

# THE BEE'S BUILDERS PAGE

## NEW BUSINESS AREA COMING TO FRONT

St. Mary's Avenue District, One of Earliest Additions to City, Attracts Attention.

### TUKEY DETAILS HISTORY

St. Mary's avenue was one of the main thoroughfares of early Omaha. The avenue and that section of the city adjacent to it has a rather interesting history, which was retold by Harry A. Tukey last Wednesday before the Omaha Real Estate board under the head of "The Development of the St. Mary's Avenue District." He brought the district down through history from 1862 to the present, with all its developments. Speaking of the improvements in this section he said in part:

"There was very little done to this property until the Flat Iron building was built and the Sterling remodelled. The Kountze interests then removed all of the frame buildings to the north and cleared the ground up. In such shape it remained until last summer, when Mr. Kountze asked me to make an appraisal of the property with an idea of putting it on the market. I felt that it was such a large proposition that I desired other independent appraisements, and with that idea in view he asked C. E. George and A. L. Reed for separate appraisements.

"Appraisements Are Close.  
"It was a peculiar coincidence that when the appraisements were turned in, while there was some variation on the individual lots, the high and low appraisements were only \$20,000 apart on the total sum, and the third appraisement was exactly between the other two. Mr. Kountze then turned the property over to us for sale, adding only to these prices a small amount on account of the change in Howard street, which I will later explain.

"This property had been held so long and offers on the same always refused, that it is a surprise to many people to realize the amount and value of such a tract so close to town. It has been passed by and overlooked for so many years that few people even realize that it is there.

**Worth a Million.**  
"It is probably the largest tract of vacant ground as close to the business center as has ever been put on the market in any city in the United States. The total value is about \$1,000,000, but with the growth of the retail district of Omaha it seems the ideal time to open up this piece of property. As you can realize, Omaha has been a one-street town, and now with Farnam street looming up as practically the only western street, there is a danger of affecting the central values, unless the other western streets are developed.

"The retail business of Omaha is practically centered between Dodge and Howard streets, on Sixteenth, and to make a solid, substantial town, Dodge, Douglas, Farnam, Harney and Howard should be developed more uniformly than at present, because no town is bettered by any sudden change of its high value district. It is to all of our interests to aid in a development that is for the best interest of the town itself. This is why I am in favor of the Dodge street proposed grade with the grading of the cross streets, and frankly I am not yet ready to favor the widening of Twenty-fourth street.

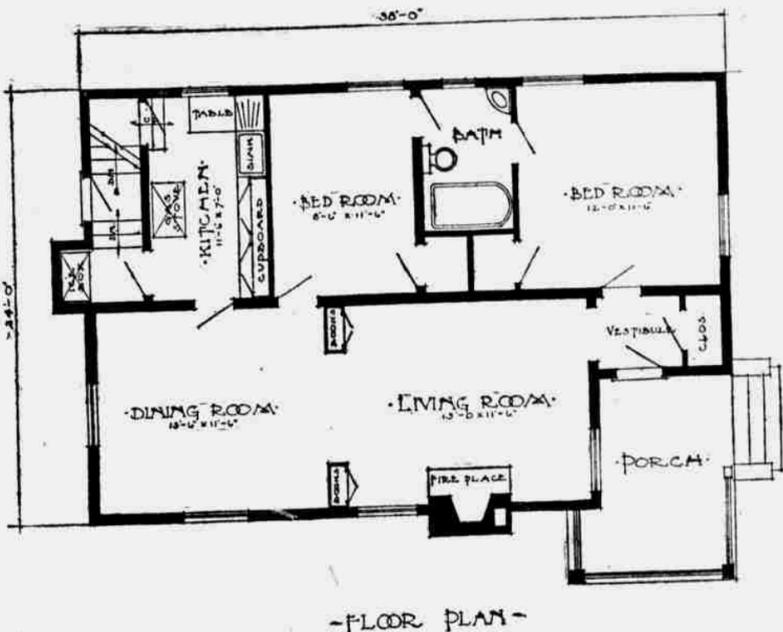
**Widening Howard Street.**  
"As soon as the handling of the property was turned over to us, we secured an option for a ninety-nine-year lease on the Krug corner on the basis of \$72,000. We then took up the widening of Howard street, which you will notice at that time was only fifty feet in width, and is paved only thirty feet. We made arrangements with the owners of the corner that we would move their property north and give them as much ground adjoining their property as we took for the proposed street, and would take a ninety-nine-year lease on the new ground at the same price. This was perfectly satisfactory to them, so they joined with the Kountzes in making a deed to the city of the strip of ground fifty-six feet wide at Seventeenth street and narrowing down to seventeen feet at Eighteenth, and the Kountzes deeded sufficient ground on each side of Howard street to make it seventeen feet wider all the way through to Twentieth. This deed was offered to the city without any conditions, and, of course, was gladly accepted by them.

"This will make the street sixty-seven feet wide, and the paving seven feet wider than St. Mary's avenue is at the present time. It will make an open space at Seventeenth and Howard and west to the Flatiron building of almost 200 feet wide, which may seem a waste of space, but when it is considered this is the only 'five corners' in the business district of Omaha, it can readily be seen what amount of traffic must be taken care of, and will make an ideal spot for large mass meetings, such as are now held north of the post office.

"There has been so much talk about establishing the automobile row on Howard street, that I feel we should explain what started it.  
**Extent of Efforts.**  
"Before this property was turned over to us for sale, the automobile men had a meeting, and decided they would attempt to secure buildings on this tract of ground. They went to Mr. Koutze, and he immediately referred them to us, saying we were to have the sale of the property when it was put on the market. I met their committee several times, and told them that if ten of them would agree to move to this location, we would build some buildings for them, or that we would sell to any individual who could afford to build his own building. This was the extent of our efforts to move the auto row, if it can be called efforts.

"However, I was very much pleased, and my belief in the property was strengthened by the first sale which I made, for I believe that if I can sell to men like Hastings, Wolf, Slater, Martin and Sweet; that the only mistake made in pricing the

## Plan for a Comfortable Bungalow



The house illustrated this week is one recently erected by the Willis Realty company, at 1613 Willis avenue, for Mrs. N. W. Randall. The house fronts north and with a porch projecting so that a south exposure is afforded. The vestibule and coat closet is convenient. The living room and dining room are practically one large apartment, separated only by bookcases, which stand up from the floor approximately four feet. A beam above these bookcases also indicates the dividing line between the living room and dining room. A large and practical fireplace is arranged in the living room. The cupboards and work table are built in the kitchen. The finish in the principal rooms is in oak. The bedrooms and bath are finished in white enamel. The floors throughout are in oak.



of approximately \$2,800 complete. The Willis Realty company is able to place this building on a lot in Victor Place and sell it with the grounds for approximately \$3,600. For further information apply to I. H. Willis, 1122 City National Bank Building, Phone Douglas 3919.

property is that we made it too low. These gentlemen bought the Krug lease of us, and we made them a ninety-nine-year lease on enough of the surrounding property to give them a piece 143 feet on Howard by 125 feet on Seventeenth street, on which is now located the Manhattan Oil company, and the Racquet club building.

"Their plans, as you all know, are to construct a building costing about \$75,000 on this corner. They had figured to make the first story for small auto accessory shops, and the balance of the building for auto storage purpose, but with the new building for Orchard-Wilhelm, the Hartman Furniture company moving to How-

ard street, and the plan of the Burgess-Nash company, regarding the Boyd theater, and the old Bennett barn on Howard, I understand they are now figuring on a different sort of a building."

**Millions of Acres of Land Are Taken by Homesteaders**  
Advices to the Burlington indicate that during January, February and

March of this year 1,300,000 acres of Wyoming land were homesteaded at the Douglas land office. Generally this land was filed upon in tracts of 640 acres each.  
No report has been received from the land offices at Sundance and Buffalo, but it is believed that the entries at these offices were each nearly equal to those at Douglas.

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### Building Operations

#### For Quarter Show Gain

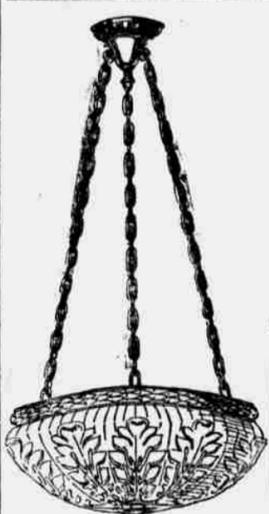
Building operations for the first three months of this year hold a substantial lead over the corresponding period of last year. March broke about even with March of 1916.

The total since January 1 is \$1,460,245, as against \$1,339,772 for first quarter of last year.  
Comparative figures for three months of 1917 and 1916 follow:

	1917.	1916.
January	\$ 192,828	\$ 177,273
February	238,925	218,485
March	228,492	244,014
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$1,499,145</b>	<b>\$1,339,772</b>

### Street Car Hits Wagon; Injured Driver Sues

Fred Johanson has filed suit for \$15,500 damages against the Omaha & Council Bluffs Street Railway company in district court as a result of an accident which occurred at Benson on February 5. A horse and wagon driven by Johanson were struck by a street car. Johanson alleges he suffered injuries which will permanently disable him.



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