

Omaha's Growth As Retail Center Dates From 1898

Trans-Mississippi Exposition Gave Great Impetus—Retailers Banded Together in Association in 1912.

By J. W. METCALFE, Secretary of the Associated Retailers. The Trans-Mississippi exposition marked the period when Omaha's great growth as a retail center really began. Due credit should be given the man who conceived the idea, for through this exposition Omaha was given advertising that gave it the boost so that it was able to climb to the height it stands at today. Many of the stores that were prominent at that stage of Omaha's growth are now out of business or have passed to other hands. Many of the proprietors have removed to other cities or have retired from active business life. Nevertheless, it was through the efforts of these first "pioneer" business men that our city is what it is today.

Largest Advertisers. Of the business houses that still remain from the year 1898 we find the most extensive and largest advertisers of that time were Hayden's, located at the same place they are today; the Boston store, which now is J. L. Brandeis & Sons, located in the old Boston store building, northwest corner Sixteenth and Douglas streets; Orchard & Wilhelm Co., then located at 1414-16-18 Douglas street; Thompson-Belden company, staunchly carrying an ad on the second page of The Bee, located then on the first floor and basement of the Y. M. C. A. building; the Nebraska Clothing company, located at Fifteenth and Farnam streets, and Milton Rogers & Sons, located at the corner of Fourteenth and Farnam streets, opposite the Paxton hotel. The above statements are borne out by the files of The Omaha Bee of 1898.

Draw Crowds Here. Here we might pay tribute to the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben. This organization was another great aid to Omaha's retail business at that time, which, the same as it does today, succeeded in drawing crowds of out-of-town people to Omaha during their activities and in this way the business of our retail stores was swelled. From 1898 on, the retailing of Omaha continued to widen out and grow until in 1912 the retailers decided that in order to retain a fraternal feeling among all persons engaged in the retail trade they would organize an association wherein they could advance the interests of our retail merchants, and in that way advance Omaha. This enabled them to check to a certain extent trade abuses, unbusiness-like methods and to make such regulations as would be conducive to not only their own benefit, but to the benefit and advancement of the general public.

Initial Meeting. The initial meeting of the association was held in the Rome hotel and those in attendance were H. A. Thompson and C. C. Belden of the Thompson-Belden company; T. P. Redmond, representing J. L. Brandeis & Sons; Charles R. Sherman of Sherman & McConnell; Joseph Hayden of Hayden Bros.; A. Hospe of A. Hospe & Co.; J. L. Orkin and M. E. Orkin of Orkin Bros.; now Burgess-Nash company; J. W. Stewart of Stewart, Miller & Beaton company; Maj. R. S. Wilcox of Browning-King company, Fred Hall of the Union Outfitting company, W. G. Brandt of Orchard & Wilhelm, Philip Swartz of the Nebraska Clothing company, William Koenig of Thomas-Kilpatrick & Co., Rome Miller of the Hotel Rome and A. S. Peck of King-Swanson company.

The idea of those present for an organization of this kind, formed the nucleus of the Associated Retailers. The reason for the success of this organization rests with the retailers of Omaha. Another forward movement of the retailers was in May, 1918, when at the urgent request of retail firms outside of the retail district who form an organization, the object being and not members of the Associated Retailers, the association opened the activities of the credit bureau to them.

Credit Bureau Formed. In order to add to the efficiency of the work performed through the credit bureau the board of directors of the Associated Retailers suggested the retail district who form an organization the object being to take over the management of the credit bureau activities. This was done in 1918 and the credit men formed what is now known as the Associated Retail Credit Bureau and Credit Men. In that year there were about 45 firms actively participating in the bureau activities. Since the credit men took hold, the number has grown to close to 500. The following retailers have served the retail interests as presidents of the association: The first two years, H. A. Thompson of Thompson-Belden company, Charles R. Sherman of Sherman-McConnell Drug company, A. T. Benson of Benson & Thorne, W. G. Brandt of Orchard & Wilhelm, and Charles E. Black. The present officers are W. S. Stryker, president; George Brandeis, vice president; E. H. Flitton, treasurer, and J. W. Metcalfe, secretary.

Bradfield Becomes Sales Director for Yellow Cab Chicago, Ill., June 18.—Announcement of the appointment of H. C. Bradfield of Detroit as director of sales and advertising for the Yellow Cab Manufacturing company of this city is made by that company. Mr. Bradfield, who has been president and general manager of the Bradfield company, Detroit, has discontinued his Detroit business and is now with the Yellow Cab company. The Yellow Cab company in addition to being the largest manufacturer of taxicabs also manufactures Yellow Cab trucks in the three-quarter and one and one-quarter ton capacities and a six-cylinder, high-grade motor car—the Ambassador. The company is on a capacity schedule for their plant at the present time with no unbalanced inventory or unalloyed finished stock.

This Is the Office Force of the Cudahy Packing Company In 1894; Some of These Office Boys Are Now Executives



The above photograph was taken of the office force of the Cudahy Packing company in 1894. Some of those in the photographs who were then clerks and office boys are now executives. The company was incorporated as the Armour-Cudahy company with a capital stock of \$750,000 August 29, 1887, to take over the small Lipton plant at the stock yards in South Omaha. From this small beginning at Omaha, and with Omaha people as its builders it has now developed to a concern with a capital paid up of \$25,800,000 and with plants at Omaha, Sioux City, Kansas City, Wichita, Los Angeles, East Chicago, Memphis, Toronto and elsewhere and branch houses throughout the United States. The company is now owned and controlled by some 2,500 stockholders of whom 1,200 are employees. The human element has been an important factor in the company's success, both between the company and the employees and the company and the public. Today there are 2,500 employees of the company in Omaha.

"Wee Willie" Once More Behind Bars

Youthful Criminal Who Has Made Dozen Escapes Back In Prison.

San Quentin Prison, Cal., June 18.—"Wee Willie" is once more behind the bars. And the present question agitating prison officials is whether the unusual ingenuity displayed by this 16-year-old boy in escaping from jail will manifest itself behind the bars of the state penitentiary. "Wee Willie" was brought here from Eureka, after being sentenced there to an indeterminate sentence in state prison. Judge Sevier passed sentence sending the boy to the penitentiary only after Preston reform school authorities and Mather Field army authorities had requested that the boy be sent somewhere else. The boy had escaped from the reform school several times and was a deserter from the army.

The youth, since he entered upon a career of crime at the age of 13, has had probably the most remarkable juvenile record in police annals in the United States. Three times he escaped from Whittier Reform school. Twice he escaped from the county jail at Eureka, nearly wrecking the institution on one occasion and saving his way out on the other. In addition, he has escaped from the county jail at San Luis Obispo county. His criminal activities include over 20 burglaries, one army desertion, passing of worthless checks and the theft of automobiles.

The Bee Owes Its Name to Pioneer Omaha Printers

The Bee owes its name to Charles E. Redfield, pioneer Omaha printer. So states his nephew, Joe B. Redfield, prominent Omaha printer. Joe's father, Joe Senior, and his uncle, Charles, printed the first editions of The Bee in their old plant at the southeast corner of Twelfth and Dodge streets, where the new jail now stands. It was known as "Redfield Brothers, Printers."

Both Redfields are now dead, but the printing tradition of the family is upheld by young Joe, now with the Klapp-Bartlett company. "My father and uncle had the first cylinder press ever used in Omaha," said Redfield, jr. "It was on this press that the first Bees were printed." "Darby Richmond, a well known darkey of those days, furnished the hand power. Every once in a while the fly wheel would hop off into a vacant lot across the street, and they would have to stop the presses to recover the wheel."

Smoke Pipes. The two Redfields used to set the type. They were noted for the long pipes they smoked, as they worked. Young Redfield said he had heard his father and uncle tell many times how the paper was named more than 50 years ago today. "No parent could have been more anxious about the name of its first-born than was Mr. Edward Rosewater, my father related. "My uncle used to talk it over with him. Both decided they wanted to select a name which would mean something when the paper rose to power and influence. Name Chosen. "It was my uncle who suggested 'The Bee' and Mr. Rosewater chose it immediately." Charles Redfield's daughter, Miss Anna Redfield, employed in the Union Pacific, still retains photographs of the original Redfield printing shop and the first copy of The Bee. The cousins repeat what their fathers used to relate many times—the eagerness with which Edward Rosewater scanned the first issue of his brain-child, The Bee. His Life and Soul. "You could tell just by looking at him how much that paper meant to him; it was his whole life and soul," they said. Mr. Rosewater had very definite ideas, too, as to how he wished his paper to appear. He knew as much about type as the printers themselves, the veteran printers would say. Charles Redfield died 30 years ago and Joe Redfield, sr., more than 20 years ago. Miss Jennie Redfield, until last year principal of Castelar school, is a sister. Because there are several particularly fast automobiles in this country, there is a plan among motor interests to get up a subscription to send American cars and drivers abroad to enter in the French Grand Prix automobile race this year.

Development of Bond Business in Omaha Dates Back 20 Years

The development of the bond business in Omaha dates back 20 years. In 1902 there was practically no business of this kind handled here except through local wire houses. Samuel Burns, jr., who had been

connected with the First National bank, felt there was an opportunity in this line and opened a one-room office in the Omaha National Bank building, handling commercial paper, insurance and investment securities. The investing public soon learned the fundamentals of safe investment and today Omaha has come to be recognized as the bond center for the wealthy middle states of Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota. The firm of Burns, Brinker & Co. is the oldest firm of this kind in Omaha. They

do a general investment business and by reason of long standing are included in large eastern syndicates, being in position to give their clients first offerings of issues of nationwide importance. Because the Anti-Horse Thief association in Missouri now and then catches a horse thief and strings him up, a bill was recently introduced in the state legislature to make the stealing of a motor vehicle a capital offense.



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