later.
With his parents young Johnnie moved about from place to place in the United States, where his people were pursuing their missionary activities. When Farnam street was little more than a buffalo pasture and when not a rail spike had been driven west of the Missouri river, the family splashed across the ferry and arrived at Omaha.
While his father was founding the United Presbyterian church in Omaha Johnnie was probably playing mumble-ty-peg on the grass where the United States National bank now stands.
Maybe he was not playing there, either, for Mr. McCague insists he never had any real boyhood.
Anyway, he existed around here for a time until at 11 he became messenger boy for a transfer company transferring freight from the Iowa railroads to the terry boat and from the ferry boat to the warehouses in the village of Omaha. He trudged through mud and snow carrying messages, and getting pretty tired by night, for he was slender to excess.
Then Omaha lost him for a time. At 17 he was whacking mules over the backs with a blacksnake, freighting between Sterling and Fort Morgan, Colo. That was tough work. He was either burning under the noon blaze that smote the prairies or he was shivering in the blizzards that gnawed their way through everything.
Then—ah, then—the old Egyptian eye disease grew worse. He came back to Omaha and in a short time grew totally blind. For two years this young man was blind, and during that time neither he nor his parents expected he would see the light of Nebraska's sunshine again. Eventually he came under the care of an eastern specialist and recovered his sight. His vision today is not the strongest, but he gets along very well and reads every night until 11 o'clock to keep up with the march of events.
With his sight regained young McCague began to work at the Union Pacific warehouse, for the Union Pacific had driven some spikes by this time, including the golden spike at Promontory Point.
As he was too short and slight to make much of a freight pusher with a truck, they put him into clerical work, where he finally drifted into the auditing department. It was his peculiar work to handle the Union Pacific land accounts.
Then and there he developed a taste and a liking for the handling of land matters, and then and there followed his taste for real estate activities.
He quit the railroad auditing work and drifted about the state, alighting at a score of Nebraska towns seeking a location. Grand Island might have had him today if he had decided to land there. Beatrice might have had him at the head of a bank or a real estate concern, but he did not stay. Hastings might be sending him to the legislature or to congress, but he did not stay there.
No, he made the circuit and finally rolled back into Omaha, convinced there was no better place on the maps then printed by the current geographies.
At 35 he was president of the American National bank here. He tackled various enterprises, started from the bottom four distinct times, and is today at the head of the McCague Investment company of Omaha, ex-president of the Omaha Commercial club and a man who has taken an active part in every big movement in which Omaha has been involved for a third of a century.
Next Week in This Series—"How Omaha Got A Hoop."

Omaha Lad Makes Good at College
By Living a Most Strenuous Life
Debating honors, oratorical honors, class and college honors have fallen thick upon an Omaha boy at Nebraska Wesleyan university at University Place.
The lad is Stanley H. High, son of F. A. High, Omaha district superintendent of the Nebraska Anti-Saloon league.
Young High is a senior in Wesleyan university. He was president of the freshman class and as such was kidnapped by the sophomore and locked in a basement for days. He soon became a member of the Boosters' club and is one of the liveliest boosters of the school. He is a member of the Everett fraternity. Last year he was manager of the Coyote, the annual publication of Wesleyan.
A Prize Debater.
From the first he has been a debater. He has debated for three years in class, interclass and intercollegiate debates for the school. He is recognized by the professors as one of the best debaters the school ever had, and is always reserved for the rebuttal, in which position he has on several occasions charged the enemy on a seemingly lost field and carried away the victory for Wesleyan.
On February 19 last he won the Hero day oratorical contest at Wesleyan with an oration prepared by himself on "Billy Sunday as the modern hero." For this he received a handsome cash prize and a gold medal.
The young Omaha chap is ambitious. He is not satisfied with mere class, interclass and intercollegiate honors. When his school work is finished at the end of each week he flies to Lincoln, where he catches a train for Ashland. From Ashland he walks seven miles west where he reaches on Sunday in a little country church. So much enthusiasm has he stirred up there during the year that



STANLEY H. HIGH
The members are now making a campaign for funds to build a new church building.
Upon completion of his course at Wesleyan, Stanley expects to enter the Boston School of Theology, and at the same time take post graduate work in Harvard.
Every Sunday this page of bright and breezy local features will await you. Get the habit.

Everybody has a Hobby!



What's Yours?
Harry Zimman's hobby is opposing public service corporations in their every activity. He is always to be found at improvement club meetings, opposing gas franchises, fighting against electric light contracts, boosting for seven-for-a-quarter street car fares or seeking to take over the whole flock of corporations for the city.
Harry has a brother, Ike Zimman, who draws a salary largely for opposing his brother's views. Ike Zimman is contracting agent for the Omaha Electric Light and Power company. While Harry is opposing corporate interests at an improvement club meeting in one end of the city, Ike is at the other end of town talking before another meeting in favor of an electric lighting contract, or some other movement of the corporation.
Asked why he and his brother didn't agree to stay at home and play seven-up and thus counteract each other's influence in municipal affairs, Ike said: "I mean my bread and butter for me, and it means nothing to him. We fight on every subject, except when he is running for office, and then it is awfully hard to vote for him."
Most people are mistaken in their guess of what constitutes the hobby of Senator Joseph H. Millard. They think it is globe-trotting, or foreign travel.
True, he travels a great deal in foreign countries, but not so much for the sights in foreign lands. He travels for the sea voyage. Riding on the galloping waves of the salty deep is his real hobby. He says he

would rather spend eight or ten days on the sea out of sight of shore than do anything else in the world. He was in Europe when war broke out, and had to sail back to America with the lights of the boat all snuffed out through the night to keep from being sighted by warships. That was an experience on the sea he had not bargained for.
As soon as he got home and learned that the war was going to cut off European touring the next summer, he began to study the sea routes of the Pacific to the Orient, just in order to be enjoying.
"A life on the ocean wave."
"And a home on the rolling deep."
C. N. Dietz has a hobby for collecting curios of all kinds from the farthest reaches of the globe. He has a taste for art and literature, so he gathers many fine paintings and rare works of art. But he does not stop at that. He will pay a good price for an odd-shaped cocoon, will give up his dinner for a button on the coat of the king of Siam, will lose a week's sleep to get a plume from the tail of an ostrich in the gardens of a Zulu chief, or a bottle of soil from the hanging gardens of Babylon.
"Walt" Jardine's hobby is river navigation. He wants Uncle Sam to spend \$15,000,000 for improving the Missouri from Sioux City to somewhere down near Kansas City. He is back of resolutions which are before the Nebraska and Iowa legislature, calling upon congress to make the appropriation.
His dream is to hear the steam-

boat's siren once more on the Missouri. He yearns for the good, old days of the steamboat. He reads stories of steamboats and would rather take a steamboat ride than attend a grand ball of Ak-Sar-Ben.
"If you keep after anything long enough and hard enough, you will see its accomplishment," is his motto. When navigation shall have been properly opened on the "muddy waters," he expects to get a job as skipper.
If you have a position that calls for a capable man who is willing to serve without any salary attached, call on Dr. D. E. Jenkins, president of the University of Omaha. Its just one of his hobbies.
When the University of Omaha was scouting around for a president, it just called upon Dr. Jenkins. He took the position seven years ago, and although he has taught part of the time in the university, he has refused to accept a salary.
For three years, ending in 1916, he was a member of the Board of Education, another salaryless position.
Other positions that he is holding and has held without pay are so numerous that it is almost impossible to enumerate them. He has been president and is still a member of the Nebraska Prison Reform board; he is one of the officials of the Nebraska Presbyterian synod and is actively connected with the Omaha Ministerial union.
"Billy" Byrne, manager of the Orpheum, admits he has a hobby. The name of his hobby is "Billy Byrne Chambers," 13-month-old grandson. When Mr. Byrne wants to get away from the grind of managerial duties, he lies out to see this grandson, with whom he enjoys a romp on the floor. The parents of the child charge this discipline with breaking into the household by yielding to the whims of his son.
"It sounds strange to hear Billy call me 'grandpa,'" remarked Mr. Byrne, as he was relating the wonderful abilities of his namesake.
"My idea of having a good time is to take a hike out to see Billy Byrne Chambers, because we understand each other perfectly well and the good times we do have," added the Orpheum man.
Working problems in algebra is Mrs. E. M. Syfert's hobby when she isn't presiding at meetings of the Omaha Woman's club. Factoring, extracting the square root or the cube root of anything and similar mathematical undertakings are Mrs. Syfert's greatest indoor sport.
You see, Mrs. Syfert used to be a schoolman before her marriage, and she has a strong hold on her.
Every once in a while Mrs. Syfert has a haunting fear that she has forgotten how to work out an equation, so she will haul out her algebra book and begin to review the problems.
Before her duties as president of the largest woman's organization in the city became so arduous, Mrs. Syfert took up a new study each year. She studied German, French and music after her marriage. Mrs. Syfert is an inveterate reader; indeed, you'd have to think hard to guess the name of a book she hasn't read.