

Groh's History of Omaha

All the truth and untruth that's fit to know

By A. R. GROH.

Chapter XVII.—The City Hall.

The voice of criticism is again raising its head against my great history, but it shall beat powerlessly against a stone wall which shall ride on majestically across the sea until it arrives safely in its intended port.

In Chapter VII the historian hurled back his critics, or rather paid no attention to them, comparing them to little dogs barking at a great elephant, the elephant being the historian.

The present critic is a person who has been trying to get me to write him up, and have continued to ignore his request, as I write only about important things. Now he comes up like one of the yapping little dogs and states that my history "isn't as good as it used to be."

I suppose this person thinks he could write a better one. It will be well for him to remember that it is easier to criticize a great history than to write one. I shall pay no attention to him. He does not disturb me in the slightest. I shall sail on majestically over a calm sea, passing all others on the race track of history and gathering a full harvest when the golden sheaves of grain are ripe.

That is my lofty answer to this critic. [To the artist: Please make a cartoon of this critic. He is a tall young fellow with a bald head and usually smoking a briar pipe with a curved stem. Make him look as ridiculous as possible in the picture.]

Let us proceed with our history. The city hall was built in 1890 (just

address, when they laid the corner stone. He spoke about erecting "a monument of enduring granite stone" and he rang in something about the pyramids and sphinx of Egypt, the Alexandrian library and the Colosseum of Rome. "I know I express the hope of all, when I say that the structure which we shall rear here will be a satisfaction to future generations," he said.

Unfortunately this hope was not



FLOWERY ADDRESS OF MAYOR CUSH

realized, for just this year the city has remodeled the city hall, tearing out the basement and making it into offices and making a new entrance on Eighteenth street. The man, however, who did the remodeling have no doubt that the city hall is built of "enduring granite stone," as the mayor said. It was so hard that the pneumatic drills could hardly cut it. The place where the city hall stands was the site of Governor Saunders' handsome and costly home. When he built it, the ground was very high. This was all graded down and Farnam street as it now stands was reduced to that level only after the earth had been removed to a depth of forty-five feet.

We have seen in another chapter how the court house grounds were formerly very high and were graded down with herculean and costly labor to their present level and a beautiful lawn planted.

How many of these interesting facts about the city's history did the critic of my history know? Not one.

Questions on Chapter XVII.

1. What was the real reason why this critic criticized my history?
2. What is easier than writing a history?
3. How long after the Declaration of Independence was the city hall built?
4. Describe the address of the mayor.

Comb Honey

By EDWARD BLACK.

June. Which month do you like best? June, of course.

Each month has its claims of superiority, but June seems to have the most credit marks as a popular period in the yearly cycle. It is the month of poetry, posies, picnics and pie, meaning cherry pie, of course.

Consider the sweet girl graduate as she steps upon the threshold of life, with a graduation certificate in her hand, looking into the future with its many bright promises, the pictures in roseate colors, the pathway ahead. She is a prominent figure of the month of roses, orange blossoms and sunshine.

In an old scrap-book we read: Who comes with summer to this earth, And owes to June her date of birth, With rings of agate on her hand, Can health, wealth, long life command.

James Whitcomb Riley wrote: "Month a man kin rally love— June, you know, I'm speaking of."

There's the June bride who always blushes and about whom so much has been written. Who ever heard of a June groom? He is a nonentity, just a bit of bric-a-brac in the scheme of things.

In this great month of months the schoolhouse door is closed for the long summer vacation, the old swimming hole is enlivened by its clientele of youth, the picnic basket is pressed into service once more, the chigger bug is on the scene and the straw hat offers evidence that the good old summer time is here.

Father and Son.

We entered the office of a business man the other day, intending to discuss a matter of mutual interest. He had his hand upon the shoulder of a youth and in tones which bespoke the feelings of his heart he said:

"Good-bye, James; remember your father will always be thinking of you. Be a good boy, my son."

The boy was going to war. A slight moistening of the elder man's eyes moved us to tip-toe away from the scene, to return another day. Our errand suddenly shrank into relative unimportance.

The Height of Frivolity.

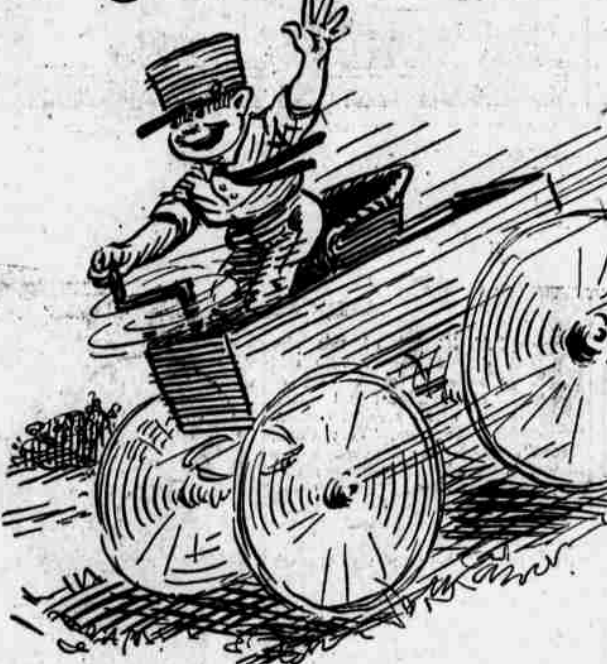
Having the baby photographed for the first time.

Class in Civics.— Stand up and state who is chief of Omaha's detective department?

Did You Ever.— Play postoffice?

How Omaha Got Him

Early Visits to Kansas City Inspire Longing to Live in Better Town.



By A. EDWIN LONG.

Kansas City might have had a handsome street car motorman, but she didn't make her wants known in time. The result was that Omaha got a cracking good furniture man.

Harry R. Bowen's boyhood ambition was to run a street car. On his fathers' farm near Paola, Kan., he used to practice for this job. He got a battered blue cap with a square beak and crammed this down over his ears. He took the crank of the grindstone, spiked it on the dashboard of his fathers' buggy and coasted down the hills in the pasture turning the crank manly in imitation of the street car man who stops and starts his car thus.

This ambition came to him, of course, after he had stood on the streets of Kansas City once clinging

to his father's thumb and staring open-mouthed at the street cars as they galloped up and down the magnificent hills of that city.

These trips to Kansas City were not frequent. Young Harry stuck pretty close to the farm. He trapped the rats around the barn, snared gophers at the edge of the cornfield and was always on the warpath against rattlesnakes. He roasted lark's eggs in the prairie fires, cooked frogs' legs by the mill pond and chased jackrabbits with some of the best hounds in Kansas.

When he was 14 he was stacking hay, plowing corn, and shocking wheat; for boys mature early on western farms. By this time his longing for street cars had somewhat left him, and he craved to be a furniture dealer. Shiny oak tables, mahogany chairs, rolltop desks, and polished pianos were pleasing to his eye. Even the scent of the new varnish was sweet to his nostrils; he knew not why.

His father became a trader in cattle in the Kansas City stock yards. The lad mounted a horse and entered this game also, until every gate, every alley, every pen and every scale in the vast yards was familiar to him. Yet after whipping steers around all day he would ride home at night and ponder on the furniture business.

Fifteen years ago he broke away from this business. "I had Omaha in

mind for a long time before I came," said Mr. Bowen. "Omaha stuck in my mind as a central spot, and a coming city. And I have never gone back on that first idea. I believe Omaha is just beginning to grow."

So he came to Omaha, and not seeing an opening for his furniture store at once, he established the Omaha Horse and Supply company. He could not break away from live stock with one sudden wrench. With an eye constantly open for his location, he suddenly abandoned the horse business and opened his Central Mercantile company furniture establishment on Leavenworth street. For four years he sold goods through

agents, and then moved his plant to Seventeenth and Howard streets ten years ago, where the plant now does a thriving and constantly growing business. Not content with the one establishment, he recently bought the Rubel store which now operates under the name of the Raymond.

Thus was a live and expert furniture man jerked out of the jaws of the life of a cattle broker, and dragged from a fascinating field of horse trading by the magnetic force of one clinging ambition to sell furniture, and sell lots of it.

Next in This Series—"How Omaha Got Frank A. Kennedy."

Harry T. Bowen

Everybody has a Hobby!



STYMEST STEVENSON, PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATED FATHERS' CLUBS OF COUNCIL BLUFFS, AND A SMALL GROUP OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD CHILDREN AT PLAY IN HIS YARD.

Making the kids happy, just everlastingly furnishing amusement for the children in his neighborhood, is the hobby of Stymest Stevenson, a lumber broker of Council Bluffs. The back yard and the entire lawn around his home on the heights in Council Bluffs is one huge outdoor gymnasium. The grass is trampled flat. Stevenson puts up no "Keep off the grass" signs. He hates them. He invites the children to come to his lawn to play.

He steps on the front porch, or into the yard, and blows a shrill whistle which he carries in his pocket for the purpose. The children come scampering from a score of houses, barns and woodsheds. They flock to Stevenson's lawn, and there they tumble on the trapeze; they climb on his pack porch, they teeter on his teeter-totter, they jump rope, they swing by steel cables fastened in the trees and they climb about in the branches and set up such a clamor and chatter as to make one think a human menagerie was being placed on exhibition.

Stevenson himself is always found in the midst of the confusion. Once on Sunday morning when the pastor thought Stevenson might better have been in church, he was found climbing around in the branches of the trees with a pail, serving water to the

well-keptness. There is no such thing as a clean-up day with Mr. Macleod—every day is clean-up day with him.

If a genie would rub his magic lamp and inquire of Mr. Macleod what he most wanted in the world, the county employe would probably ask for a spotless town, provided he could be mayor.

Touring the wilds on a motorcycle is the hobby of Robert W. Taylor, pastor of Parkville Presbyterian church. Every summer he spends his vacation on a motorcycle. He has spent his vacations thus for many years. He fills a small knapsack, leaps aboard the pop-pop wagon and roars out of sight around a curve in the boulevard. That is the last his friends see of him for months, until he comes in, rounding that same curve in the boulevard, bringing with him a most marvelous mahogany complexion. While he is away he endures Pike's Peak, tears through the sands of the Nevada deserts, skirts the edge of Death valley and rides for miles along the very brink of the Grand canyon just to look down, and look down still more and more, for he never tires of the grandeur of the mountains.

His home at 123 South Thirty-fifth avenue is a model of cleanliness and

These he has printed in colors and made into lantern shades, and many an Omaha audience he has entertained for an evening with his fascinating lectures on his travels.

Abhorrence of bayonets is the hobby of A. A. Gilbert, Omaha real estate man. Mr. Gilbert is one of those who will march up and register his name for the selective draft June 5. Meantime he is seeking to learn all he can about bayonets. "I wonder do they keep bayonets sterilized in the war?" he asked the other day. "I wouldn't mind being stuck so badly if I was sure the bayonet was sterilized and thoroughly sanitary." Steel-jacketed bullets have no horror for him at all when compared to the glittering bayonet. Shrapnel and sixteen-inch shells he merely laughs at when he talks of being taken to the trenches. But when the bayonet is mentioned his face sobers visibly. He sent for application blanks for the officers' reserve corps many weeks ago and thought of trying for a place. He read the instructions, requirements and other details, and then came upon a list of the equipment a prospective officer must carry while in training. Alas! The first item in the list stood out like a flaming demon: "One bayonet!" Gilbert did not go into training.

On the northwest corner of Fourteenth and Farnam in 1880 there was a two-story frame store and office building, one of the stores being used by A. D. Morse Shoe company. His signs read: A child can buy as cheap as a man at A. D. Morse's, this being about all the advertising he did, that being sufficient, as it made him famous. The present two-story brick on that lot was erected about 1883 and for years a part of the second floor was used as a hall, known as "St. George's hall." For years John L. Webster had his office there, as did Boggs & Hill. The Norris ticket office and cigar store and J. B. Williams, the tailor, at one time occupied two of its stores, the latter being the oldest tenant in point of duration in the building. West of this at No. 1412 is the World-Herald office, located there in 1887. Prior to that there was a one-story brick there, used as a saloon and run by Ed Wilzig. Adjoining this to the west has for years been the saloon and billiard hall of Lentz & Williams; it is a two-story brick—this being part of the ground upon which in 1885 was erected a one-story narrow brick building, where in January of that year David Miller, ex-sheriff of Douglas county, started a saloon, which for years was known as a political headquarters and called the "Drum," but it proved an expensive venture to Miller. Adjoining this on the north-

Omaha's Thoroughfares : : Farnam Street

Part Two of the Chapter from Ed Morearty's Recent Book of Personal Reminiscences

(Continued)

On the southwest corner of Thirtieth street was M. Hellman's three-story brick building, which up to 1888 was the largest exclusive clothing store in this city. In 1887 it was converted into a hotel on the European plan and was called the "Dewey." It was destroyed by fire in February, 1913, and in 1914 the Omaha Printing company erected in its place the present five-story brick—one of the largest printing houses in the west. Two of the buildings west of this were for years used as dry goods stores; one by Loyal Smith and the other by S. F. Morse & Co. Smith was a seasonal bargain-giver and at times would give free excursions to Omaha from a radius of 100 miles around, when carpets would be laid on the sidewalks almost the entire length of the block. One pleasant Saturday night in the spring of 1886 he locked the store doors and decamped for Canada, leaving behind him debts aggregating \$100,000. In the summer of 1887 Morse disposed of his store and business. West of these buildings in 1880 Ish & McMahon ran a drug store, this being the closest the block ever came to harboring a saloon until 1889, when Darst established a wholesale liquor house at No. 1313 in that block. On the southeast corner of that block stood one of Omaha's oldest hardware and stove stores and one of the most extensive in the entire west. It was a three-story building occupying a full city lot and was owned and run by Milton Rogers & Son. This ground and building was sold by the Rogers estate in 1910 to the Woodmen of the World, who erected on the lot its present sixteen-story building, it being the headquarters of the order as well as an office building and stores.

On the northwest corner of Fifteenth street, was located the old Union block, also called the Wabash corner, because the ticket office of that road was located there from 1880 to 1890—Frank E. Moores being the agent. For many years it was the spot where political medicine was mixed. I recall one instance in 1890 when there were gathered in a group James E. Boyd, W. J. Bryan, Charles H. Brown, C. V. Gallagher, J. Sterling Morton and myself. At this writing this building is being razed to make way for the eight-story building of the Omaha World-Herald, this lot having been purchased by the west of this was built in 1882 by Peter Goos and was used by him as a hotel, then called the "Goos hotel." In 1885 it was sold to W. A. Paxton, who in 1895 sold it to Lou Hill. Since 1885 it has been known as the "Merchants hotel." The lost west of that are the ones on which the Paxton block is located, that building extending to the northeast corner of Sixteenth street. In 1880 and up to 1883 the Douglas county court house stood on that corner, when it was sold to Paxton for a certain sum and part in exchange for other lots where now stands the new court house. The Paxton block was erected in 1888. In 1895 it was sold to the present owners, the Boston Ground Rent company.

On the southwest corner of Fifteenth street is located the Barker block. This ground has been owned by the Barker estate, to my personal knowledge, since 1880. In that year and up to 1886 there stood on that lot a two-story frame building, used for stores and offices. In 1886 a new building was started, but be-

east corner was Boyd's opera house, erected in 1882. It was completely destroyed by fire in October, 1893. In 1896 the Nebraska Clothing company purchased the ground and erected its present five-story clothing house. In 1880 an old livery stable owned by Wilber & Co. occupied this lot.

On the southwest corner of Fourteenth street is located the Paxton hotel. When it was built in 1882 it was considered the finest hotel in the city, it not in the entire west. It was a vacant lot in 1880 and prior to the fire of 1878 the Grand Central hotel stood there. The Kitchen brothers built the present hotel, which they have managed since its erection. The building west of it was the place from which the old Morning Herald was issued. At No. 1415 C. S. Goodrich ran a store in 1885. At No. 1417 was in 1880 located the first undertaking establishment in the city and was owned and run by John G. Jacobs and after his death by Drexel & Maul. At No. 1419 is the Drexel Shoe company. In 1883 Henry Dohle occupied it for a like purpose. On the southeast corner of that block and Fifteenth street is located the Ware block, erected in 1882 by W. A. Paxton. It is a six-story brick used for stores and offices. For a number of years it was used by Kelley, Stiger & Co. as a dry goods store. It was named in honor of the wife of the owner, W. A. Paxton.

On the northwest corner, on Fifteenth street, was located the old Union block, also called the Wabash corner, because the ticket office of that road was located there from 1880 to 1890—Frank E. Moores being the agent. For many years it was the spot where political medicine was mixed. I recall one instance in 1890 when there were gathered in a group James E. Boyd, W. J. Bryan, Charles H. Brown, C. V. Gallagher, J. Sterling Morton and myself. At this writing this building is being razed to make way for the eight-story building of the Omaha World-Herald, this lot having been purchased by the west of this was built in 1882 by Peter Goos and was used by him as a hotel, then called the "Goos hotel." In 1885 it was sold to W. A. Paxton, who in 1895 sold it to Lou Hill. Since 1885 it has been known as the "Merchants hotel." The lost west of that are the ones on which the Paxton block is located, that building extending to the northeast corner of Sixteenth street. In 1880 and up to 1883 the Douglas county court house stood on that corner, when it was sold to Paxton for a certain sum and part in exchange for other lots where now stands the new court house. The Paxton block was erected in 1888. In 1895 it was sold to the present owners, the Boston Ground Rent company.

On the southwest corner of Fifteenth street is located the Barker block. This ground has been owned by the Barker estate, to my personal knowledge, since 1880. In that year and up to 1886 there stood on that lot a two-story frame building, used for stores and offices. In 1886 a new building was started, but be-

fore its completion it was destroyed by fire. The present six-story brick was constructed immediately afterward, the main floor of which is occupied as a bank. The adjoining two-story brick was built in 1882 by O. F. Davis and for years was used by the life of a cattle broker, and dragged from a fascinating field of horse trading by the magnetic force of one clinging ambition to sell furniture, and sell lots of it.

On the southwest corner of that block, on Sixteenth street, in 1880 stood the handsome residence of Charles S. Goodrich. In 1884 the property was purchased from him by John A. McShane for \$40,000 and the residence was torn down and replaced by a number of one-story brick buildings.

In 1887 Zachariah Thompson bought the property from McShane for something like \$60,000, at least he so informed me. Mr. Thompson had his real estate office in the corner store until 1888, when it was rented to Mr. Schroeder for a drug store, which he occupied until 1894, when it was rented for a like purpose by the Myers-Dillon Drug company, who occupied it until August of this year, when the property was leased by the Rose Realty company, which is erecting on the corner a two-story brick twenty feet in width adjoins this and is owned by the Redick estate.

On the southwest corner of that block, on Sixteenth street, in 1880 stood the handsome residence of Charles S. Goodrich. In 1884 the property was purchased from him by John A. McShane for \$40,000 and the residence was torn down and replaced by a number of one-story brick buildings.

In 1887 Zachariah Thompson bought the property from McShane for something like \$60,000, at least he so informed me. Mr. Thompson had his real estate office in the corner store until 1888, when it was rented to Mr. Schroeder for a drug store, which he occupied until 1894, when it was rented for a like purpose by the Myers-Dillon Drug company, who occupied it until August of this year, when the property was leased by the Rose Realty company, which is erecting on the corner a two-story brick twenty feet in width adjoins this and is owned by the Redick estate.

(Concluded Next Sunday)