

# THE OMAHA SUNDAY BEE

OMAHA, SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 13, 1917.

## Groh's History of Omaha All the truth and untruth that's fit to know

By A. R. GROH.  
Chapter XIV—Hotels.

At an early day in the history of our city it was decided to have some hotels. It was a good idea. One cannot think of a city without hotels.

The first hotel was built of logs at Twelfth and Jackson streets. It was sixteen feet wide and eighteen feet long and one story high. The builders wanted to call it the "Imperial and Royal hotel." Better counsel, however, prevailed and it was decided that this name would not be suitable. So it was called the "St. Nicholas hotel."

It was run by William Snowden. His wife was appointed cook. Mr. Snowden later attained political distinction, being appointed constable of Omaha.

The Douglas house was another early hotel. It was nearly two stories high. The rear part of it was built of cottonwood slabs, placed vertically. In the winter time there were many complaints from guests because of cold rooms and snow sifting through the chinks.

George Francis Train, whose inspiring life we studied two weeks ago, built the Edwards House in 1867. It did not do much business, so the name was changed to Cozzens house. Later it was known as the Casement and still later as the Wyoming. But still never prospered.

A pleasing occasion was had at this hotel February 4, 1859, at which two baskets of champagne were sampled and consumed. Mr. McConchie responded to the toast, "The lady of the present day. She wants but little on her head, but much below to make a spread." From this we see that



Saturday Night in a Pioneer Hotel

times have changed much since then. Those were the days of flowing skirts.

Mr. Train, that eccentric gentleman, was much put out one cold day when he was having a noonday lunch at the Herndon house. There was a broken window pane right by his table and the wintry blast blew in on him.

He called the proprietor and asked him to have it fixed. But when they stuffed some rags into it Mr. Train was still unsatisfied. He then hired a colored waiter to stand in front of it, paying him one dollar (\$1.00) a minute for this service.

When he paid his bill he was so disgusted that he said he would build

a decent hotel. That same day he bought a lot and had men at work digging an excavation. Mr. Train was a great hustler. Two months later the hotel was completed and Mr. Train ate lunch in it without feeling any draught from broken window panes. He called it the Jennings house, after Al Jennings, the reformed bandit.

Great excitement was occasioned when the Grand Central hotel burned down in 1878 (102 years after the signing of the immortal declaration of independence in Philadelphia).

The fire started from a candle left burning there by workmen, forming a striking parallel to the great Chicago fire which started from the kicking over of a lantern by a cow belonging to a Mrs. Murphy.

None of these hotels, however, can compare in beauty and conveniences with our hotels of today. In the early days bathrooms were unheard of. Some of the later hotels had only one bath room and on Saturday nights the rush was tremendous. It was a long development from that time until today when rooms with private baths are common and guests can take baths at any time. Thus does the world move forward.

Questions on Chapter XIV:

1. What position did William Snowden occupy?

2. Give the name of the cook at the St. Nicholas hotel.

3. Describe the pleasant occasion at the Wyoming house.

4. How long after the signing of the declaration of independence was the Grand Central hotel burned down?

## Comb Honey

By EDWARD BLACK.  
Mother's Day.

Today is Mother's day. We have heard it said that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. The word "mother" has been one to conjure with ever since the beginning of the world. The world bows in reverence at the shrine of motherhood. Ella Wheeler Wilcox wrote, "Fatherhood is but a poor accomplishment at best."

A mother, with her babe has a friend wherever she goes. If a father is seen with an infant somebody will say, "Guess he kidnapped it."

Do you remember the time when your mother tucked you in your little bed with the admonition, "Early to bed, early to rise, make a man healthy, wealthy and wise?" Do you remember the time you were afraid to meet dad and mother interceded for you?

**Why Not?**  
"Mother's day" is a splendid idea, but why not have "Father's day?" Somebody please offer a motion.

**Interesting if True.**  
Navy posters in windows at Sixteenth and Farnam streets read: "The navy will be full on May 1." We thought Josephus had cut out the grog.

**A Contribution.**  
It is reported that a man in the north part of the city is so patriotic that he will not plant a garden this summer. Why? Because he is afraid it will German-ate. —A. R. G.

**We Told You So.**  
Even the price of sand has been advanced. Please pass the sand.

**Mrs. Ohaus Says:**

"There is no such thing as luck. When you leave an event to chance you cast aside the advantages which the intelligent person has over the unintelligent. In every work that you do take your responsibilities with sufficient appreciation to insure their being taken care of. In reality acquiring a sense of responsibility is obtaining a diploma in the art of living."

**Signs Fail.**  
Careful Observer—All signs fail in wet weather.

Oldest Inhabitant—How's that, old top?

C. O.—Well, I was meandering along a public thoroughfare this morning and stopped in front of a place whose sign read "Saloon." Nobody home.

O. I.—They're walking out on you.

**Swatting Time.**  
Swat the fly and the slacker.

# How Omaha Got Him

## Mishaps of Milking Time Lead Him to Search Solace and Safety in Courts of Law.



By A. EDWIN LONG.

On a little farm near De Witt, Ia., Francis A. Brogan, present member of the Board of Education, used to milk cows long before daylight. He used to try to get up before the mosquitoes and flies got to the cows, but they often beat him to it at that.

When the cow would whip his face into a stinging pulp with her tail while fighting flies and mosquitoes, Francis A. Bragan would roll his eyes skyward, fix them on the morning star, and then and there would vow he would desert the farm some day and go where there are no cows to milk and no winged monsters to pester the cows.

Once he vowed this louder than at any other time and with more emphasis. It was when a big greenhead torpedoes the cow at just when the bucket was full of foaming milk. The cow responded by whacking one hoof into young Brogan's face and with the other deftly turning the bucket of milk over upon his ear as he sprawled in the dirt.

Brogan's adventures on the farm began almost as soon as he was born. He was born near De Witt, Ia., in 1860. He was scarcely 6 when a clumsy farm horse tried to step upon his face, sharp-shod. The hired man had turned the team loose in the evening after work and allowed them to trot to the barn. He did not know that little Francis was crawling over the threshold of the barn door at that moment. The lad's father was near the barn door, however, and turned just in time to save the situation. The child had tumbled over the threshold

and fallen on his back. The lead horse had raised a ponderous hoof and was just ready to step on the childish face, when the father caught the hoof, clung to it madly with both hands, while he kicked the child out of the doorway and out of danger.

When the chap was big enough to drive a team, he used to rake hay and thus disturb many aumble bees' nest, to his everlasting regret and chagrin. Blizzards of yellow jackets also linger in his memory.

When the lad was 14 the family moved to a farm near Hartford, Kan. For two years he pitched hay and trotted after the plow, and at 16 he entered St. Benedict's college at Atchison. He was graduated from Georgetown college, Washington, D. C., in 1883 and from Harvard law in 1885.

With three diplomas under one arm and a volume of statutes under the other, he began to appear before juries in Emporia, Kan.

It was Justice Miller of the supreme court of the United States who pushed

this young man into Omaha eventually. Justice Miller did not tell him to go to Omaha, but what he did tell him was this: "Practice in a good-sized country town for about three or four years. You get the law in its elements there. When you feel that you have found yourself, then move to a city as fast as you can and get down to big practice."

Brogan kept this in mind. In three years' practice in Emporia he felt he had found himself. He looked longingly at Kansas City, then at Omaha. He chose the latter, and arrived in 1888.

Though Mr. Brogan has commanded the field in some big legal battles, though he has been wrestling with the problems of running Omaha's schools, though he led the legal party of the fight to get Omaha's Federal Land bank, and though he is constantly identified with important public movements in the Nebraska metropolis, he has not forgotten to be proud of his life on the farm. "It gives one a familiarity with nature which is very important," he says. "I am so taken with the importance of raising boys close to nature that I bought a small tract in the western part of the city, and moved there so that my boys might grow up close to nature and get their bare toes into the black earth in the furrow behind a plow. There is an exhilaration in that which can be found nowhere else."

(Next Week: "How Omaha Got Vaclav Buresh.")

Francis A. Brogan

## Graphic Narrative of Douglas Street

This Interesting Account is Taken from Ed. Morearty's Book of Personal Reminiscence Just Out

Douglas street was named after the Little Giant of Illinois—Stephen A. Douglas—who at one time was the idol of the democratic party, second only to Andrew Jackson. In 1880 there were but few substantial business blocks on this street, aside from what was then called the Caldwell block. On the south side of that street, between Thirteenth and Fourteenth streets, there were a few brick structures. That block alone possessed the only evidence of business on the street. The Paddock block, on the southwest corner of Eleventh street, and the Glynn block, on the northwest corner, were the first evidences of permanent buildings on the street. They were erected about 1883. The Millard hotel, on the northeast corner of Thirteenth street, was built about the same year. The Metropolitan hotel, on the northeast corner of Twelfth street, is an old landmark that runs back to Omaha's early days. It was a popular resort in the early '80s, but has of late years been used chiefly as a cheap lodging house. Where the Millard hotel now stands the Vischer block stood. That was a two-story frame building, used for stores and offices. Gladstone Bros. occupied one of the stores and carried on an extensive grocery business. On the southwest corner of Fourteenth there was a two-story brick, the store part of which was used by William Fleming as a grocery store, he retiring from business in 1895, since which a new three-story brick has taken its place.

At No. 1407 for years Little & Williams ran a grocery store. At No. 1409, in 1888, Charles Higgins opened a saloon and restaurant, this venture lasting but a short time, as he went broke. Numerous other parties thereafter engaged in various lines of business in that building, but for one reason or another they were but short-lived. In 1898 the present occupants rented the building for a saloon, which is known as the "Budweiser" and owned by William Nestlehouse, but the name should be the "Palace" as it is the political home of the political king of Douglas county, the man who holds the destiny of both the democratic and republican parties in the hollow of his hand.

The Continental block, on the northeast corner, was erected in 1888. Prior to that there was a number of one-story frame buildings running as far east as No. 1412, one being occupied by a restaurant and another by Buncle, the hatter, and the corner by Owen McCaffrey as a saloon.

On the northwest corner of Fifteenth street is the old Creighton block, erected in the early '70s. For fifteen years the corner store was occupied and run by Norman A. Kuhn as a drug store, he retiring from the business in 1896. It was there that both Sherman & McConnell, Omaha's leading druggists, learned the business. There were a number of small frame-buildings between that and the corner west. Most of them were torn down in 1912 to make room for the Empress theater, an expensive building built that year by J. L. Branen, company of Omaha.

The building on the northeast corner of Sixteenth street was built in 1885 by William Bushman for a store and office building, the store being used by him for a dry goods store, the building is on leased ground, Bushman's lease having expired some years ago. In 1914 the ground and building was leased by ex-Congressman J. L. Kennedy for a piano department of their store. It was built in 1900. On the southeast corner of Fif-

teenth street stands the Karbach block, erected by Charles Karbach in 1887. It is an office and store building of six stories. This corner was, from 1888 to 1898, occupied by C. S. Raymond, the jeweler, from whom time the Ryan Jewelry company has rented it. The German Savings bank occupied another of its stores from 1890 to 1896, when it went into the hands of a receiver. From 1890 to 1895 on this corner was located a two-story frame store and office building known as the "Bushman block." William Bushman during that time ran a dry goods store in the corner room. Many of Omaha's pioneer lawyers had their offices in that building, among them being N. J. Burnham, Albert Swartzlander, Judge A. N. Ferguson and Sam Balliet, all of whom have passed beyond the great divide.

On the northwest corner of Thirteenth street in 1880 was the old Republican building, a two-story brick, formerly called the "Patterson block." For years the second floor was used as a dance hall and lodge rooms. The Central Labor union at one time occupied rooms there. In March, 1899, the building was partly destroyed by fire, but was soon repaired, since which time it has been occupied as a grocery store by Courtney & Co.

On the southwest corner of Sixteenth street is a seven-story brick, extending the entire length of the block west, covering the entire half of a city block, including the old Karbach residence. It is owned and occupied by the J. L. Brandeis company, the four upper floors being fitted for offices. This building was erected in 1906. In 1882, on a part of this property facing Sixteenth street, was a frame fashionable boarding house, which was moved in 1896 to make room for the elegant headquarters erected by the Young Men's Christian association, which in turn gave way for the present structure.

Before going west of Seventeenth street it might be of interest to learn how and when this street, from Seventeenth to Twenty-first, secured its present grade and the difficulties incident to it, which occurred in this way: In 1890 when I entered the city council, that part of the street was in such a wretched condition that it would have been difficult for a jack-rabbit to climb the hill. It was not graded because of failure on the part of the property holders to agree to a change from the original established grade, which if permitted to stand, would prevent it from becoming a business street. Finally, through the efforts of Dr. George Tilden and Edward Rosewater—both living on that street—I secured a compromise grade, the one the street now has, the street being graded in 1891, after 1885, was erected a three-story building, since which time the entire block has been built solidly with substantial business houses. At No. 1402 is located the old Fuller block, which from 1883 to 1906 was occupied by J. A. Fuller as a drug store. During the last eight years it has been used as a saloon—run by Jabez Cross. At No. 1404 is located one of the first picture shows in Omaha. At No. 1408 was the Duke Hardware store. It went out of business in 1888, having been sold to C. O. Lobeck, our present congressman. At No. 1410, T. J. Beard & Bro., have had their paper and paint store since 1885, prior to which time it was occupied by W. E. & McDonald as a ready-made ladies' garment store. At No. 1412 is a saloon, which was opened up in 1886 by Foley & Darst, but since 1889 it has been run by Tom Foley.

The Browning-King building, on the southwest corner of Fifteenth street, has been used by the company as a clothing store since 1886. From 1879 to 1886 it was the dry goods store of Cruickshank & Falconer. The property is owned by the heirs of the late Lew Hill. The building west of this, No. 1507, has been owned by Thomas Kilpatrick & Co. since 1890, at which time they started the present mammoth retail dry goods house. The two-story brick store at No. 1519 was built by A. Martin, the tailor, in 1886. The lot was purchased by him in 1884 for \$12,000; I was present at the time and witnessed the payment of the option money. This proved to be one of the best investments in real estate in those early days.

On the southeast corner of Sixteenth street is the Brown block, a five-story, narrow office building, with a one-story space. J. J. Brown built this structure in 1886. It was the first home of the City National bank when organized in 1906.

On the northwest corner of Sixteenth street is the Fontenelle hotel, an eight-story brick and stone building, embracing the entire half of the block. It was erected in 1914 and 1915. It is one of the finest of its kind in the entire west, and was built at a cost of \$1,000,000. It was built by the Douglas Hotel company, composed exclusively of Omaha capitalists, and is a thing of beauty and a joy forever.

These changes may be evidenced by the remarkable improvements that have since taken place, as, where formerly stood the residences of Henry Pundt and Edward Rosewater, on the south side, between Seventeenth and Eighteenth, there is now the Brandeis theater, a six-story office and theater building, extending almost the entire length of the block.

Added to this on the west end, formerly the Saunders lot, is the six-story Saunders & Kennedy building, used for offices and stores. While on the north side, between the same streets, the entire block is built up solidly with creditable business buildings.

On the northwest corner of Seventeenth street, where for years Dr. Grossman has a two-story frame house, is now a five-story brick office and store building called the "Baird block." The lots west of that are covered by brick stores. On the northeast corner is the Strand theater.

On the northwest corner of Eighteenth street is erected the Fontenelle hotel, an eight-story brick and stone building, embracing the entire half of the block. It was erected in 1914 and 1915. It is one of the finest of its kind in the entire west, and was built at a cost of \$1,000,000. It was built by the Douglas Hotel company, composed exclusively of Omaha capitalists, and is a thing of beauty and a joy forever.

On the southeast corner of Fif-

teenth street stands Mathew Gering has a hobby. One would never guess his hobby by looking at him. "What's your hobby?" was asked. "Rugs," he replied.

He just dotes on rugs. In Chicago a few weeks ago he looked at an oriental rug, about 4x6 feet, with a price tag reading "\$7,500." He did not buy it. He has, however, a fine collection of rugs in his home.

"You see," he explained, "some rugs have 1,200 knots to the square inch. These are very expensive. Rugs mean something if you understand them. One rug will suggest a wedding, another a marriage and another may be a prayer rug. When the Persian prays he turns the design of his rug to the east. I have a prayer rug."

He added that real oriental rugs do not depreciate in value, but usually increase. "Whenever I need the money all I have to do is to sell my rug," he added.

When Ben S. Baker says, "Mother, mother, pin a rose on me," it means something more than empty words. His hobby is rose cultivation.

"It is true that my hobby is roses," said Mr. Baker when the matter was put up to him. Then he told about his rose garden and his love of roses. Tea roses and American beauties are his favorites. He set out 200 bushes last season, but many were winter killed. He is putting out as many more this season. He has counted as many as 400 roses in bloom in his garden.

To say nothing of the pleasure of having the roses and giving them to friends, he adds that gets exercise by getting up with the sun and cultivating his rose garden.</p