GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA:
Settlement and Growth

By

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Early Settlement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>The New Town</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Churches, Schools and Other Institutions</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Business Enterprises</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Civic Improvements</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Railroad Facilities</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Industrial Development</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Retrospect</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## APPENDIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Chronological Survey</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter I
EARLY SETTLEMENT

The history of the city of Grand Island is interwoven with that of the island whose name it bears. This island, about sixty miles in length, lies in the Platte River a few miles south of the city. It was mentioned by various explorers. In 1813 members of the Astorian Expedition on their return trip wrote that they came down the river to "Great Island" where they bought some elk's hide boats. In 1818 an expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains under the command of Major Long passed up the Platte Valley and it is stated: "Our guide informed us that the Platte opposite the point where we entered the valley contained an island, which is more than a day's journey across and about thirty miles in length." Captain Bonneville with men and wagons reached the island in 1832. Fremont with an exploring expedition passed through Nebraska by the Oregon Trail in the summer of 1842. He wrote in his journal: "On the 18th (September) we reached Grand Island, which is fifty-two miles long with an average breadth of one mile and three-quarters. It has on it some small eminences, and is sufficiently elevated to be secure from the annual floods of the river. As has

already been remarked, it is well timbered with an excellent soil, and recommends itself to notice as the best point for a military position on the Lower Platte."

On the map which accompanied his report of 1845 on the "Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains" he showed that a trail ran southwest from the lower end of "Grand Island."

Other phases of the historic background of the city of Grand Island are the trails which crossed the plains of Nebraska. Before there were any settlements in the state, trade and travel from the East to the Northwest followed the Oregon Trail, the great "Military Road" as it was sometimes called. The Astoria expedition, the Oregon travelers, the gold-seekers enroute to California went over this road. As the years passed by and traffic became greater, the trail because of so much travel became a highway, broad and well beaten.

The Overland Trail followed the north side of the Platte. Many of the gold seekers from the East crossed the Missouri River near Bellevue and then kept on the north side of the Platte till they came to Ft. Laramie where this trail united with the Oregon Trail. The Mormons in 1847 on their way to the region of Great Salt Lake passed over this trail through Nebraska. The Denver Trail on the south side of the Platte led across the state from Nebraska City on to Denver. From the
southeast many travelers came in over the military road established in 1830 which led from Ft. Leavenworth, striking the Platte River at Ft. Kearney.

As early as 1854, before the white men came to Nebraska as permanent settlers, the Pawnee Indians held the country south of the Platte and had villages opposite the present city of Grand Island. There were about four thousand of them who lived in log houses covered with turf and earth. The Otoes in 1854 were south of the Platte, while the Omahas were north. With the exception of the few persons living at the army posts there were no white settlers in the territory until the Organization Act of 1854 when it was organized and was given the name Nebraska taken from "Nebrathka" a word used by the Otoe Indians in speaking of the Platte River, which they called "Flat Water." The immigration to California had much to do with the territory being organized so early, as the people going back and forth over the trail saw what kind of a country it was that lay between the Missouri and the Rocky Mountains.

After the territory was organized, settlements were soon made in the eastern part, but it was not until 1857 that a plan was made for the establishment of the settlement that has to do with Grand Island.
The nucleus of the project was the idea that a railroad would soon pass through Nebraska and consequently towns would be laid out along the line where the railroad would extend in the future. A. H. Barrows of the banking house of Chubb Bros. and Barrows of Davenport, Iowa, Washington, D.C., and Boston, Mass., formulated the plan of founding a town on the Platte River. They believed that the government of the United States would in time be moved to a central point and consequently they made their plans to plat their city as near the center of the country as possible.

A town company was formed and a band of settlers was to be engaged to make the journey to Nebraska and take up land. According to the agreement the parties were to claim and hold 320 acres of land each; the town company was to furnish the funds for the final purchase of the land; each settler should deed one half of the land claimed by him to the town company; each settler should get ten lots in the town which was to be platted. A plat of the intended city was made in Davenport in 1857, prior to the settlement. This map of the city

1-Grand Island Daily Independent, June 23, 1907. A copy of this issue of the Grand Island Daily Independent is in the library of the Nebraska Historical Society, Lincoln, Neb. It is becoming worn by handling.

2-Soon after being made this map was taken to Germany, but it was brought back a few years ago and placed in the Liederkrantz.
as originally planned was made by R. C. Barnard, civil engineer. He planned for 400 blocks covering 1440 acres. Ten of these squares were to be left unnumbered as they were to be used for public purposes. The corner lots were to be 50 ft. x 150 ft. The city was to be laid out near the north channel of the Platte to get the traffic over the trail. As the question of a name came up, it was decided to call the city "Grand Island" because of the nearness of the island of that name.

The town company succeeded in getting enough men interested in the project of making the settlement. The party left Davenport, Iowa, May 28, 1857 with five wagons drawn by sixteen yoke of oxen. The party was composed of thirty men, five American and twenty-five German; six women, five married and one single; and a child four years old—making a total of thirty-seven persons. The surveying party under Surveyor Barnard went on ahead with a four mule team. The other party was under William Stolley who brought it as far as Omaha, where he turned back to Davenport, from which point it was led through Nebraska by Fred Hedde. Omaha was then about three years old and had a population of nearly 3,000. The way traveled was very lonesome as only a few settlers had as yet gone up the Platte River Valley. Every few miles an unfinished house was found and in many cases the name of a city was painted on a sign
and attached to it. These cities never came into existence. A German settlement of eighteen log houses was found at Columbus. The pioneers there tried to get the emigrants to stop, but they pushed on. Sixty-five miles farther on, they struck Wood River and "about ten miles from the point where this little river emptied into the old narrow north channel of the Platte River and opposite the large island in the Platte called Grand Island, the new settlement was located July 4th, 1857."

The settlers, yet fearing that they might not be satisfied, divided into three parties and went in different directions to explore. In four days they returned and decided to remain there near Grand Island. They then went to work cutting and hewing logs for the houses. After consultation, it was decided to build four log houses at first and then build the others. Each house was 14 ft. x 23 ft. with a partition, making two rooms. They were built on the south one-half of the northwest quarter of section 14, township 11, range 9. As the pioneers wished to have some defense in case of attack by the Indians, they built the houses double. They were provided with loop holes for the muskets. Room was provided for the corraling of the cattle

1-Article in Grand Island Daily Independent, Semi-Centennial, June 29, 1907.
in the spaces between, as the houses themselves formed part of the enclosure. By August the houses were finished and the families moved in. Since each settler wished to have some land adjoining the town of "Grand Island" - which was only laid out on paper and had no existence at that time - forty acre tracts were laid off and given to each one. As no survey had yet been made by the government, the survey started "from a big dead cottonwood tree on an island in the river near the northeast corner of the town." Ditches and sod walls were used temporarily as fences and boundary lines.

The early settlers worked under the greatest disadvantages as the most of them were foreigners and were unused to frontier life. They broke fifty acres of prairie the first year and prepared timber for the burning of charcoal to be used in the blacksmith shop, which they were setting up. There were neither candles nor soap in the settlement for sometime. Clothes were washed with home-made lye. Some of the oxen had to be killed for meat the first year. There was plenty of flour, but little else. In 1858 the little colony had to live on half rations until supplies came in June of that year. It took sometime to get provisions as they lived sixty-five miles from the last traces of civilization. As a result of the panic of 1857 the town company at Davenport failed and the settlers were thrown entirely on their own resources. Many of the men and
boys sought work at Ft. Kearney. In July, 1858 another band of settlers came out. There were twenty persons with twenty yoke of oxen and four milk cows. The Pawnee Indians passed through in August, 1858 and stole green corn and potatoes, but did no other damage. Many travelers passed up and down the valley with teams and oxen, and it gave the settlers an opportunity not only of selling a little grain and some vegetables, but often of "buying lame cattle at a very low price." In 1858 a prairie fire was started by careless travelers. The grass was tall and brittle and the fire spread so rapidly that seven houses were destroyed. But these undismayed pioneers worked together and in a short time had erected new houses. It was very hard on those who had their hay stacks and other provisions destroyed, but the government helped by sending in from the fort a month's rations for thirty men. This relieved the situation.

The little colony struggled along until 1859 when immigration going to the West because of the discovery of gold at Pike's Peak started the line of travel through the Platte Valley. The settlement then contained an outfitter's post and store, a blacksmith shop, a cobbler's shop and a small home bakery. As the Grand Island settlement was the last place where the immigrants to the West could secure supplies, it gave the settlers the chance they needed to sell their provisions—hay, corn, oats and vegetables. The officers at Ft. Kearney
also helped by making contracts to the settlers for grain at good prices. They could do this as it was a hard trip to deliver the grain, for the Platte had a dangerous crossing at Kearney. The pioneers also had a good business in the buffalo robes, which they purchased cheaply - $2.00 to $3.00 each - from the Pawnee Indians on their return from their hunting trips. The robes were then sold to passers-by at a higher price.

For protection from the Indians, if they made an attack, a fort of logs was erected on the farm of William Stolley in 1862. The flag containing thirty-four stars was made by Miss Henrietta Axelsen of Davenport, Iowa. Arms were collected, and about fifty pounds of powder were stored there. Mr. Stolley's fort was 24 feet by 24 feet and had twenty-five port holes. For the first few years the Indians were kept under control as the troops in the West kept them from being bold. But when the Civil War broke out, the troops were needed in the East. In 1862 the Indians committed their first act of aggression in massacring Smith and his three grandsons on Wood River, twelve miles from Grand Island. In the summer of 1864 a band of Sicux came within eighteen miles southwest of the settlement and stole cattle and horses. In August, 1864

1-This flag, framed and under glass, is now in the Liederkrantz. It was donated to the Liederkrantz Society by Mrs. William Stolley in 1921.
war broke out between the Sioux and the Cheyenne and the settlers along the Platte became frightened and fled, having their wagons loaded with household goods. Although these settlers left through fear of an Indian raid, the settlers at Grand Island decided to stay and go into the stockade. As the Stolley fort was not large enough, the O.K. Store, one and one-fourth miles south of Stolley's farm, was fortified "with breastwork of sod and a tower of cotton wood logs on each corner." After it was completed, "sixty-eight men and one hundred women and children were gathered there." Scouts were sent out every day; and straw and brush piles were made ready to be used as signals if the fort should be attacked. On August 22, 1864 Major Curtis accompanied by a cavalry regiment came by the fort on the way to Ft. Kearney. After inspecting it, he went on his way, but left a "six-pounder" cannon there at the little fort. It was ready for an emergency and was well protected, but it was never attacked.

The settlers secured game along the river. After the wolves had been killed, the smaller game increased rapidly. The prairie chickens, ducks, geese and wild turkey gave a supply of food. The inhabitants depended

1-Grand Island Daily Independent, June 29, 1907.
2-This cannon is on the Court House lawn at Grand Island.
upon their rifles to procure it. Of larger game there were buffaloes for the winter supply and antelope for the summer meat, for when the spring opened the deer came back to the prairie. In order to get the buffalo they had to go many miles and take their teams and wagons to bring back the meat. It took several days and a number of the men always went together, starting in October and November. Besides hunting, they trapped beaver, otter and mink for the skins, which they sold at a good price.

These pioneers of the Grand Island settlement endured many hardships, not only going without many of the necessities of life, but by being deprived of the companionship of their friends in the East. The mail came in slowly over the military road. If it had not been for the trail going across Nebraska at the little settlement, it could not have grown so rapidly, nor would the people have been content to stay. The travelers along the way kept the settlers in touch with the affairs of the country at large besides giving an opportunity to sell their produce. The choosing of the place for the settlement at the point near the island, and on the trail had much to do with assuring its permanency. Although the town planned for these pioneers never did come into existence, yet the Grand Island settlement was the embryo which later developed into a town when the railroad came through.
CHAPTER II

THE NEW TOWN

The chart for the city of Grand Island as planned in 1857 by the town company of Davenport was not followed when the city was platted by the Union Pacific Railroad Company. In 1866 Grenville Dodge, surveyor and engineer, made a plat of the city showing "the streets, alleys, lanes, avenues, parks, commons, and lots set apart for public or county or railroad use and for charitable or religious purposes, all well and accurately staked off and marked." The lots were 66 feet by 132 feet and the streets were 80 feet and the alleys 16 feet. There were ninety-six blocks. The original plat of Grand Island was filed for record September 29, 1866 in the Records of Hall county, Book B. The scale of the plat was 200 feet to the inch.

The town was located along the survey of the Union Pacific Railroad which missed the little settlement at Grand Island by two miles. The old town company had miscalculated the line of the railroad. After it went through, travelers were attracted by the advantages of the section and land was taken up rapidly. As the country grew, the town grew. In 1870 the Platte River was
bridged. It required nine bridges to cross the nine separate channels. The building of the bridge was a great help to the little town as it gave a wider range of country for trade.

But the little town too, had its trials. A prairie fire came in the fall of 1867 and swept over the land south of town, but it was put out on the block where Bartenbach's theatre now stands. Much damage might have been done, but it was averted by the heroic efforts of the townspeople. The grasshoppers had visited the Grand Island settlement in 1862. They came to the settlement and to the vicinity of the town again in 1866 and in 1868 doing little damage; but in 1869 they destroyed corn and other grain. They came in 1873 with little damage, but in 1874 on July 20, they came in great swarms and stayed several days. Everything green was devoured and the corn was ruined. The suffering was relieved by aid which came from many parts of the United States. The grasshoppers came in small numbers in 1875 and in 1876, but did little harm. The early inhabitants of Grand Island experienced an unusual snow storm on

1-Grand Island Times, Dec., 1880.
2-Reminiscences, O. A. Abbott, a pioneer of Grand Island and a "signer" of the petition for the incorporation of the city. Mr. Abbott is still engaged in the work of his profession.
3-"Nebraska Pioneer Reminiscences."
4-"Nebraska Pioneer Reminiscences."
April 13, 1873. It came up at four o'clock in the afternoon - not "a breath of air" seemed to be stirring. It became dark, and the storm "burst in a rage." It lasted for three days. The snow drifted around the houses so that the wells could not be reached, and the people melted snow to use. Many cattle perished, and much suffering was experienced during the storm.

Very soon after the town of Grand Island was laid out by the Union Pacific Railroad Company it really became a station; and a postmaster was appointed in November 1866. D. Schuler was the first postmaster and had the post office in his building. W. R. McAllister, who set up a grocery store in 1867 on Front Street, was appointed postmaster in 1868 and moved the post office into his store. During the fall of 1866 a building was erected by the Railroad Company for the housing of its employees.

In 1867 there were in Grand Island only the railroad employees and a few other families. Besides the stores mentioned before, there was one kept by M. S. Hall, who furnished supplies to the men who were hauling ties and wood to the railroad. This little frame building was blown down in 1873 and was not rebuilt.

In 1867 there was a hotel, a two-story frame structure with a lean-to, which was kept by James Michelson. It was located on the southwest corner of Front and Pine.

1-Reminiscences O. A. Abbott.
The office of O. A. Abbott was built in 1867 on Third Street where the Dolan building stands. It was the first office erected in Grand Island. It was a small building made of cottonwood lumber, with the boards running up and down, and the cracks battened.

Koenig and Wiebe who opened up the O. K. Store in 1862 one and one-half miles south of Grand Island laid the foundation for a store in Grand Island in 1867 where the Koehler Hotel now stands. They finished the building and moved into it in the fall of 1868. The coming of the Union Pacific Railroad had taken away their emigrant trade, and they moved into Grand Island as they believed it would some day be one of the leading cities of the State. They also built a grist mill and a warehouse, to which the Union Pacific Railroad Company constructed side tracks. The United States Land Office was established in Grand Island in 1869 and was of much value to the little town. J. Michel-son's livery barn and store were built on the corner of Pine and First about 1871. Until 1872 the business houses were on "Front" Street facing the railroad, but during that year they began to build on other streets. C. W. Thomas erected a dry goods store in the building now used as a newstand on Third and Front. The first
residence on Third Street was built by Warren Loyd. It was a "pretentious" frame house of one and one-half stories and stood where the Hedde Building now stands on Third and Locust. The second residence on this street was built by Fred Wiebe where Meyer's jewelry store is located. The third building, a residence and office, was erected by Dr. Thorpeckan. It was made of cottonwood logs and stood on the corner of Third and Pine.

Neither in 1857 when the early town was planned, nor in 1863 when the Union Pacific Railroad came through, were there any surveys or any section lines. The town plat of 1866 was laid out on the line of the Railroad. As long as the buildings were small and temporary it made little difference to the owner, if his neighbor transgressed a few inches on his land; but finally the property owners got together, while the question of "staking" was still before the people, and agreed that the corner of Walbach's store should be a permanent mark for a starting place to measure off the land. There was no city surveyor before 1878 and only 2 tape lines were used to measure. In 1878 the city engineer made a plea to see that all buildings were put up on corners and not in the streets. The owners were to know that the corners were to be established, and both

1-Reminiscences O. A. Abbott.
2-Grand Island Times, April 27, 1878.
the owner and the surveyor knew that the lot was surveyed correctly. This was necessary in order to make the streets symmetrical.

The city of Grand Island developed slowly. Several meetings were held at various times to discuss the question of organization. At a meeting held on November 25, 1872, a report from a committee, that had been appointed before, was read which favored the presenting of a petition to the Board of County Commissioners for incorporation of the town. After considering the report, a committee of three was appointed to circulate the petition to secure the signatures for the request.

After the petition was circulated by A. Platt, A. Thorspecken and W. C. Buderns and was signed by one hundred and five persons, a majority of the taxable inhabitants of Grand Island, it was presented to the Board of County Commissioners of Hall County on November 25, 1872. It was a request that they "declare the town of Grand Island a body politic and corporate by the name and style of Grand Island," and that "R. C. Jordan, John Wallichs, A. Thorspecken, H. N. Chapman, and Christian Wasmer be appointed trustees of said town." Action was taken by the commissioners at Grand Island December 10, 1872. They ordered "that the town of Grand Island be declared incorporated by the name and style of 'Grand Island' with the following limits: The northwest \( \frac{1}{4} \) and
the northwest \( \frac{1}{4} \) of the southwest \( \frac{1}{4} \) of section fifteen (15) and the northeast \( \frac{1}{4} \) and north \( \frac{1}{2} \) of southeast \( \frac{1}{4} \) and northeast \( \frac{1}{4} \) of southwest \( \frac{1}{4} \) of section sixteen (16) in township eleven (11) north of range nine (9) west."
The commissioners also granted the request for the appointment of trustees. Those present were Edward Hooper, George Cornelius and A. Jackson.

The first city ordinance had two sections: one showing that the city was duly organized and incorporated on the tenth of December, 1872 under chapter fifty-three (53) of the revised statutes of Nebraska as a city of the second class; second, dividing the city into two wards. The second ordinance, approved February 4, 1873 fixed the time for the regular meeting of the council; the third, of the same date, regulated the police force of the city of Grand Island, their duties to be assigned by the city marshal; the fourth was with regard to law and order; the fifth also February 4, 1873 appointed a fire warden.

The city officers for 1872 were the board of trustees as named in the petition and John Wallich as clerk part of the time and W. C. Buderns the remainder of the time. The election of 1873 resulted as follows: mayor, John Wallich; police judge, W. H. Platt; marshall, J. O. Adams; clerk, J. E. White; council, Louis Engle, H. P. Handy, J. C. Cornelius, and H. N. Chapman.
The city of Grand Island was incorporated with a mayor and city council. The city was first divided into two wards and to 1879 there were four councilmen. In that year the city was divided into three wards and there were six councilmen. In 1885 the city was divided into four wards and has had eight councilmen from that year on. The officers of a city of the second class were: a clerk at $300. per year; a city engineer at $3.50 per day (not to exceed $300. per year); city attorney at $250. per year; policeman at $50 per month; a mayor and council to serve without compensation. Since Grand Island became a city of the first class in 1890, the mayor and the council have also received a small compensation; the mayor receives $500. per year and each councilman $200. per year.

T. J. Ellsberry is mayor; and Chris Michelson, E. Justice, Charles Haux, Otto Giesenhagen, Walter Peterson, William F. Krehmke, William R. Gilchrist, George Mildenstein are members of the city council. Henry E. Clifford is city clerk; W. R. King, treasurer; William J. Wilkinson, police judge.

The following have been mayors of Grand Island:
John Wallicks 1873; Edward Hooper 1874-5; James Cleary 1876; W. N. Platt 1877; C. D. M. Washburn 1878-80; J. L. Means 1881; Michael Murphy 1882-3; J. E. White 1884; J. L. Means 1885-6; W. H. Platt 1887-90; H. D. Boyden 1891-2;

1—Grand Island Times, March 27, 1879.
William M. Gaddes 1893-4; W. H. Thompson 1895-8; W. H. Platt 1899-1900; James Cleary 1901-4; H. Schuff 1905-10; Charles G. Ryan 1911-6; J. L. Cleary 1917-21; T. J. Elsberry 1921-.

At a vote taken October 13, 1868 Grand Island was chosen as the county seat of Hall County. The first sessions of Court were held in Michelson's building. When the Liederkranz or "Singing Society" was organized and erected a building in 1871 on the same block where its present building stands, it permitted the court to hold its sessions there. The Union Pacific Railroad Company originally donated a block on the north side of the track for a court house but as there were more citizens on the south side the U.P.R.R. Co. donated to the city Block 84. After the presentation of a petition for the County Commissioners to call an election to vote bonds for the erection of a court house, the election was called and bonds for $15,000 were voted on February 15, 1872. The contract for a building was given, July 17, 1872 for $16,500 with Ed Hooper as superintendent of construction. It was a brick structure 44 feet by 60 feet and was occupied for the first time June 28, 1873. On November 5, 1872 bonds to the amount of $5,000 were issued to complete the court house. At a special election called August 8, 1901 bonds were issued to construct a
new courthouse. The bonds were voted and the building was erected, not on Block 84 where the old court house stood, but on the block at First and Locust Streets. The building was completed and ready for use in 1904. The total cost was $131,142.51.

Grand Island township was formed out of the North, the West and the East precincts and, so, they ceased to exist in consequence of the township organization. Grand Island City comprised one township as the law provided that a town of "3000 or over shall be a separate township of its own." Ordinarily a township is organized to give the people a more extended self government, and they elect their officers and carry on their own affairs. But this was not needed for a city like Grand Island, as it had its city organization instead; so, only a township supervisor and an assessor were appointed.

The United States Land Office was opened in Grand Island December, 1869. During the first year or 1870 there were 77 homesteads and 137 pre-emptions filed while during the fourth year or 1873 there were 1,552 homesteads and 723 pre-emptions. These figures were taken from the report of E. W. Arnold, register. William Anyan was at the head of the Land Office for the year 1879 and his report showed the total number of acres disposed

1-Grand Island Daily Independent, May 17, 1884.
of by homesteads, by timber-act or by pre-emption was 454,598 acres. The business of the office in the early period of the history of this section was very great and it meant much to the little town of Grand Island.  

The office was closed December 31, 1893 and was consolidated with the Lincoln Nebraska Land Office January 1, 1894.

1-History of Hall Co., p.194.
CHAPTER III
CHURCHES, SCHOOLS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

As Grand Island has developed, the number of church organizations has increased. The First Methodist church is the oldest church organization in Grand Island. It was organized in 1867. Two lots were donated to it by the Union Pacific Railroad and the building was erected in 1874 on the north lot. The corner lot was sold to the city, which later erected the city hall there. The church was dedicated in September, 1874 by Bishop Bowman and Rev. A. G. White, district superintendent. Rev. J. H. Stett has been pastor since 1919.

1

The First Presbyterian church was organized in 1869 by Rev. Sheldon Jackson, State Missionary under the Presbytery of the Missouri River, with five charter members. Their first building was a school house which was purchased by them and then remodeled. Their present church, built at West Second and Wheeler, was dedicated in 1904.

2

The First Baptist church was organized in 1870 by Rev. J. N. Webb, State Missionary for Nebraska, with five members. The first pastor was Rev. J. J. Pace. After a few years when the membership had increased, a church building was erected at the cost of $2800. In

1888 it was sold to the Seven Day Adventists; and a
new building was erected at Seventh and Sycamore at a
cost of $12,000 and was dedicated October 1888 while
Rev. Terry was pastor. In December, 1922 lots at the
corner of Tenth and Eddy were purchased for $5000 and
a large building, adequate for the needs of the growing
church, will be built there. Rev. A. C. Hull is the
present pastor.

The Episcopal church called "St. Stephen's" was
organized in 1871 with ten members. A church building
was dedicated September 3, 1871. In July 1889 the new
church building was completed.

The Evangelical Trinity church was organized in
1878 and a building erected the same year. In 1896 their
new church building at the corner of Vine and Second was
dedicated. It has a seating capacity of five hundred.
Its pipe organ was the first to be installed in Grand
Island.

The Evangelical Lutheran, St. Paul's church,
at Second and Cedar Streets was dedicated March 14, 1886.

The Congregational church was organized June 16,
1887, and Rev. D. W. Comstock was the first pastor. The
church building, erected on the corner of Sixth and Kim-
bball, was dedicated January 24, 1888. Rev. C. J. Christ-
iansen is the present pastor.

2-History of Hall Co., p.342-3.
The Second Methodist church was organized in 1887 and a church building was erected at Sixth and Sycamore.

The First Christian church was organized in the nineties. In 1895 it bought the church edifice of the Immanuel Baptist church on the south side.

The Catholic church erected a building in 1877. The new church building was dedicated July 7, 1889.

From the very first the people of Grand Island were resolved that their children should have an education. In 1868 the School District Number 2, known as the School District of Grand Island, was organized and Fred Wiebe, Henry Koenig, and W. H. Platt were chosen as board members. The first school building, a one-story frame structure, 16 feet by 20 feet, was erected by the residents themselves, who donated their services, the school district furnishing the lumber and the nails. This building still stands on Second Street and is used as a place to sell auto accessories. At first only a common grade school was conducted with one teacher. In 1870 a new one-story frame building was erected on Block 81, which was donated by the Union Pacific Railroad Co. The building cost $2,895. George McKenzie was the "principal" of the school. In 1873 Grand Island was included with the surrounding district, and had a common school

1-History of Hall Co., p.342-3.
2-Reminiscences of O. A. Abbott.
3-Grand Island Times, March 18, 1874; Jan. 31, 1878.
with an enrollment of one hundred and fifty-six children; there was a principal and an assistant. In 1874 the school building was enlarged and three teachers were necessary. In 1878 Henry Garn was "principal" of the public schools with forty-two pupils in his department; Mrs. Laine, first intermediate with forty pupils; Miss B. Ferguson, second intermediate with forty-five pupils; Miss E. Smith, first primary, sixty-two pupils; Miss M. Butterfield, second primary, forty-nine pupils. The population of Grand Island at this time was nearly two thousand and the total school enrollment two hundred thirty-eight. The school rooms were overcrowded and were without the necessary accommodations for carrying on the work properly. On April 15, 1878, the School District No. 2, Hall County (Grand Island) voted to have school for nine months, and to levy twelve mills for carrying on the school work. In the summer bonds were issued for a new school building to be erected on Block 81. The contract was given for the building complete with heating apparatus for $17,000. N. Newcombs was chosen superintendent of construction at $4.00 per day. Since Block 81 had been donated to the district by the Union Pacific, the new building was called "Dodge" in honor of Gen. Grenville Dodge who had been interested in the route of the railroad.

1-Grand Island Times, March 18, 1874; Jan. 31, 1878. 2-Grand Island Times, June 28, 1878.
The wing of the old school building was moved to Block 20 on the north side of the railroad and was used for a primary department; while the main part of the building was disposed of to the Presbyterians for $500, and was converted into a church after being moved to Second Street. In 1883-4 the question of adequate room for the increased number of children again came up, and the 1 Dodge Building was enlarged at a cost of $7,600. A new building was erected on Block 20 on Fifth Street where the primary school of that side was held. This school was called the "Howard Building" in honor of Blake C. Howard, master mechanic of the Union Pacific shops, who was interested in good schools. The contract was given to P. Berkenbeuel for $22,900. In 1886 the Wasmer school building was erected on West Division at a cost of $5,125. It was named for Mr. Wasmer, who laid out the addition. The Evans building was formerly a part of the Dodge building moved to the Howard site and then on to Block 7 in the Evans addition in 1884. The Platt building, named in honor of N. Platt, a board member at that time, was erected in 1888 at the corner of Cleburn and Seventh Street. The Handy School is located on North Madison between Fifth and Sixth; the Lincoln School on Eighth and Beal Streets; the Jefferson building on West Jefferson and West Seventh Streets; West

1-Evening News, June 23, 1883.  
2-Evening News, June 23, 1883.
Lawn at "Five Points." Additions have been made to many of the buildings. The Grand Island High School, a building 140 feet by 84 feet, was completed in January 1908, at a cost of $56,627. It has two stories and a basement. It contains recitation rooms, chemistry and physics laboratories, lecture rooms, offices, an auditorium, and a gymnasium.

The enrollment of school children for 1878 was 238; for 1879, 525; for 1880, 667; for 1881, 835; for 1882, 939; for 1883, 974; for 1884, 1046; for 1885, 1160. From that time on there was a steady increase until there were enrolled for, 1915, 2,587; for 1916, 2,667; for 1917, 2,819; for 1918, 3,039; for 1922 the enrollment reached 3,433.

In June 1883 the first class of high school graduates held their commencement exercises. They were: May Lamb, Effie Taylor, P. S. Heffleman, Mary Hurford and Mrs. George Bell. The graduating class of 1922 had 107 members. Grand Island in the beginning had one teacher for her school; in 1887 there were twenty-six; in 1922 there was a teaching force of over one hundred. Robt. J. Barr was elected as principal of the Grand Island Schools August 7, 1882 and was superintendent until 1922—a period of forty years. C. Ray Gates was elected as superintendent in 1922.

1—Grand Island Daily Independent, July 27, 1885; July 5, 1887.
Besides the public schools Grand Island has two colleges. The Grand Island Business and Normal College was started in 1885 by Professors Hargis, Rucker, and Evans; but the work was soon left in charge of Professor and Mrs. Hargis. The growth of the institution was slow but steady. In the course of a few years it occupied the upper floor of a building at Third and Spruce. In recent years it has occupied rooms in the five-story building at South Locust street. There is a large faculty and several hundred students.

The Grand Island College is situated in the northwest part of the city. In 1887 the Baptist State Convention met in York, Neb. and located the State College there on condition that it complete the terms of the proposition by January 1, 1888; if not, the college was to be founded at Grand Island if it met the demands. L. M. Bryan, chairman of committee on Education and Public Buildings of the Grand Island Board of Trade was interested in getting the college located at Grand Island. In June, 1892 Articles of Incorporation were filed. The college opened that year with Prof. A. M. Wilson acting as president. In 1893 Dr. George Sutherland was elected president and held that position for eighteen years. The following have been president:

1-Grand Island Daily Independent, June 6, 1885.
2-Grand Island Daily Independent, Dec. 31, 1887.
since Dr. Sutherland's presidency: 1911-3, Dr. L. A. Garrison; 1913-6, Dr. George W. Taft; 1916-8, Dr. E. F. Jordan; 1919-20, Dr. A. T. Belknap; 1921---, President John Mason Wells. The college campus consists of twenty-five acres. There are four buildings: the Administration Building, containing twenty-seven rooms, erected in 1883 at a cost of $40,000; Hibbs Hall, the girls' dormitory with fifty-five rooms, gift of John A. Hibbs of Omaha, erected in 1904 at a cost of $22,000; Grand Island Hall, the boys' dormitory with room for fifty boys, erected at a cost of $16,000; power house. The college has a library of about 10,000 volumes. The college offers two years of academy work, and four years of college work, including courses in science, philosophy, Bible, mathematics and language. During the history of the school about four thousand students have been enrolled.

In the early history of Grand Island an attempt was made to interest the citizens of Grand Island in a library. In 1878 plans were made for forming a library association and a committee was appointed to raise funds. But when it could not raise by subscription the $400 necessary to begin the work, the matter was dropped temporarily. In 1880 a one mill levy was made for the purchase of books. On May 23, 1884 a Library Board

1-Grand Island Times, Jan. 3, 1878.
2-Grand Island (Weekly) Independent, May 31, 1884.
was appointed; it met August 4, 1884 and made by-laws and regulations. In the fall of that year a shipment of four hundred volumes was made for the library, which was in the office of H. E. Clifford over the First National Bank. The library was to be open Wednesday and Saturday, afternoon and evening. Mr. Clifford was the librarian and received nine dollars a month. The members of the library board were: president, C. F. Bentley; recording secretary, Mrs. O. A. Abbott. In July, 1886 the library was moved to the Y. M. C. A. rooms and Miss Alice Hurford was elected librarian. The officers of the library board elected July 1, 1887 were: president, C. F. Bentley; vice president, Charles Rief; secretary, Nathan Platt. On April 27, 1888 after sealed bids had been made for librarian and room for the library, which was to be open six hours each day, the offer of C. D. Irvine was accepted at $350 per year. On May 6, 1888 the secretary of the board was allowed $1.00 per night for his services. On Nov. 7, 1888 R. J. Barr was allowed $2.00 a day for fifty-three days for cataloguing books. On June 25, 1889, Mrs. C. D. Irvine was elected librarian at $20.00 per month, the board to pay for the room and lights. On July 24, 1890 two rooms in the City Hall were given over for the library and $200. allowed toward furnishing them. The

1-Taken from Library Records.
total number of books was then 1,750 and in 1898 was 4,685. After being librarian for twelve years, Mrs. Irvine resigned May 4, 1900 and Miss Clara Body was elected at $35.00 per month. The total number of books May 31, 1901 was 7,106 and periodicals 27.

The question of a site for a library building had come up many times and in 1902 several different lots were offered. On April 27, 1902 a letter was received from Mr. Andrew Carnegie offering $20,000 for a public library provided the city council would guarantee a yearly income of $2,000 and donate a site for a library building. On May 30, 1902 the board accepted as a site the west 1/3 of lot 3 and all of lot 4 in Block 81, original town of Grand Island, or 68 feet by 132 feet, at the corner of Walnut and Second Street. In 1902 at a gathering of the citizens of Grand Island the ground for the Carnegie Library was broken by President Roosevelt upon his visit to the city. The building was completed in 1905. Miss Daisy Houck has been librarian since 1910. Mrs. J.A. Castello has been first assistant for a number of years. On May 31, 1922 there were in the library 7,829 volumes besides the government documents, and 97 periodicals. The report on circulation showed for adults 22,831 volumes and for juveniles 12,219 volumes.

The State Soldiers' and Sailors' Home was located in 1887 two and one-half miles north of Grand Island.
Three hundred and twenty acres were purchased for $25,600. The corner stone was laid Oct. 20, 1887. The ceremony was carried out under the auspices of the Lyon Post No. 11, G.A.R., who had worked to have the law passed creating the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home of Nebraska at Grand Island. Under the corner stone was deposited a box containing copies of the Grand Island newspapers. The "Independent" contained a program of the exercises of the day, a copy of the law creating the home with a short history of its passage. The first building was dedicated June 26, 1888. It is 160 feet by 90 feet and is three stories above the basement. The basement contains store room, dining room, kitchen, pantry, cold storage room, baggage room. On the second floor are the head-quarters, commandant's consultation room, large dining hall, small dining room, library, reception hall. The third and fourth stories are used for sleeping apartments. The building was erected at a cost of $45,000. In 1896 an addition was built at a cost of $12,000. The building has steam heat and electric lights. The hospital, built northwest of the main building is 120 feet by 30 feet. Adjoining the main building are several small buildings. A new building, a hospital, was completed in 1923.

1-Grand Island Daily Independent, Oct. 21, 1887.
The Soldiers' and Sailors' Home has a power house, laundry, conservatory and some other buildings. There are now six hundred and forty acres in the track of land. The home is of great benefit to Grand Island as much of the supplies used there are furnished by the stores in the city.

From its earliest history Grand Island has been interested in various kinds of organizations. The Liederkranz was organized in 1869 and in the fall of 1873 a dramatic club was organized. On Sept. 26, 1875 the "Eintucht" a "Ladies' society to develop singing and sociability" was organized. In 1877 the "Amateur Opera Club" was organized and gave its first entertainment, "Queen Esther," and a little later presented "The Bohemian Girl." A city band was organized in 1877.

The Liederkranz or "Song Society" for the "promotion of musical and social culture" was established in 1869 by John Wallichs. The Union Pacific Railroad Co. granted two lots to it; the first hall was completed in 1871. From its beginning the society took an active part in launching public affairs. School exhibits were given in the building, and committees on civic affairs met there to discuss their plans. The normal

1-The Times, Nov. 5, 1873.
2-The Times, Nov. 23, 1877.
3-Patterson's centennial address in 1873.
4-The Times, June 21, 1877.
The institute, which met in Grand Island, June 1877 and which had as its speakers S. R. Thompson, State Supt., and Dr. Robt Curry, president of the state normal, held some of its sessions in the Liederkranz. In 1879 it held its tenth anniversary. In 1880 the building was enlarged to seventy-three feet in length. In 1912 the present building was erected. The Liederkrantz Society has made itself felt in Grand Island by showing an interest in vital questions and by opening its building for public gatherings.

In the fall of 1877 the Agricultural Fair was held in Grand Island. The vegetables, fruit and grain, that were displayed, showed that Grand Island and the surrounding country was very productive. It was also an incentive to many people to set out fruit trees on the farms and on the town lots.

1-The Times, Nov. 7, 1879.
CHAPTER IV

BUSINESS ENTERPRISES

Grand Island very early felt the need of the press. The first weekly newspaper, "The Platte Valley Independent" was established in Grand Island in 1870, the first number being published July 2. Mrs. T. B. Eberhart had charge of the paper for Seth P. Mobley. After their marriage in 1871, it was published under the name of Mr. and Mrs. S. P. Mobley, who conducted the paper until 1883 when it was sold to Fred Hedde. He had in the same year bought out the "Anti-Monopolist" published for the first time that year. Mr. Hedde united these two weeklies under the name "The Independent." In 1884 he established "The Grand Island Daily Independent," which has been published from that time under the same name. It is in a large building called the "Independent Building," and it has a very large circulation.

"The Grand Island Times" was established in 1873. Volume I, number 1 was published Wednesday, July 16, 1873 by C. F. R. Williams. By 1877 it was an up to date weekly of four pages, giving the latest news in our land, and painting vivid scenes of Russia, Turkey and Servia.

1-History of Hall County, p.386.
2-Grand Island Times, July 16, 1873.
"The Times" building was at the northeast corner of Pine and Third Streets. In 1880 "The Times" was changed to an eight page paper of seven columns.

"The Daily Evening Times" was published first on Saturday, October 4, 1873 by C. P. R. Williams, at fifteen cents a copy. It was a four page paper about one-half the size of "The Grand Island Times."

"The Evening News" was a daily published by W. H. Weeks with the first issue June 11, 1883. It sold for ten cents a copy, and was then the only daily newspaper west of Fremont.

"The Grand Island Democrat" was founded as the "Hall County Democrat" in 1875. It ceased publication in 1883, was revived a few years later, but eventually was merged with "The Free Press," a paper established about 1883 by the Augustine Bros.

"The Grand Island Herald" was an outgrowth of the union of the "Free Press" and the "Anzeiger-Herald" in 1913.

The "State Central Bank" was the first bank of Grand Island and was established in 1871 with $45,000 capital stock and with H. A. Koenig as president, and D. Heffleman as cashier. This bank had as its successor,

2-History of Hall County, p. 400.
3-The Times (Supplement) Dec. 23, 1880.
the "Citizens National Bank" which in 1887 had a capital stock of $60,000. H. A. Koenig was still president of the bank. It was located in the Koenig Building at the corner of Third and Locust, where the State Bank of Grand Island is now located. Although it did not stand the panic of 1893, yet it served its purpose well, especially when there were only few banks in the whole section.

The "Grand Island Banking Company" was incorporated in January 1880 and had a capital stock of $40,000. The president was C. P. Packer and cashier, George B. Bell. A building was erected on Third Street between Locust and Pine. In 1884 the capital stock was increased to $110,000. About 1910 the name was changed to "The Grand Island National Bank". About 1915 the bank was moved to 302 West Third, where it is now located.

"The First National Bank" received its charter August 22, 1882 and started with a capital stock of $50,000, which was increased to $100,000 in 1885. C. F. Bentley was cashier until his death July 15, 1908. S. N. Wolbach was the first president and has remained at the head of the bank through out its history. The bank building is located on 112 West Third Street.

The "Commercial State Bank" was incorporated July 2, 1901 with a capital stock of $30,000. This was increased in 1906 to $100,000 and in 1917 to $150,000.

1-Grand Island Daily Independent, July 12, 1884.
The "State Bank of Grand Island" was organized in 1914 with a capital stock of $50,000. The bank is located on the northwest corner of Locust and Third Streets.

The "Nebraska State Bank" was organized in 1917.

The "Peoples' State Bank" on the north side at Fourth and Pine was organized in 1919 with a capital stock of $65,000.
CHAPTER V
CIVIC IMPROVEMENTS

The early citizens of Grand Island were interested in the beautifying of their city and kept Arbor Day, the third Wednesday in April. The kind of trees that the early settlers found would grow here were: cottonwood, soft or silver maple, ash-leaved maple, box elder, white elm, white ash, black walnut, black and white willow, native red cedar, honey locust, coffee bean tree and some fruit trees. Those that were planted in the early days and had stood the test were: thirty varieties of apples with the Ben Davis at the head, early Richmond cherries, wild goose plums, the minor plum, peaches, and the corn grape vine.

The company for the horse car street railway system was organized in 1887. The street cars were used on first Street as far as Pine. The cars were first class with the best of horses that traveled at the limit of speed set by the city ordinance, eight miles per hour. The railway was soon extended a distance of three and one-half miles. The company was composed of: O. A. Abbott, P. R. Alter, H. A. Koenig, William Hagge, A. H. Baker, O. B. Thompson and C. W. Scarff. The car route first went from the Soldiers' Home, to Eddy south across the

Union Pacific tracks to Third Street, then east to Oak Street, then northeast to the Burlington Depot. Another route turned south at Third and Cleburn and ran to Second Street and on west to the sugar beet factory and then back east through the business part of the city. A third route came in from the west on Koenig Street and then north on Locust Street. This system of street cars was used for about ten years. During the business strain that came in the early nineties the company stopped operation and the tracks were taken up and the material used elsewhere. By 1919 nearly all the streets of the business section were paved, Third, Second, First, Division, Koenig, besides Pine, Locust, Wheeler on the south. While on the north Pine and Walnut were paved to Tenth; Tenth and Eddy were also paved.

The paving of the streets did much toward having the "Auto-Bus" system installed in Grand Island. A beginning was made in the fall of 1921 when two "buses" were built by the Green Co. By 1923 there were four going regularly to Lincoln School, Jefferson School, Grand Island College and the Soldiers' Home.

In 1879 the city council called a special election for April 15, to issue $2,500 bonds to lay pipes in the city to furnish water in case of fire. These pipes were to connect with the main pipe of the Union

1-The Times, Jan. 26, 1879.
Pacific water works at a point near the main track in the center of Locust Street. The distance of the pipes laid was to be 1920 feet. The election was held April 15, 1879 and with the result that the lines were laid. After the new water main on Locust Street was completed and the ditch had been filled, there came a very heavy rain. When a team of mules was driven across they sank to their backs in the sand.

In 1880 the water works had its supply from a system of twelve drive wells. The tank into which the water was pumped had a capacity of 50,000 gallons, and had an elevation of forty feet. There was about one mile of pipe; the large main was six inches and the small one, four inches. The daily capacity of the plant was 500,000 gallons, while the average daily consumption of water was 200,000 gallons. In 1885 bonds were again issued for water works to the amount of $35,000. The work was begun with contractors Messrs. A. L. Strang and Company. In this year also the question of erecting a building on Pine and Second Street came up. It was to include water works, engine and machinery, and a stand pipe one hundred feet high, twelve feet in diameter, and set on a ten foot base of solid masonry. Its capacity was to be 85,000 gallons. It was erected

1-The Times, April 15, 1879.
2-The Times, July 22, 1880.
3-Grand Island Daily Independent, Nov. 24, 1885.
4-Grand Island Daily Independent, July 25, 1885.
in 1889. In 1898 there were two Knowles pumps each having a capacity of a million gallon daily. For the water supply there were thirty-six two inch wells and three six inch wells. The power was furnished by two boilers of forty horse power each. At that time there were sixteen miles of water main from four to ten inches.

The annual report of Commissioner C. W. Burdick for the year 1922 showed that the business of the water work system had increased. The average daily water consumption per capita was 126 gallons; while for the year 344,415,045 gallons were pumped at the city water works which was an increase of 5.9 per cent over the year 1921. The estimate made of the amount of water pumped by the city plant for 1922 was as follows: "would more than fill a ditch five feet wide and five feet deep, extending from here (Grand Island) to Chicago." 6,996 feet of six and eight inch pipe were laid during the year, making the total length of water mains in Grand Island at the beginning of the year 1923, measure thirty-four miles and two hundred feet. The number of consumers was 2943 which was a gain of 272 over the preceding year. Nine fire hydrants were added, making a total of 193 hydrants for Grand Island.

1-Independent Souvenir, 1898.
The Fire Company was organized on June 8, 1874, and the Hook and Ladder Company in August 1874. In 1876 there were twenty-five members of the department. In 1880 the fire department had one chemical engine on wheels; eight chemical hand extinguishers; one hook and ladder truck; two hose carts with seven hundred feet of hose. The total value of the fire apparatus was $10,000.

The fire department consisted of three companies manned by fifty-seven volunteers. Other companies were formed as the population of the city increased. After 1889 when the City Hall was erected, they had the fire apparatus there.

The sewer system was built in 1889-90. The size of the pipe in the main section was twenty-four inches in diameter. In 1919 the city voted $20,000 to construct several main sewers with many laterals, so that as many lots as possible within the city limits would have sewerage facilities.

1-The Times, July 22, 1880.
CHAPTER VI
RAILROAD FACILITIES

Grand Island has become what she is because of her advantage in having had three railroads and also being a division point on a through main-line system. The first railroad was the Union Pacific which came in 1866 before the town was platted. The railroad reached what is now Grand Island July 8, 1866 and the first construction train came in the same day. The Union Pacific has been a great factor in the history of the town. It has branches in many directions. The branch from Grand Island to St. Paul a distance of 22.23 miles was completed in 1880. It was extended to North Loup, a distance of 26.63 miles, in 1882, and to Ord 11.91 miles farther in 1886. The main line and its branches gave a large section of the country in direct contact with Grand Island.

October 25, 1873 was the beginning of the incorporation called the "St. Joseph and Grand Island Railroad Company." Bonds to the amount of $90,000 were voted by Hall County at a special election; bonds were also issued by the City of Grand Island on December 4, 1873. On May 27, 1879 the voters of Grand Island voted

1-History of Hall County, p.326.
2-Grand Island Times, Oct. 23, 1873.
$75,000 bonds for the Hastings and Grand Island Railroad Company. In July 1879 the work of construction was begun. Four car-loads of horses and mules and five car-loads of wagons and scrapers were shipped in for the beginning of the work. The St. Joseph and Grand Island Railroad was the second line built, but it is now managed the same as the Union Pacific.

The Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad Company took into its consolidation in 1880 the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad Company. On June 8, 1884 it was extended from Aurora, Nebraska to Grand Island. At that time it gave the city three railroads, for then the St. Joseph and Grand Island Railroad was not under the Union Pacific System.

The railroads helped to make Grand Island a commercial and manufacturing city as it not only gave an opportunity to compete with the neighboring towns, but also opened up trade with the central portion of the state and with the rapidly developing territory in the northwest. Grand Island is centrally located. The Union Pacific connects it with the East and with the West. Together with the Burlington it opens up the southeast and the northwest. The St. Joseph and Grand Island Railroad connects the city with other states in a southerly direction. This connection with a large extent of

2-History of Hall County, p. 326.
territory gives the advantage of trade in all directions. It has made Grand Island a railroad center and the third largest city in Nebraska, for it now has a population of 13,960. Besides the train facilities and the opening up of territory for commercial relations the number of railroad employees, who have made their home in Grand Island, has had no small part in its history. The families connected with the railroads have meant much to the merchants, for their wants had to be supplied.

In 1879 the Union Pacific made Grand Island a freight division. It had a round house and a new depot, and furnished the supply of water for the city.

The significance of the Union Pacific Railroad to Grand Island in its early history was shown by the number of cars received and forwarded at Grand Island. In June 1879, there were received: 35 cars loaded with merchandise; 45 with lumber; 50 with wagons; 15 with agricultural implements; 48 with sundries; 4 with horses; 349 with railroad material; 117 with coal; 8 with lime, making a total of 621 cars.

The freight handled by the Union Pacific Railroad during the year ending June 1, 1885 was 83,022 tons or 8,302 cars received over the Union Pacific and St. Joe and Western Railroad and 3,302 cars forwarded, or a total

1-Census, 1920.
2-Grand Island Times, Oct. 9, 1879.
3-Grand Island Times, July 6, 1879.
4-Grand Island Daily Independent, June 2, 1885.
of 11,603 cars which would "make a continuation of cars sixty-six miles in length, or five hundred eighty trains of twenty cars each." The receipts for freight business done in the city over the Union Pacific during the month of September, 1885 amounted to $29,013, the weight of commercial freight being 10,893,352; during October the receipts were $34,266.64; the weight of freight 14,106,944. These figures did not include the Burlington or the St. Joe. The railroad business of the Union Pacific for 1886 showed that the number of cars shipped was 3,384, cars received, 7,071 besides 2,156,073 received in other than car lots. For the Burlington line there were: cars shipped 4,862, and cars received, 8,645.

1-Grand Island Times, July 6, 1879.
2-Grand Island Daily Independent, Nov. 25, 1885.
3-Grand Island Daily Independent, Feb. 1, 1887.
CHAPTER VII
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The industrial life of Grand Island began back in the old settlement down on the river where James Michelson had his blacksmith shop and did carriage and wagon work also. Another shop was opened in 1861 by Edward Hooper. There was also a sawmill that was very productive.

In 1867 the State Central Flouring Mill was established by Henry A. Koenig. In 1873 a new enterprise was started in the form of a brick kiln, one mile from Grand Island by Oliver McIntyre. The dark yellow clay made the brick after burning a deep red color. Eight arches containing eleven thousand brick each could be burned; it consumed thirty-three cords of wood in burning. The clay was ground by horse-power in a square gum pit, and moulded six bricks to the mold. It was one of the first successful ventures in the state. Many attempts were not successful because of the cracking of the brick while drying. Mr. McIntyre knew how to make his bricks firm through "combustion of the chemical qualities of the clay." In the summer of 1878 a foundry was established in connection with the blacksmith and wagon shop of Hooper and Ferguson. On

1-Grand Island Times, Aug. 13, 1873.
2-Grand Island Times, Aug. 15, 1878.
October 2, 1878 there was the first casting of iron in the foundry and also the first work of this kind done in the city. The foundry was of great advantage to the people of the community, as they got the extra pieces of machinery without extra expense of freight or express. Many things were made especially for the patrons here. Among these was a big doorplate, measuring 8 feet by 11 feet and weighing a ton, which was made for the Wolbach building.

In 1879 a new grain elevator was put up by Thomas and Sears on the south side of the track. It was 20 feet by 40 feet and was 56 feet high, to the top of the cupola. It was two stories and a basement and had a storage capacity of 25,000 bushels, and a working capacity of 400 bushels or one car load an hour. In 1884 Wiseman's elevator was erected 32 feet square and 58 feet high. The engine was a 10 horse-power one. The elevator contained fifteen bins with a capacity of 20,000 bushels.

In 1886 Ott's ice house was built. It was 60 feet by 120 feet and held 4,500 tons of ice.

In 1887 the building for the canning factory was completed at a cost of $23,000. The main building was three stories 100 feet by 138 feet; the process

1-Grand Island Times, Aug. 5, 1880.
2-Grand Island Times, Sept. 11, 1879.
3-Grand Island Daily Independent, July 7, 1887.
4-Grand Island Daily Independent, Aug. 11, 1887.
building was 30 feet by 43 feet; the boiler and engine room 30 feet by 40 feet; a husking shed 33 feet by 144 feet. Over 1,400 feet of piping was laid to connect the factory with the water works. The factory had a capacity for canning from twenty to thirty thousand cans of corn per day, using forty to fifty tons of corn daily. It had one hundred and twenty employees with James J. Rourke as superintendent. Forty-one men prepared the corn for the elevator, and were paid 3 cents per bushel for husking. After the corn was cut from the cob, it was carried to vats below and filled into cans and then sealed and soldered and packed into crates, five hundred cans to the crate. These were taken to the process room where there were six large cooking tanks. After being cooked from thirty to forty-five minutes by the steam process, the cans were cooled and then labeled by girls, who received 50 cents per 1,000 cans. The corn used in the factory was raised in the vicinity of Grand Island. In 1893 the factory closed down but reopened in 1903 and has since been running on about the same lines as before.

In November 1879 a Union Pacific rail mill was at work sawing and punching rails. The engine was a 130 horse-power and the saw was a 40 inch one, at 3,300 revolutions per minute.

1—Grand Island Times, Nov. 13, 1879.
In 1880 the news was received that the machine shops would be located here. In the summer after a survey was made, and the site staked out, the foundation for the shops was laid, the machine shop being erected first. It was under F. Farming, the engineer in charge of the construction with eighty men working under him. The shop was 100 feet by 150 feet and with walls 21 feet high; the peak of the roof was 46 feet with a 7 foot ventilator above. It contained three pits of 118 feet; twenty-two iron columns supported the shafting; there were four double doors on the west side giving entrance to the building, and fifty-seven windows; the chimney was 75 feet high and was 10 feet at the base. The diagram of the shops as they would be when completed showed: coal chute (31 x 175); machine shop (100 x 150); blacksmith shop (75 x 150); oil room (40 x 60); car erecting shop (100 x 300); car machine shop (100 x 50); with engine room additional (50 x 50); car paint shop (50 x 300); car shop (50 x 300). The shops were completed in 1881 and covered about eighty acres. The shops now are about the same as when finished with these exceptions: the oil room was destroyed by fire, and a much larger one is in the process of construction; the old coal chute has been discarded and a new automatic coal chute of 500 tons capacity has been

1-Grand Island Times, Aug. 16, 1880.
installed; the old round house had twenty-five stalls; it was reduced to twenty-three stalls and a new round house erected with fifteen stalls in addition. On an average throughout the year about four hundred and fifty men are employed in the shops.

In 1887 arrangements were made for stockyards to be erected in the west part of Grand Island at the junction of the Union Pacific and St. Joe and Grand Island Railroads. Two side tracks were constructed and about ten acres of yards laid off with sheds. About 1908 the yards were moved to the eastern part of the city. Hundreds of cars of cattle, sheep, hogs and horses are handled there every year.

Another industry that has meant much to Grand Island is that of the sugar beet. In 1887 tests were made of the soil and it was found that it would be adapted to sugar beet culture. Seeds were imported from France and Germany and were planted in 1888. They grew so well that a number of the enterprising citizens of Grand Island decided to form a company to build a sugar beet factory. They felt that the venture would be successful since some of the men knew from experience in the factories in Europe how to raise the beets and how to make the sugar. A site was chosen for the factory in the western part of the city and the ground broken December 9, 1889.

1-Grand Island Daily Independent, Aug. 6, 1887.
2-Buechler, Barr and Stough, p. 250.
The main factory building is 292 feet long, 85 feet wide and 50 feet high. There are other buildings: the engine house, the lime house, and the beet sheds. The machinery for the factory was shipped from Germany and France. The engine used now is a 24 x 36 Allis-Chalmers. From 7,000 to 8,000 tons of coal are used per year and approximately 5,000 tons of lime rock and 500 tons of coke in making gas.

The work was undertaken by the Oxnard Company which was succeeded by the American Beet Sugar Company. The beet sugar industry has been and is still a paying proposition. In 1921, 65,000 tons of beets were used in the making of 150,000 bags of sugar of 100 pounds each. 10,000 tons of beets were raised in the vicinity of Grand Island and were planted and taken care of by foreign labor. They also did the hand-work of thinning, hoeing and topping.

The pulp produced consists of about 50 per cent of the beets that are sliced and is used for the feeding of cattle in the yards of Grand Island. The tops are also used for feed. The beet sugar factory employs two hundred persons in the sugar making season and about thirty for the rest of the year. The season begins about the first of October and lasts nearly one hundred days. The factory gives a sale for the beets that grow near Grand Island. As they are not enough to supply the demand, other beets are shipped in from the irrigated districts farther west.
In March 1884 the Grand Island Creamery Company was formed and "let the contract for the creamery building, machinery and other apparatus." In May, 1884 the creamery owned six acres with good buildings situated on an elevation with a good drain to the east and west. By 1897 the interests had been sold until it was owned by Oscar Roesser, one of the early members of the company. The Grand Island Creamery as now managed was opened in March 1921 with Mr. Stevenson as manager. It has seven cream stations and a large local business, besides that which is conducted by the shippers, who send cream direct from the farm in adjoining places. The sales have averaged from thirty to forty thousand pounds of butter per month. It is marketed in Omaha and Sioux City, being sold direct to the grocery stores there. The ice cream sales during the ice cream season vary from five to seven thousand gallons. It is sold as far west as North Platte and has a wide range east, north and south. The average number of employees is eight or nine in the winter and fourteen in the summer.

The Fairmont Creamery Company bought out in 1907 the plant that was originally the St. Paul Creamery which was established in Grand Island in 1901 on East Fourth Street. The Fairmont Creamery completed a large plant in 1909. It has and is now carrying on a large business, handling cream, milk, eggs and poultry, which comes in

1-Grand Island Daily Independent, March 1884.
from all the western section of the state of Nebraska. The company has had a steady growth. In the year 1922 the plant made three million pounds of butter; gathered one million gallons of milk; dressed one million, two hundred and fifty pounds of poultry; handled forty thousand cases of eggs. The average number of persons on the pay roll is one hundred twenty-five.

In the summer of 1922 the Justice Alexander Company took over the plant of the Raymore Canay Company who had opened up a factory at Fourth and Walnut in 1919. The Justice Alexander Company make many varieties of candy: peanut brittle, taffy, stick candy, caromels and cream chocolates. The factory uses about nine thousand pounds of peanuts a month, besides other kinds of nuts. It makes up seven hundred pounds of corn syrup, and seven hundred pounds of sugar a day during the ordinary season; but during the holiday season it makes up daily twelve hundred pounds of sugar. The factory makes eighteen hundred pounds of chocolate candy every day, and it uses five hundred pounds of coating for that amount of candy. The vats for cooking the candy are made of copper and hold two hundred pounds of the mixture. After the mixture for the peanut brittle has been poured out, it is rolled with a rolling pin weighing seventy pounds. The factory contains a machine for dipping chocolates, a marshmallow beater, an immense taffy puller, and big cutting machines. The factory employs thirty persons the year round.
Grand Island had several wholesale houses before 1887 in wholesale fruit, wholesale paper business, and wholesale creamery supplies. In 1880 the Platt Manufacturing Company came in, also the Minton Woodward Company, a wholesale grocery company, which was followed by the Donald Company. The business in wholesale groceries grew up steadily and gradually, until now it is able to compete with other cities of the state. The Brown Fruit Company began business in 1914. It is now located at Fourth and Pine in a two-story building 50 feet by 140 feet. It sells its produce throughout Nebraska and in many sections of Kansas. The Nebraska Mercantile Company of Grand Island was established in Grand Island April 14, 1905 and was an outgrowth of the Nebraska Mercantile Company of St. Paul. On May 25, 1917 it consolidated with the company of St. Paul.

The Horse and Mule Market has been of importance to Grand Island in that it opened up a market between the east and the west. The shipping facilities of the city made it possible for the business to grow. The Bradstreet and Clemens Company was started in 1903 and their business grew until the period of the war when in 1918 the sales reached the highest mark. The Grand Island Horse and Mule Market was incorporated in 1913. It is still operating with A. C. Scott, president;

1-History of Hall County, p. 254.
John Torpey, secretary and treasurer. Their sales of horses and mules for 1919 amounted to 29,765 head; for 1920, 21,156; for 1921, 9,450. Besides these companies there is the Blain Horse, Mule and Cattle Commission Company with W. I. Blain, president and W. W. Wimberly, secretary and treasurer.

The Gas and Electric Light Company of Grand Island was organized in July, 1884 with George H. Thummel, president. On March 21, 1887 the Grand Island Gas Company was formed with A. S. Maxwell as managing director. In 1895 the Grand Island Light and Power Company was established. In September, 1905 the Grand Island Electric Company was organized with E. E. Sunny, president, and in 1915 the Central Power Company took the place of the Grand Island Electric Company. A few years ago the city established its own light plant, which has been very successful.

From the commissioner's report for 1922 it is seen that the municipal light department had an increase of 13.61 per cent over the year before. The plant generated 4,239,984 K.W.H. which was 508,034 K.W.H. over the year 1921. The lines were extended so that on Jan. 1, 1923, the total number of miles of lines reached forty-nine.

1-History of Hall County, p. 112.
The municipal ice plant began operation in 1921 and put out 4,574 tons of ice that year. In 1922 there was an increase of 637 tons or an increase of 13.9 per cent. The total amount of ice manufactured for the year 1922 was 5,211 tons. Of this amount twenty-six carloads were sold for use outside the city. The plant does not have sufficient storage to manufacture at full capacity during the months when the demand for ice is low, and cannot manufacture to supply the demand in the hot season. Better storage equipment would enable the plant to work more regularly and more efficiently.

The Home Telephone Company was organized in 1903 with Charles T. Ryon as president. Its capital stock increased until in 1910 it was $100,000. Its name was changed to the Grand Island Telephone Company. After a few years it was sold to the Nebraska Telephone Company and Grand Island became the headquarters for one of the territorial divisions of the company, which is nearly one half the size of the state. The business of this district is carried on through the Grand Island office and a great part of the messages sent back and forth to towns in western Nebraska go through Grand Island. The office here employs about one hundred persons, while the local exchange has about one-half that number of operators.

1-History of Hall County, p. 247.
Besides the industries mentioned there are in Grand Island the following: Bottling works; Implement Company; Auto-Paint Shop; Brandt Cigar Company; Cantrell Plumbing Company; Central Power Company; David Creamery Company; Eifers Cabinet Makers; Gilbert Motor Company; Grand Island Candy Kitchen; Grand Island Dye Works; Grand Island Woven Wire Fence Factory; Grand Island Plumbing Company; Great Western Iron and Metal Company; Grand Island Rubber Works; Voss Rubber Company; Henne Pump Shop; Ideal Cement Works; Kelley Well Company Factory; Leupp Valley Packing Company; Greer Company; Paine-Fishburn Marble and Granite Company; Sheffel and Son Monument Works; Mattress and Auto Top Factory; Great Western Chemical Company; Grand Island Hide and Fur Company; Henry Glade Milling Company.
CHAPTER VIII
RETROSPECT

For two or three years after the settlement of the town and the building of several business houses and residences, it grew slowly for the country adjacent had only a few settlers; there was a stretch of miles and miles where there was only a house or two. But after a few years the people from the east heard more about the towns along the Union Pacific and immigration started toward that section of the west and the country surrounding Grand Island began to be taken up. There were no towns to the east nearer than Columbus and to the west only a few struggling settlements. Grand Island secured trade from all directions especially from the south. The Grand Island Times for 1873 showed forty-one business interests in the advertising columns of its four page issue. The population was also increasing very rapidly and was 1200 in 1874. It had a school building; court house; the Liederkranz; banking house under the management of Fred Wiebe; steam flouring mill owned and operated by Fred Wiebe; agriculture and implement store by T. J. Hurford; merchandise by Charles Wasmer and Bros., C. W. Thomas, Jacobs and Michelson; agricultural implements by Ed Hooper; O. K. Store by R. C. Jordan; ready

1-Grand Island Times, July 16, 1873.
2-Grand Island Times, Jan. 7, 1874.
made clothing and gentlemen's furnishings by A. L. Engel; general grocer and butcher shop by Cornelius and Peterson; tinner and hardware by James Clearer; butcher shop by Hall and Thomas; drug stores by Kelley and Richardson, and Ellis; jewelry stores by C. Hoffman, and H. C. Held; leather goods, boots and shoes by John Grimes, and Jenneman and Dumphy; general store by W. R. McAllister; lumber yards by George Hagend, and Ed. Taft; a bakery; two millinery stores; three barber shops; land office; two newspapers, "The Independent" edited by Mr. and Mrs. S. P. Mobley, and "The Grand Island Times" edited by C. P. R. Williams.

From 1874 to 1880 there was a period of slow growth for Grand Island and then there came better times. But even then the Central City "Courier" for 1877 says:

"Grand Island, considering its age, is a model young metropolis and will be a representative city of Nebraska. Its location is lovely, its advantages good, and its business portion shows healthy trade."

In 1879 Grand Island claimed to be ahead of any town of its size in the state of Nebraska and it backed its claim with these items: "A larger and better cultivated section of country near it; better churches and more of them; larger and better school house; two railroads and two more wanting to come; more and better newspapers, including a daily;

1-Grand Island Daily Independent, July 22, 1877.
2-Grand Island Daily Independent, July 24, 1879.
only system of water works in this section; county seat of Hall County; a division station of the Union Pacific Railroad; the terminus of the St. Joseph and Denver Railroad."

In 1880 there came very prosperous times. During that year lots in Grand Island were sold to the amount of nearly $80,000 and one hundred and fifty-seven buildings were erected. By 1881 there were: 3 banks; 12 groceries; 5 hardware stores; 3 clothing stores; 6 dry goods stores; 5 drug stores; 3 furniture stores; 6 boot and shoe stores; 10 hotels and rooming houses; 2 mills; 2 elevators; 3 societies of Masons; 2 Odd Fellows societies; 3 temperance societies; the "Turnverien"; the "Liederkrantz"; 4 newspapers. In 1884 the population was over 6,000. Frame buildings were moved off of many lots and brick buildings erected in their places.

By 1886 there were many substantial brick blocks. two and three stores high. There was also: a new school building; new hospital; gas works; waterworks; new packing house; number of fine residences. In the way of other improvements was the removal of the stock yards to the outskirts of the city; and the opening up of new streets; the water works stand pipe was almost completed; and the company for building a street railway was being formed.

1-Grand Island Times, Aug. 4, 1881.
2-Grand Island Daily Independent, Aug. 16, 1887.
Among the buildings erected were: brick hotel 41 x 100 @ $20,000 by D. F. Jameson; three-story brick 66 x 100 @ $50,000 by Fred Hedde; the "Union Block," a two-story brick 66 x 100 @ $40,000; a two-story brick 44 x 100 @ $25,000 by Raine & Platt; the "Grand Army Block," a two-story brick 44 x 100 @ $20,000; a two-story brick 22 x 66 @ $10,000 by Beymen; a two-story brick 44 x 60 @ $15,000 by Steho Bros.; a two-story brick 22 x 90 @ $50,000 by Gettles; a two-story brick 22 x 60 @ $10,000 by Cornelius; a three-story brick 44 x 100 @ $50,000 started by Williams & Kerr; St. Francis Hospital completed @ $35,000; water works and gas @ $55,000. The total value of the property in Grand Island for 1886 was $3,480,750. In 1887 many more improvements were made. The Palmer House, a brick building 66 x 132, was erected on Third and Sycamore at a cost of $50,000; the plans and specifications were made by Jenney & Otis of Chicago; the furniture for the building cost about $2,000. In 1887 a new gas and light plant was installed at a cost of $80,000; a new system of water works for $45,000 and additional bonds issued to the amount of $30,000; the "Soldiers' and Sailors' Home" built; Union Pacific Railroad's extension of the stock yards for $20,000; three and one-half miles of street railway built; five hundred new residences built; free postal delivery established. During the next two

1-Grand Island Daily Independent, Feb. 1, 1887.
2-Grand Island Daily Independent, Sept. 23, 1887.
decades many more improvements were made to keep pace with the growing city.

The following additions have been made to the original boundary of the city of Grand Island: Arnold and Abbott, August 1, 1870; U. P. Railroad, first addition, April 8, 1871; Koenig and Wiebe, September 19, 1873; Nagy, August 7, 1875; West Lawn, May 14, 1880; U.P. Railroad, second addition, November 30, 1880; Kernochan and Decker, May 27, 1881; Clark, July 28, 1881; Lambert, March 4, 1881; Voitle, December 3, 1882; University Place, July 9, 1883; Bogg and Hill, December 24, 1883; Wasmer, July 9, 1884; Wheeler, September 2, 1884; Wasmer, second addition, October 20, 1885; Packer and Barr, December 3, 1884; Packer and Barr, second addition, October 22, 1885; Shoemaker, June 1, 1886; Baker, December 11, 1886; Wallich's, April 6, 1887; Rollin, April 18, 1887; Bonnie Brae, May 9, 1887; East Park, May 19, 1887; East Grand Island, July 5, 1887; Joehnck, September 2, 1887; West View, September 29, 1887; Cottage Grove, October 27, 1887; Scarff, November 26, 1888; Wasmer, third addition, June 18, 1889; Fair View Park, July 11, 1889; College addition to West Lawn, September 11, 1889; South Grand Island, December 17, 1889; South Park, February 8, 1890; Dawn, Feb. 14, 1890; Woodbine, February 24, 1890; Morrill, June 12, 1890; Wheeler and Bennett, June 12, 1890; Spaulding and Gregg, April 2, 1902; Court House addition, May 25, 1905; Wheeler and Bennett,
second addition, September 22, 1905; Wheeler and Bennett, third addition, May 4, 1906; Wheeler and Bennett, fourth addition, August 17, 1906; Gilbert, November 20, 1906; Shimmer, December 5, 1906; Wiese, September 20, 1907; Park Place, February 25, 1908; Elm Place, November 4, 1908; Cedar Park, April 29, 1909; Hann, May 18, 1909; Capital Hill, August 18, 1909; Gilbert, second addition, November 6, 1909; Koehler Place, May 19, 1910; Dill and Houston, May 25, 1911; Belmont, May 27, 1912; Hann, second addition, December 3, 1913; Hyde, March 18, 1914; Axt and Hagge, September 24, 1916; Gilbert, third addition, July 16, 1919; Hann, third addition, April 6, 1921.

The streets of Grand Island running east and west are: Anna, Louise, Charles, Koenig, Division, First, Second, Third, the Railroad no number, Fourth to Eighteenth. The streets running north and south are: Plum, Oak, Kimbball, Sycamore, Pine, Locust, Wheeler, Walnut, Cedar, Elm, Cleburn, Eddy, Clark, Greenwich, Lincoln, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, Harrison, Logan, Tilden, Clay, Grant, Hedde, Cleveland, Blaine.

Grand Island has had a gradual but steady growth, and is today one of the leading cities of the state. To the few survivors from her early days, her development seems unreal; but it is to these pioneers, who so nobly bore
the hardships of the frontier life, that fitting praise should be given. If the progress of Grand Island continues as it has in the past, who knows but what the dream of the idealist of 1857 may come true.
CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY

1857  Grand Island Settlement.
1859  Post office established for the settlement.
1862  O. K. Store built.
1862  Ft. Independence on Stolley's farm.
1864  O. K. Store fortified.
1866  First train into Grand Island over U.P.
1866  Town platted.
1866  Post office established.
1867  M. S. Hall built his store.
1867  Central Flouring mill.
1868  O. K. Store moved into town.
1869  U. S. Land Office established.
1869  Liederkranz organized.
1870  "Platte Valley Independent" founded.
1871  State Central Bank incorporated.
1872  Court House erected.
1872  Grand Island incorporated.
1873  St. Joseph and Grand Island Railroad incorporated.
1878  "Dodge School" building erected.
1879  Bonds for Water Works.
1879  Grain Elevator built.
1880  Population of Grand Island 2963.
1880  Grand Island Banking Company.
1880  U. P. Machine Shops built.
1882  R. J. Barr elected superintendent of city schools.
1883 First commencement exercises of the high school.
1885 St. Francis Hospital started.
1885 Bonds for water works.
1886 Building program.
1887 Canning factory built.
1887 Company for the street railway formed.
1888 Soldiers' and Sailors' Home dedicated.
1889 City building erected.
1889 Sewer system.
1890 Population 7,536.
1890 Sugar beet factory completed.
1892 Koehler Hotel built.
1892 Grand Island College incorporated.
1898 Street railway stopped.
1900 Population 7,554.
1902 Contract for new court house.
1903 Horse market started.
1905 Carnegie Library erected.
1907 50th anniversary of Grand Island settlement.
1908 High school building erected.
1909 Nebraska Telephone Company.
1910 New Post office completed.
1910 Population 10,326.
1912 New Liederkranz building.
1914 Glover building.
1917 Nebraska Mercantile five-story wholesale building completed.
1917 North American Hotel started (ten-story).
1918 Elk's building completed.
1918 New Union Pacific passenger station.
1919 People's Bank established.
1920 Population 13,960.
1921 Auto-bus system installed.
1923 New hospital building at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home.
1923 Work on North American Hotel continued (ten-story).
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