

Omaha at the Time The Bee First Made Its Bow

(Continued from Preceding Page.)

Chapman, vice president; James M. Watson, cashier; James E. Boyd, assistant cashier. The First National bank, then at the corner of Thirteenth and Farnam streets, had been established in 1856 and organized as a national bank August 20, 1863. Its capital and undivided profits were \$250,000. Edward Creighton was president; Herman Kountze, vice president; Augustus Kountze, cashier; H. W. Yates, assistant cashier. The Omaha National bank, corner Thirteenth and Douglas streets, had a paid-in capital of \$100,000, and an authorized capital of \$500,000. Ezra Millard was president and J. H. Millard cashier. The State Bank of Nebraska was at the corner of Thirteenth and Farnam streets. It had a capital of \$100,000, with Alvin Saunders as president and Benjamin B. Wood cashier. The banking house of Caldwell, Hamilton & Co., now the United States National bank, was already at the corner of Twelfth and Farnam streets, and transacted business the same as an incorporated bank.

In the line of jobbing and wholesale trade the chief business was in agricultural implements, groceries, hardware, lumber, liquors, furniture and some dry goods. In addition to the nucleus of manufacturing on a small scale, as everywhere carried on by the cigar makers, shoemakers, blacksmiths and so forth, there were a number of more important factories and mills. Two flouring mills were at work grinding wheat into flour. Two breweries were converting malt into beer. A distillery was in operation manufacturing whisky and spirits. The linseed oil works

had just been started. There were two soap and candle factories, a cigar box factory, a paper box factory, a coffee and spice mill, a foundry, a carriage factory and several wagon makers, sash door and blind manufacturers, a showcase maker and pork packers. There were two establishments engaged in the construction of lightning rods and one which was flooding the west with Nebraska-made hoop skirts and corsets. All this without counting the two thriving lottery swindles which were soon after compelled to retire from business under the irresistible onslaught of the Bee. The principal addition to the industries of Omaha for the year 1871 was the smelting works, which had been organized the preceding year and which completed the construction of its works and began active operations in February, 1871, giving employment night and day to an aggregate of 60 men. Next to the Union Pacific car shops, the smelting works at once took rank at the forefront of Omaha's manufacturing enterprises.

Representation in the Professions.
Among the inhabitants of the town our traveler would have found a fair representation of intelligent professional men. Of the attorneys and law firms then practicing before the courts only a comparatively few are still pursuing the profession in this city. Here, however, are some of the familiar names: G. W. Ambrose, Baldwin & O'Brien, J. C. Cowin, Gilbert & Swartzlander, Neville & Haws, Strickland & Webster, Savage, Manderson, A. J. Poppleton, C. H. Brown, C. S. Chase, W. J. Connel, G. W. Doane, Luther & Thurs-

ton, John I. Redick, E. Wakeley, J. M. Woolworth, D. L. Thomas. The list of surviving physicians of twenty-five years ago is still small. Those who are well remembered are Drs. I. Van Camp, O. S. Wood, Peck & Moore, V. H. Coffman, S. D. Mercer, J. C. Denise, J. R. Conklin, George Tilden and James H. Peabody.

None of the ministers of 1871 occupy Omaha pulpits regularly today.

Amusements and Entertainments.

In the matter of amusements our traveler would not have much difficulty to secure desired diversion. The Academy of Music, in the Caldwell block on Douglas street, was the scene of theatrical entertainments by its own stock company under the management of Mr. Corri. Redick's new opera house had but shortly been completed at Sixteenth and Farnam streets and witnessed a number of performances, both amateur and professional, before it was knocked down as a capital prize in the great Patee lottery. Scattered about the town

were innumerable concert and dance halls, where social gatherings of varying degrees of propriety were the powerful and frequent attractions.

As a hotel guest, our traveler would hardly have fared so well as he might reasonably have expected. The famous Herndon house had been transformed into the Union Pacific railroad headquarters, and the wonderful Cozzens hotel, which George Francis Train had built in 60 days, could no longer lay claim to superiority. There were, nevertheless, some dozen hostilities ready to receive guests and give them good accommodations, and a host of lesser hotel lights and boarding houses. Among the hotels to which the business man of Omaha would have recommended his friends in 1871 were the American house, Atlantic house, Cozzens hotel, Davenport house, Douglas house, Emmet house, Metropolitan hotel, Omaha house, St. Charles hotel, St. James hotel, United States hotel, Valley house and Wyoming house. Every hotel of pretension of course

conducted a saloon in connection with it, but if that had been all, there would by no means have been enough saloons to supply the demand. The places where liquor was to be had added up between 80 and 90 and many of them had gambling room attachments for which no effort was made at concealment.

From the Standpoint of Morality.
In contrast with this the organizations of church-going people presented a strong array and Omaha had made good progress in the field of mission, church and Sunday school.

To quote in conclusion from the unknown contemporaneous author to whom I have previously referred, "with regard to morals, Omaha has suffered from its position as the entrepot for all the west and the resort of professional rogues seeking a respite after a sojourn in the mountains. It was also plagued with a set of newspaper correspondents who delighted in retailing all that was prurient and giving to every street brawl the importance of a first-class

tragedy. Hence the impression east is general that life and property are by no means safe in Omaha; upon this subject we say briefly that as in all cities, vice may be found in certain haunts in Omaha, but it does not ply its seductions nor display its vulgarities in public, as it does in many places laying claim to superior virtue. "As to the state of religion, during the last year, some of the churches have had to endure the trial of witnessing the fall of prominent members; others are divided in sentiment

and some are destitute of pastors, but a glance at the city will show that religious activity has been the rule from the beginning. Sabbath schools are numerous and well attended; benevolent associations are sustained, as well as missionary enterprises and should any one test the report of liberality which pervades all classes he will find nowhere in the world a more hearty response to the claims of suffering humanity than he will from the religious portion of the population of Omaha."

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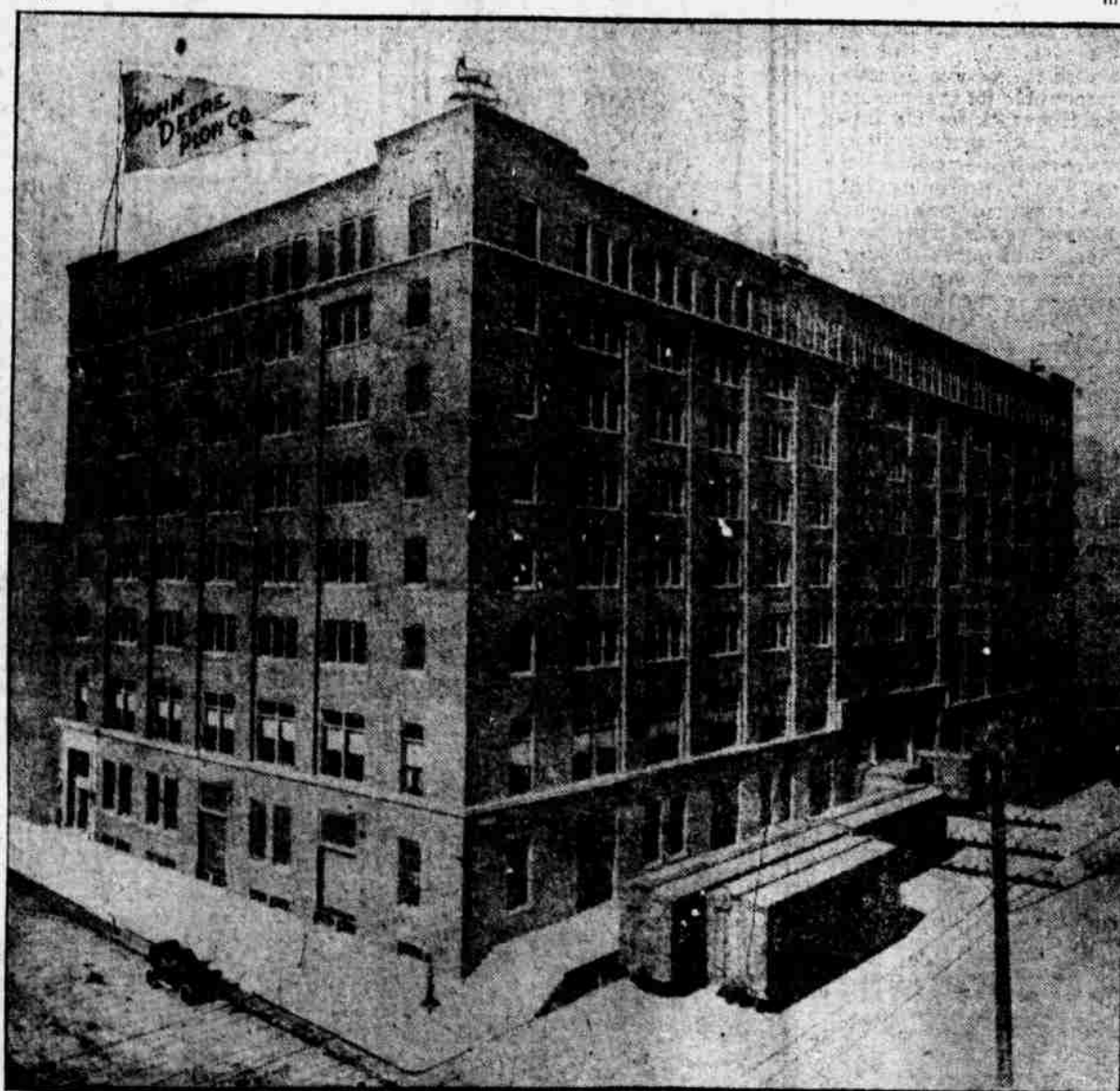
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