

Omaha/Douglas County History Timeline

Omaha/Douglas County History in a Trunk Project[©]

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Revised and Expanded as

***History at a Glance*[©]**

A Guide to Businesses, Institutions, Organizations, People and Events that Shaped the
History of Omaha and the Douglas County Area, 1671-2005

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- 1671** The Omaha tribe was first mentioned as “Mahas”, a wandering nation” on a Marquette map. It placed them just east of the Missouri River, probably in central Iowa.
- 1682** Sieur de La Salle claimed all the territory drained by the Mississippi River and its tributaries for France and gave the region the name of Louisiana. Nebraska was included in this claim.
- 1700** The first journal reference to the Omaha tribe was made in Beaurain’s *Memoire*. Pierre Charles le Sueur never visited the Omahas, but he recorded from other reports that the Omahas lived in a village of 400 dwellings, with a population of about 4,000 people. This village is generally believed to have been located on the Big Sioux River (once called the “River of the Maha”) south of present-day Sioux Falls, South Dakota.
- 1714** French-born Etienne de Bourgmont led an expedition from the mouth of the Missouri River to the mouth of the Platte River, which he called the Nebraskier River, the first to approximate the state’s name. An early explorer of the Missouri basin, he may have gone as far as the Niobrara River.

- 1718** The Omaha tribe was mapped by Delisle as “The Maha, a wandering nation” along the northern stretch of the Missouri River.
- 1720** Spaniard Don Pedro de Villasur led an overland expedition that followed an Indian trail from Santa Fe as far north as Nebraska. Near the juncture of the Loop and Platte Rivers and apparently just south of present-day Columbus, Nebraska, he and 34 members of his party were killed in a battle with the Indians. This battle marked the biggest defeat for the white man in Nebraska. It was a major reversal for the Spanish who were in competition with the French for control of the region. Survivors of the battle made their way back to Santa Fe.
- c. 1735** The first Omaha village west of the Missouri River was established on Bow Creek in present-day Cedar County, Nebraska.
- 1739** Pierre and Paul Mallet, French-Canadian explorers and traders, reached the mouth of what they named the Platte River. From there they went cross-country to explore southwest following the South Fork of the Platte River. Their goal was to reach Santa Fe via a water route.
- c. 1755** The new Omaha village was near the present location of the tribe. The village was probably at Homer, Nebraska, and fifteen miles north of present-day Macy. The Poncas split from the Omahas during this time and moved further up the Missouri River to present-day Knox County, Nebraska.
- 1762** The Treaty of Fontainebleau concluded, by which France ceded that part of the Province of Louisiana west of the Mississippi River to Spain. The future Nebraska became a part of the Spanish possessions in America.
- c. 1775** Omahas, numbering 3,000-4,000, built a village called Ton won tonga, or Big Village near present-day Homer, Nebraska. This was the village of Black Bird, the most famous of the early Omaha chiefs. Under Black Bird, the Omahas were a powerful military force and wielded great influence. Their location along the Missouri River gave them a key position as “gate keeper” for the French fur traders. “Omaha” means “those going against the wind or current”, or “Upriver People”. It sometimes is interpreted as “above all others on a stream”.
- c. 1777** Fur trapping for the white man’s trade became economically important to the Omahas. French traders became trade partners.

- 1783** The Treaty of Paris that ended the Revolutionary War fixed the Mississippi River as the western boundary of the United States.
- 1794** Jean-Baptiste Truteau operated a trading post thirty miles up the Niobrara River, reporting that the Missouri River was navigable for a great distance, and kept detailed records of his travels.
- 1795** A Scotsman named John McKay established a trading post on the west bank of the Missouri River, about twelve or fifteen miles below the present town of Dakota City, and gave it the name of Fort Charles. This probably was the first white man's establishment within the present limits of Nebraska, and was under Spanish control.
- Spanish-sponsored explorers and fur traders James McKay and John Evans reached the Omaha Village and met Black Bird, the powerful and feared Chief of the Omaha Indians. Lewis and Clark had with them a copy of a map made by Evans when they ascended the Missouri River a few years later.
- Spanish subject Jacques D'Eglise traveled the Nebraska-Iowa corridor as he headed north in search of the Northwest Passage and a \$3,000 prize offered by the Spanish General Governor of Louisiana if he reached the Pacific Ocean. D'Eglise did not go beyond the Mandan Villages in North Dakota.
- 1800** Spain returned the Louisiana Territory to France. Land later known as "Nebraska" was part of the Louisiana Territory.
- The Omahas fell victim to a smallpox epidemic that decimated the tribe and destroyed its power in northeastern Nebraska. Nearly two-thirds of the tribe perished, including Black Bird, their powerful, self-appointed chief.
- 1802** A second smallpox epidemic severely reduced the population of the Omaha tribe.
- 1803** The United States purchased the Louisiana Territory from France for \$15,000,000 under terms of the Treaty of Paris. The 830,000 square miles of territory doubled the size of the United States at roughly three cents an acre. Under this treaty, Nebraska became the property of the United States for the first time.

1804 Lewis and Clark and members of the Corps of Discovery camped at Camp White Catfish near present-day Bellevue, NE for five nights beginning July 22nd. On July 27th, William Clark and Reuben Fields came ashore on the west bank of the Missouri River to investigate mysterious earthen mounds close to where 8th and Douglas Streets and Heartland of America Park are today. The mounds may have been of natural origin or the remains of an Otoe Indian village. It has never been determined with any certainty what the mounds were. That night they camped in an area that is Eppley Airfield today. Mosquitoes, heat and humidity provided a great source of discomfort for the men and their dog, Seaman, during their stay.

Lewis and Clark held their first official meeting with the Indians at Council Bluff near the present site of Ft. Atkinson/Ft. Calhoun on August 3rd. Their council with the Otoe and Missouri Indians was friendly and successful. After the Council, the Corps of Discovery continued its journey up the Missouri River.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition found the “Big Village” of the Omahas near present-day Homer, Nebraska. It was empty because the Indians were on a buffalo hunt. Their number when Lewis and Clark arrived was about 900 to 1,500 people, “counting three to five persons per adult male.” The expedition visited the grave of Omaha Chief Black Bird near present-day Decatur, Nebraska on August 11th.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition gave a boost to the fur trade and led to the establishment of commercial fur companies. The activities of these companies dominated the history of the region for the next forty years.

1808 Manuel Lisa, a Spaniard-turned United States citizen, founded an early fur trading company in the region.

c. 1810 The famous chief, Big Elk, Ongpatonga, took over principal leadership of the Omahas around this time. The Omahas were met at the Big Village by many American fur-trading and exploring expeditions during the early 1800s until wars with the Sauk and Fox drove them away.

1812 Manuel Lisa built a substantial trading post, also known as Fort Lisa, less than a mile north of Douglas County. From here, Lisa frustrated British-Canadian plans to control parts of the West during the War of 1812. Loyalty of middle Missouri River Indians to Lisa partially checkmated the British.

President James Madison signed a bill that created the Territory of Missouri which included the present state of Nebraska.

- 1815** The first treaty between the United States and the Omahas, a treaty of “friendship and peace”, was signed. No land was relinquished by the tribe.
- 1817** The Otoe signed a treaty of peace with the United States.
- 1819** The Western Engineer, first steamboat to ascend into the waters of the middle Missouri, carried Major Stephen Long and Colonel Henry Atkinson’s 1,100 troops on their way to the mountains. The steamboat’s boilers became clogged with silt, and its engine was no match for the Missouri. The troops spent a miserable winter at Cantonment Missouri (Camp Missouri) in Washington County. A scurvy epidemic caused many deaths. The following spring troops moved to higher ground to establish Fort Atkinson.
- The Omaha people moved to the Elkhorn River where they lived until 1834.
- 1820** The U.S. Army established Fort Atkinson near today’s Fort Calhoun on the west bank of the Missouri near the Council Bluff site to protect the fur trade. The fort was the first U.S. Army post west of the river.
- 1822** Bellevue was established when the Missouri Fur Company built a headquarters and trading post in the bluffs on the west side of the Missouri River about nine miles north of the mouth of the Platte River. The new field headquarters and trading post was directed by Joshua Pilcher. Two years later, Lucien Fontenelle, noted leader of the Rocky Mountain fur trade, became a new partner when the Missouri Fur Company was reorganized. Bellevue’s location facilitated the company’s trade with the local Omaha, Otoe and Pawnee tribes and served as a way station and supply depot for its trade ventures into the fur-rich lands of the Upper Missouri.
- 1824** Jean-Pierre Cabanné (or Cabanne) established a trading post for the American Fur Company two-and-one-half miles south of Fort Lisa at the mouth of Ponca Creek, which became a well-known post in the region.
- 1825** T.B. Roye (or Royce) established a stockade and a trading post on the Omaha plateau on or near the block later formed by Dodge Street and Capitol Avenue, Ninth and Tenth Streets. Jesuit missionary Father Pierre-

Jean De Smet referred to him as a noted trader who was probably “the first white man who built the first cabin on the beautiful plateau where now stands the flourishing City of Omaha”.

Omahas made a treaty of friendship and peace with the United States, but no land was relinquished by the tribe.

Logan Fontenelle, later Chief White Horse of the Omaha Indians, was born at Fort Atkinson. His later role as tribal chief was not recognized as legitimate by all Omahas.

1826 The U.S. Government ordered abandonment of Fort Atkinson. The fort was abandoned the following year.

1828 Half the Omahas, under the leadership of Big Elk, moved back to the Big Village on the Missouri, but were driven back by the Sauk and Fox within a year.

Lucien Fontenelle became the owner of the Bellevue trading post when the Missouri Fur Company disbanded.

1830 William Sublette took the first wagons with trade goods and supplies west along the Platte River to the fur traders’ annual rendezvous in the Rockies to show that a wagon trail was practical.

In the Treaty of Prairie du Chien, Omahas signed away their claims to lands in Iowa, east of the Missouri River, with the understanding the tribe still had hunting rights there.

1831 Regular steamboat service is established on the Missouri River by the American Fur Company.

The Omahas suffered another smallpox attack.

1832 Lucien Fontenelle sold his Bellevue trading post to the Office of Indian Affairs. Fontenelle moved a short distance south where he built a new home and trading post which he operated until his death in 1840.

Headquarters of the Indian Agency for the Omaha, Pawnee, Otoe and Missouri opened on the site of the old Pilcher-Fontenelle trading post at Bellevue and operated as such for about seven years. John Dougherty was the agent until he resigned in 1839.

1833 The steamer Yellowstone made its second trip up the Missouri River. On board was naturalist Prince Alexander Philip Maximilian von Wied, and Swiss-born artist Karl Bodmer. The German prince wrote detailed diaries of his two-year tour of North America, and Bodmer produced hundreds of paintings and drawings. Together they left an incredible record of the land and the people.

The Pawnee were forced to cede all their land south of the Platte River to the United States.

Moses P. Merrill, his wife and two assistants arrived in Bellevue in November to establish a mission among the Otoe Indians. Merrill's efforts were sponsored by the Baptist Missionary Union.

1834 The Omahas moved back to the Big Village near present-day Homer, Nebraska.

John Dunbar and Samuel Allis, commissioned by the American Board of Foreign Missions, a Presbyterian agency, arrived in Bellevue in October to establish a mission among four distinct tribes of Pawnee.

1836 By terms of a treaty, the Omahas ceded their remaining hunting lands in Northwest Missouri to the United States.

1837 Iotan, famous Otoe chief, was killed by a fellow Otoe near Bellevue.

1838 Father Pierre-Jean De Smet, Jesuit missionary, began mission work among the Pottawatomie Indians in Iowa and became familiar with conditions around the Bellevue Indian Agency during the same period. On a visit to the Otoe village in May, he found the residents "poor and miserable." Fewer opportunities to benefit from hunting, the availability of alcohol and violence between and within tribes were taking their toll.

1840 Peter Sarpy, fur trapper and trader, took over Lucien Fontenelle's trading post at Bellevue upon the death of Fontenelle.

1841 After several battles with the Lakota, who replaced the Sauk and Fox as the main enemy of the Omaha in the late 1830s and 1840s, the Omahas moved from the Big Village to the mouth of Logan Creek on the Elkhorn River where they lived in miserable conditions for two years.

Peter A. Sarpy completed construction of a new building to house the Bellevue Indian Agency at a cost of \$1,249.20. The new structure was in

use for about fifteen years after which the four tribes it served were housed on reservations. The reservation for the Omaha tribe was established in present-day Thurston County. The Otoe and Missouri tribes located in present-day Gage County, and the Pawnee settled on their reservation in Nance County.

- 1842** Lt. John C. Frémont, having explored the Platte River country with 27 trappers (mostly French) and frontiersmen, including scout Kit Carson, sold his mules and government wagons at auction in Bellevue. On this mapping trip, Frémont used the Otoe word Ne-brath-ka to designate the Platte River. Platte is from the French word for “flat”, the translation of Ne-brath-ka meaning “land of flat waters”.
- 1843** Omahas returned to the Big Village and again were attacked by large parties of Lakota.
- 1844** The Omahas abandoned Ton won tonga (Big Village) for the last time and relocated their village on Papillion Creek eight miles west of Bellevue. They numbered about 1,300 at this time. Their settlement there near the Indian Agency continued for the next ten years.

For the first time, the name “Nebraska” was used in an official capacity by William Wilkins, then U.S. Secretary of War.

- 1846** Mormons, led by Brigham Young, arrived at the Missouri River in June, and by September they established Winter Quarters on the site of present-day Florence. Approximately 4,000 Mormons spent the winter of 1846-1847 here based on an agreement with Big Elk and the Omaha Indians. Winter Quarters was the site of the first white settlement within the current limits of Douglas County.

The Florence Mill was built and survives today.

The Reverend Edmund McKinney and S.M. Irvin arrived in Bellevue to establish a permanent mission for the tribes of eastern Nebraska. They were sent to the Bellevue area by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. Construction of the Otoe and Omaha Mission House was begun the following year and completed in 1848. It served as a boarding school for local Indian children for seven years before tribes relocated to reservations after Nebraska was declared a territory.

The Pawnees moved their villages to a location about thirty miles from Bellevue in order to be closer to their agent and his protection.

Iowa was admitted to the Union as the 29th State.

1847 Pottawattamie County was organized by the Iowa Legislature.

Even though the Mormons raised a crop and shared the produce of their fields and gardens with the Indians as they had agreed to do, the activity destroyed so much timber land that game was driven away, and the Omaha chiefs complained to their agent, John Miller. The Mormons were then ordered to vacate Omaha country. Subsequently, thousands of them left the Winter Quarters and the Missouri Valley lands of the Omaha and Pottawatomie tribes for a new home in the Great Salt Lake Valley. Those who did not go west with the main body recrossed the Missouri and settled in the Pottawatomie country in the bluffs and south to Kaneshville and Glenwood. Winter Quarters was abandoned by 1848.

1848 The Kane post office was established at Miller's Hollow on the site of present-day Council Bluffs.

1849 The first issue of the Frontier Guardian, a publication of the Mormon Church, appeared in Kaneshville.

1853 The Council Bluffs and Nebraska Ferry Company was chartered by the State of Iowa. It was organized with the help of William D. Brown, founder of the Lone Tree Ferry which operated from a site a few miles south of the old Winter Quarters on the Omaha side of the Missouri River. Brown's vision was to found a town across from Council Bluffs.

Kaneshville, Iowa was renamed Council Bluffs.

The first railroad surveying party to reach Council Bluffs arrived. About this time, survey parties representing Chicago railroad lines and headed by Grenville Dodge, one of the country's first railroad engineers, started detailed studies of a route through Nebraska.

A.D. Jones and Thomas and William Allen rowed across the Missouri in a leaky raft to stake the first claims in what would become Omaha.

William D. Brown, owner and operator of the Lone Tree Ferry, convinced twelve businessmen that the Omaha plateau was an ideal spot for a city.

The Council Bluffs and Nebraska Ferry Company named the new town "Omaha City".

Big Elk, the last full-blooded Chief of the Omaha Tribe, died. A famous and influential leader, Big Elk is buried at Bellevue Cemetery, 13th Street and Lord Avenue. Bellevue students raised money to restore his grave and have a plaque installed at the grave site during the 2006-2007 school year.

Hadley D. Johnson of Council Bluffs was chosen delegate to Congress in an informal election held at Sarpy's trading post in Bellevue. Johnson went to Congress with specific instructions to work for the establishment of a new territory west of the Missouri River.

James Comley Mitchell had the Winter Quarters area surveyed with the intention of building a town on the site of the former Mormon settlement. The new town was laid out in the fall, and resettlement began almost immediately.

1854

Under new pressures created by passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, most of the land in eastern Nebraska (about 4,000,000 acres) was ceded by the Omaha Indians to become part of the public domain for 18.5 cents per acre. The first signature on the treaty was that of Chief White Horse, also known as Logan Fontenelle. Other signers were Yellow Smoke, Little Chief, Village Maker, Joseph LaFlesche, Standing Hawk, and Noise. The Omahas reserved about 300,000 acres for themselves on a reservation that is a portion of their ancestral lands in present-day Thurston County, Nebraska.

The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act granted territorial status to Kansas and Nebraska. The Territorial Legislature subsequently created "Omaha City" and Douglas County. The land west of the Missouri River was opened to settlement. President Franklin Pierce signed the Kansas-Nebraska bill into law on May 30th and appointed Francis Burt of South Carolina as the Territorial Governor.

Francis Burt, the first Territorial Governor of Nebraska, reached Bellevue on October 7th. In poor health at the time, he nevertheless took the oath of office on the 16th and died of pneumonia two days later. Territorial Secretary Thomas B. Cuming, who came from Iowa, assumed the duties of Acting Governor on October 19th.

Men and women from Council Bluffs celebrated the founding of "Omaha City" at a 4th of July picnic on Capitol Hill in the new town. Omaha, the first permanent settlement of white men in what is now Douglas County,

was designated the Territorial Capitol on December 24th. Alfred D. Jones, Andrew J. Hanscom, William D. Brown, Thomas and Frederick Davis, Hadley D. and Harrison Johnson, John Gillespie and others were among those celebrating Independence Day on the site of the future city. Originally, Douglas County included Bellevue.

The population of Nebraska Territory was 2,732 residents. Douglas County, including “Omaha City”, had 645 residents.

The Omaha Township Claim Association was founded. Its rules provided for the protection of all holdings up to 320 acres, with the understanding that no member could own more than eighty acres of timber.

The first white residents to settle in Omaha were William “Billy” and his wife Rachel Snowden who lived near 12th and Jackson. Today they are memorialized in a plaque at that location.

A.D. Jones, a surveyor, divided land into blocks down by the ferry landing. This is the first planning of Omaha as a city. He was appointed the first postmaster of Omaha. The first post office was his hat in which he collected the mail.

The first white child born in Omaha was Margaret Ferry, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Ferry.

Nearby towns organized and platted were Plattsmouth, De Soto, Nebraska City, and Bellevue.

The first claim was staked on the future town site of Tekamah.

Thomas Allen for the Council Bluffs and Nebraska Ferry Company built the first house in Omaha at 12th and Jackson in June. It was known as the Claim Cabin and was occupied by Billy (later known as “Uncle Billy”) and Rachel Snowden, the first residents of Omaha. They operated it as a hotel called the “St. Nicholas”.

The Omaha Arrow, printed in Council Bluffs, appeared in Omaha and was the town’s first newspaper.

The Nebraska Palladium, the first Nebraska newspaper, made its appearance in Bellevue.

The first sermon in Omaha was preached by Reverend Peter Cooper, a Methodist Episcopal minister, at the St. Nicholas, 12th and Jackson, in August. His audience totaled 25 persons.

The First Methodist Church was established in Omaha.

A steam-operated sawmill was established.

The Florence Land Company was organized, and the town was resurveyed. The new survey laid out 270 blocks. The town was named "Florence" by J.C. Mitchell, a town founder, in honor of Florence Kilbourn, Mrs. Mitchell's grandchild by a previous marriage.

1855

Acting Governor Thomas Cuming signed the bill locating the territorial seat of government in Omaha. His duties were assumed by Mark Izard of Arkansas who arrived in Omaha as the new Territorial Governor.

The first Territorial Legislature convened in Omaha on January 16th and was comprised of 26 members in the House of Representatives and thirteen members in the Council. The Territorial State House was located on Ninth Street between Farnam and Douglas.

The Territorial Supreme Court was organized in Omaha, but no business was transacted.

A special census showed the population of Nebraska Territory was 4,491 white inhabitants. Of that number, Douglas County had 1,028 residents with about 200 in Omaha, 200 in Bellevue, and about 300-400 in Florence. The other 400 residents were scattered throughout the countryside.

Julia Adelaide Goodwill opened Omaha's first private school at the State House when the legislature was not in session. She enrolled 40 students of various ages.

John Logan and Caroline M. Mosier were the first couple to be married in Omaha.

Omaha's first Catholic Mass was celebrated on or about May 15th in the court room of the old State House on Ninth Street between Farnam and Douglas. This was the first church service celebrated in Nebraska according to the rites of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Western Exchange Fire and Marine Insurance Company, the first financial institution in Nebraska, opened for business in Omaha.

F.A. Schneider founded a business that became Johnson Hardware, one of Omaha's oldest businesses. Its axe head symbol still hangs outside its door today at 1201 Pacific Street. During its earliest years, it outfitted wagon trains, the U.S. Cavalry at Fort Omaha, the Western Stage Coach Company and supplied hardware to install the Western telegraph lines across the country.

The first session of the District Court was held in Bellevue, then part of Douglas County. The Territorial Legislature incorporated the village of Bellevue the same year.

The first grand jury in Douglas County was convened.

Fort Calhoun was platted and made the county seat of Washington County.

The Carter Brothers—Jacob, Alexander and T.M.—settled on land north of Omaha that eventually became the site of Blair, Nebraska.

The town of Florence was incorporated.

Brothers Nathan and Grenville Dodge opened the Dodge Land Office in Council Bluffs. Later, Grenville served as a general in the Civil War before he became the chief construction engineer for building the Union Pacific Railroad. NP Dodge stayed in the real estate business.

A party of Sioux killed Logan Fontenelle, famous Omaha Chief, in present day Boone County. His body was returned to Bellevue for burial near his home in what is now Fontenelle Forest.

The Omaha Indians relocated to a reservation on the bank of the Missouri River about twelve miles from the present town of Walthill in Thurston County.

The first recorded murder in the area took place in Bellevue.

1856 Elkhorn City was established.

The Nebraskian, the first newspaper printed in Omaha, was a major source for news about Omaha and the Nebraska Territory.

The Decatur Town and Ferry Company founded Decatur.

Fremont, named for General John C. Frémont, was platted.

The Bellevue Presbyterian Church, oldest extant church building in Nebraska, was built and ready for services in 1858.

St. Mary's, Omaha's first Catholic Church, was built at 8th and Howard.

The First Congregational Church was incorporated.

The Trinity Episcopal congregation was organized by a group of local leaders whose last names were Cuming, Woolworth, Hanscom, Bemis and Poppleton to name a few of the founding members.

The Mormon handcart brigade included Mormon men, women, and sometimes children pulling or pushing heavy carts of trail provisions and personal belongings from Florence, Nebraska on the first leg of their long journey to Salt Lake City, Utah. Handcarts, two-wheeled carts pulled by emigrants instead of draft animals, were a faster, easier, and cheaper means of bringing European converts to Salt Lake City. From 1856 to 1860, nearly 3,000 Mormons, with 653 carts and 50 supply wagons, traveling in ten different companies, made the trek over the Mormon Pioneer Trail to Salt Lake City. While not the first to use handcarts, the Mormons were the only group to use them extensively. Each handcart held about 500 pounds of goods.

The Florence Town Company was organized, and Florence was chartered as a city. Efforts to secure the terminus of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad and the territorial seat of government failed. Much of the town's business activity hinged on the fact that Florence was the starting point for Mormons continuing their migration to Salt Lake City.

The first regular election for county officers in Douglas County was held.

The Government Survey of public lands in Douglas County was completed.

The first Douglas County Court House located on Farnam near 16th Street opened and stayed in service until 1885.

Edward and John A. Creighton arrived in Omaha. Edward amassed a fortune in cattle raising, freighting, banking, real estate, and the telegraph. Youngest brother John followed suit, adding the areas of mining and retailing. At the time of their deaths in 1874 and 1907 respectively, each man died the wealthiest person in Nebraska.

E.L. Eaton opened the first photography studio in Omaha on May 1st.

The first Odd Fellows Lodge in Douglas County was organized in Omaha. It was the second lodge of that order in Nebraska.

The Reverend Joseph Barker Sr. and family arrived in Omaha from Ohio to seek their fortune in real estate.

Suffragette Amelia Jenks Bloomer of Council Bluffs addressed the Nebraska Territorial Legislature.

1857

Omaha was granted a charter of incorporation by the legislature that was signed into law by Governor Izard. Date of incorporation was February 2nd, and the city was organized and established on March 5th. The word "City" was dropped from Omaha's name. The charter provided for a mayor-council form of government.

Omaha held its first city election. Jesse Lowe was elected Omaha's first mayor. He served until 1858. The first meeting of the Omaha City Council was held.

The United States Land Office opened. Jesse Lowe made the first entry for land for a tract of 320 acres within the city limits of 1857.

174 steamboats carrying 13,000 tons of freight tied up at Omaha wharves. The New Monongahela arrived, and 150 prospective residents disembarked.

Omaha had a population of 1,500 residents, and lots sold for as much as \$4,000. As the year ended though, the town was seriously affected by the financial panic sweeping the country. Banks and businesses closed, real estate values declined, and many of Omaha's most industrious and talented citizens left town for opportunities elsewhere.

The Omaha City Council adopted a resolution to purchase a wagon, ladders and other equipment to form a fire company, but no action was taken. The national Panic of 1857 devastated city finances.

The Kountze Brothers Bank was founded as a private bank by immigrant brothers Herman and Augustus Kountze. It was located in a small frame building at 12th and Farnam. In 1863, it was reorganized under a national charter and adopted a new name, the First National Bank of Omaha, the oldest national bank west of the Missouri River.

The first Masonic Lodge in Douglas County and the third in Nebraska was organized in Omaha.

The United States Express Company opened the first express office in Omaha. J. Shepard was the agent.

Florence School began classes in the Land Office Building. Its first school bus was a horse-drawn wagon. A new Florence School was built at 36th and King Streets in 1890.

Sarpy County was created by the legislature and named for Peter A. Sarpy, who had been in charge of the trading post in Bellevue. Bellevue was named the county seat for Sarpy County. Douglas County now had its permanent boundaries.

The Pawnee ceded all their land north of the Platte River to the United States with the exception of a small strip on the Loup River where they established a reservation in Nance County west of present-day Columbus, Nebraska.

The Council Bluffs Nonpareil was established and remains in publication today.

1858 The legislature met in the second Territorial Capitol on the hill at 20th and Dodge for the first time in January. During the same month, however, members of both houses voted to adjourn to Florence after a fight over the issue of moving the territorial capitol out of Omaha. A majority of 24 of 35 representatives and nine of thirteen council members met for forty days and nights in Florence before returning home to the unfinished Capitol building on the hill where Central High School is today.

The first public sale of land took place in the Omaha area.

The congregation of Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church officially organized as the first Lutheran church in Omaha. The church's first meeting place was at 13th and Douglas Streets.

The Herndon House Hotel was built and became Omaha's social center. Manager James T. Allen became famous as its host. From 1870 to 1912, the Union Pacific Railroad used the building as its headquarters.

The first government corral was established in Omaha.

Douglas County's first Court House was completed at a cost of \$40,000. It stood between 15th and 16th Streets, from Douglas to Farnam, in an area once known as Washington Square.

The Douglas County Agricultural Society was organized and held its first fair at Saratoga, a little town half way between Omaha and Florence, on land bounded by Laird and Boyd Streets, and 16th and 20th Streets. For 25 cents, fairgoers could view prize livestock and vegetables and watch horse racing. In the race featuring female equestrians, Miss Augusta Estabrook, daughter of General Experience Estabrook, won a side saddle and caught the eye of a local reporter, Colonel R.C. Clowry, who later became president of the Western Union Telegraph Company.

The Roman Catholic vicarate of Kansas and Nebraska was divided, and the Reverend James O'Gorman was appointed vicar apostolic of Nebraska.

The body of Alonzo F. Salisbury was buried in Cedar Hills Cemetery at 32nd and Parker. His grave was the first in "Omaha's Pioneer Cemetery", renamed Prospect Hill by Byron Reed in 1865, where many other Omaha pioneers are buried. Names such as Hanscom, Hitchcock, Kountze, Lake, Metz, Millard, Poppleton and Redick are common. Today 15,000 burials are recorded including military burials from Omaha Barracks, later known as Fort Omaha. Veterans dating back to the War of 1812 are buried there, although most did not die in armed conflicts.

Fort Calhoun was incorporated, and the county seat of Washington County was moved to De Soto.

1859 The Territorial Capitol Building at 20th and Dodge was completed.

The Overland Stage Company established the first regular mail route between Fremont and Omaha.

The Omaha Public Schools System, the first public school system in Douglas County, was established on a permanent basis.

Howard Kennedy was hired as superintendent at an annual salary of \$1000. In November, he opened a school for all grades in the old Territorial Capitol building on Ninth Street between Douglas and Farnam with five teachers. This was the beginning of what later became Omaha High School and eventually Central High School. Both structures were located on Capitol Hill.

Omaha became the outfitting center for Colorado gold seekers headed for Pikes Peak. During the height of the Colorado gold rush, 268 steamboats arrived at Omaha between March and November.

Abraham Lincoln visited Council Bluffs on a business, political and pleasure trip and forecast the area would become a railroad center.

Frederick Krug established the first brewery in Omaha and in Nebraska in a small frame building at 10th and Farnam. He produced twelve to eighteen barrels of beer a week, most of which were sold to the Mormons in Florence.

Having worshipped for a few years in private homes, the Trinity Episcopal congregation built its first place for formal worship at 9th and Farnam Streets.

An expedition against the Pawnee Indians left Omaha under the command of General John M. Thayer.

Douglas County Commissioners purchased 170 acres of land where the Field Club is today between 36th and 42nd Streets, Center Street to Pacific, for the purpose of establishing a county poor farm. Although the poor farm was located there, a long court battle ensued regarding the county's obligation to pay for the property. The matter was settled by a ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court in November 1885, and the county made final payment for the land in July 1886.

1860 Edward Creighton, telegraph pioneer, completed the first telegraph line linking Omaha with St. Louis and the outside world.

Omaha's population was 1,883. The population of Nebraska Territory was 29,000, and rural Douglas County had about 400 residents. Council Bluffs had 2,011 residents.

As many as 700 wagons of immigrants passed through Omaha daily on their way west.

The Omaha Daily Telegraph began publication.

Omaha patrons saw their first theatrical performance by Julia Dean Hayne at the Herndon House.

The First Presbyterian Church was organized.

The Omaha Fire Department was established when the Pioneer Hook and Ladder Company, No. 1 was officially organized on May 2nd. A one-story, wood frame structure at 210 South 12th Street between Douglas and Farnam became the city's first fire station.

The family of the Reverend Joseph Barker Sr. left Omaha and returned to live in England.

1861

About 400 men from Douglas County, mainly from Omaha and Plattsmouth, in Cass County, formed the First Regiment Nebraska Volunteers to fight for the Union in the Civil War. Their commander was Colonel John M. Thayer of Omaha.

A bill prohibiting slavery in Nebraska was passed by the legislature and vetoed by Governor Samuel Black. Subsequently, the veto was overridden by a vote of ten to three in the Council, and thirty-three to three in the House.

Due to the depression following the Panic of 1857 and the outbreak of the Civil War, the city was unable to support the public schools which were forced to close. Professor Samuel D. Beals opened a private school for all ages and grade levels in the old Territorial Capitol building in April and called it "Omaha High School". The popularity of the school led to overcrowding which made it necessary to move the school to several locations. Beals closed his schools in 1867.

St. Mary's Catholic Church built a small parochial school.

Edward Creighton and his crew completed construction of some 500 miles of telegraph line "as the crow flies" from Julesburg, Colorado to Salt Lake City on October 17th. Six days later, builders of the western segment of the line reached Salt Lake City to complete construction of the nation's first transcontinental telegraph line. Coast to coast telegraph service was put into place on October 24th. Creighton had the assistance of his brother, John Andrew, in his efforts.

Alvin Saunders was appointed Territorial Governor of Nebraska, a post he held until 1867.

1862 The First Regiment Nebraska Volunteers fought under General Ulysses S. Grant at Forts Henry and Donelson and later at Pittsburgh Landing (Shiloh), Tennessee.

President Abraham Lincoln signed the Pacific Railroad Act into law on July 1st. It created the Union Pacific Railroad Company and authorized it to build one “continuous railroad and telegraph” line across the continent “to the western boundary of Nevada Territory” with federal assistance. It authorized the President of the United States to fix an eastern terminus for the transcontinental railroad. The new law set September, 1862, as the date for the formal organization of the Union Pacific Railroad Company.

President Lincoln signed the Homestead Act into law. It offered 160 acres of free land to any settler who lived on it and made improvements. The Homestead Act led to an increase in the number of pioneers who settled in Nebraska.

Emanuel Lutheran Church was dedicated at 13th and Douglas Streets. The congregation later became Kountze Memorial.

The Santee Sioux were forced to surrender when U.S. troops overpowered them to end the “Uprising of 1862”. This was the worst tragedy to befall the Santee. Thirty-eight tribal members were mass-executed in Mankato, Minnesota as a result.

1863 President Lincoln issued an executive order on November 1st that fixed the eastern terminus of the transcontinental railroad on “the eastern bank of the Missouri River, opposite Omaha”, or Council Bluffs. A second executive order on March 7, 1864, was far more ambiguous and led to a U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1876.

Thomas C. Durant, vice president of the Union Pacific Railroad, arbitrarily decided that Lincoln meant for the Union Pacific (UP) to begin construction of the transcontinental railroad from Omaha. To demonstrate his company’s determination and to impress investors, he organized a gala groundbreaking celebration in Omaha on December 2nd. A crowd of a thousand people from Omaha and Council Bluffs attended the event. Even though UP built its headquarters and a large railcar

manufacture and repair facility in Omaha, the mile-one marker for the transcontinental railroad still stands in a huge switching yard in Council Bluffs, Iowa where the roundhouse is located today.

The First National Bank of Omaha opened at 12th and Farnam as the first bank in Nebraska organized under the National Banking Act. Edward Creighton was president; Herman Kountze, vice president; Augustus Kountze, cashier; and H.W. Yates, assistant cashier. With a capital of \$50,000, it succeeded to the business of Kountze Brothers, one of only two banking houses in Omaha at the time.

Omaha's first public school building was constructed.

Brownell Hall, an Episcopalian college-preparatory school for girls, was founded near 24th Street and Grand Avenue in a town once known as Saratoga. It was the first established institution of higher learning for women in Nebraska.

Cyrus H. Tator was hanged for the murder of Isaac N. Neff in the first legal execution of a civilian in Douglas County.

Frederick Krug moved his brewery to a plant at 11th and Jackson Streets and soon occupied the entire block. By the early 1890s, he moved to another plant at 24th and Vinton Streets when he was producing 1,000 barrels of beer each week.

Congress abrogated all existing treaties between the Santee Sioux tribe and the federal government. The Santee were exiled to the Crow Creek reservation in South Dakota where over 300 Santee died, mostly from disease and malnutrition, during their first months there.

1864

The men of the First Regiment Nebraska Volunteers returned home to Omaha amid fanfare, a parade, and a banquet at the Capitol. However, most re-enlisted, changed the unit name to the First Nebraska Veteran Volunteer Cavalry, and rode west when word came of a widespread Indian uprising.

Metz Brothers, including Frederick Sr., Frederick Jr., and Charles Metz, purchased a brewery on the corner of Sixth and Leavenworth Streets and started beer production.

The town of Valley in Douglas County was founded 35 miles from Omaha by way of the old Ox-bow Route. The town site consisted of eighteen

acres owned by the Union Pacific Railroad, which constructed a depot and laid out the town. The first resident, Richard Selsor, built a general store. Other businesses followed in succeeding years.

President Lincoln signed the act of Congress authorizing the people of Nebraska to draft a constitution in preparation for admission into the Union as a state.

1865

Peter A. Sarpy, Indian trader and a noted character in early days, died at Plattsmouth, Nebraska.

The Young Men's Christian Association of Omaha (YMCA) was organized and housed in a two-story building on 12th Street between Farnam and Douglas. Constructed at a cost of \$2,600, it had a library and reading room on the first floor and an assembly hall on the second floor.

Dr. George Miller's newspaper, the Omaha Daily Herald made its appearance.

The first track for the Union Pacific Railroad was laid at the ferry landing on the banks of the Missouri River on July 10th. By September 22nd, ten miles of the road were completed and in use, with materials on hand for 100 additional miles. By the end of the year, track was completed to Fremont. Also in 1865, the railroad's first locomotive, the "General Sherman", arrived in Omaha by steamer traveling up the Missouri River from St. Louis. The locomotive was named for one of the major supporters of the railroad.

St. John's African Methodist Episcopal Church was founded in Omaha, the first black church in the state.

The Omaha City Council approved the construction of four wells and four cisterns located in the intersections of main streets to fight fires.

The town of Elkhorn had its beginning when the Union Pacific Railroad established Elkhorn Station, a place for getting water, storing supplies, and housing employees. The town was platted the following year.

The Omahas sheltered the Winnebagos and sold them land that was part of their reservation in Nebraska ("Ni-bltha-ska: Land of Flat Waters"). The Winnebagos, who had been unfairly forced out of Minnesota during the Civil War, came to Nebraska from the Crow Creek reservation in South

Dakota where they lived unsuccessfully next to their ancient enemies, the Sioux.

1866

The legislature approved a state constitution by a narrow vote. The voters approved it later at a special election in June.

The Department of the Platte of the United States Army was organized with headquarters in Omaha. A military supply depot called The Corral was built at 13th and Webster. Many supplies were purchased from Omaha merchants and all quartermaster, commissary, and paymaster funds went through Omaha banks, creating an economic boon for the city.

The First Nebraska Veteran Volunteer Cavalry was mustered out at Omaha after five years of service against the Confederate States and the Plains Indians.

The Omaha National Bank was organized by Ezra Millard, senior member of Millard, Caldwell and Co., a banking house. Ezra Millard was president, and Joseph N. Field was cashier, although he never actually filled the position. In January 1867, J.H. Millard was appointed cashier. Located at 14th and Douglas, Omaha National Bank opened with a paid up capital of \$50,000.

Andrew J. Simpson received city authorization to purchase a used, hand-pumped fire engine called the Fire King from the city of Davenport, Iowa, for \$695. A two-wheeled, hand-pulled hose reel accompanied the Fire King. The Fire King Engine Company, No. 1 was formed to man the apparatus. In August, Simpson became Omaha's first fire chief over members of both the Pioneer Hook and Ladder Company, No. 1 and the Fire King Engine Company, No. 1.

The Omaha Police Department was organized with four men who were assigned to beats from 8 PM until sunrise. City Marshal "Uncle Billy" Snowden was expected to keep order single-handedly the rest of the time. Thomas Welch became the first police officer killed in the line of duty in Omaha.

The Omaha Medical Society was organized.

Union Pacific Railroad completed a total of 305 miles of track west of Omaha for the transcontinental railroad.

The first big fire in Omaha occurred on November 8th and resulted in \$106,900 in property losses. Nearly everything on the south side of Farnam Street between 13th and 14th Streets was destroyed, including the grocery store of Alfred D. Jones. Arson was suspected.

Joseph Barker Jr. returned to Omaha from England to oversee the family's real estate interests and investments. He continued a series of letters to his family in England regarding family business matters and every day life in Omaha.

The federal government settled the Santee Sioux on a reservation in northeast Nebraska. This marked the last phase in the tragic removal of the Santee from their homeland in Minnesota to South Dakota and finally to Nebraska.

James G. and Samuel D. Megeath bought the outfit and equipment of the McCoy Distillery in Council Bluffs at a government condemnation sale. Peter E. and Joseph D. Iler and Marsh Kennard were partners in the enterprise. The plant was moved to Omaha, and the business of making alcohol and whisky began.

Omaha's first city directory was compiled and published by Charles Collins. It contained "a general resident and business directory of the citizens, and an appendix containing a great variety of historical data, statistics and facts".

1867 By proclamation of President Andrew Johnson, Nebraska became the 37th state of the Union on March 1st. The State Government of Nebraska was inaugurated on March 27th.

Territorial Governor Alvin Saunders signed a bill locating the State Institute for the Deaf and Dumb in Omaha.

In June, Governor David Butler signed a bill passed by the legislature to move the capital from Omaha to Lincoln.

The first Omaha post of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was organized as a patriotic society of the soldiers who served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Other posts were formed during the next two decades.

The first train on the Chicago and North Western Railroad arrived at the Missouri River opposite Omaha, our first direct rail link via Chicago to the East.

The Omaha Horse Railway Company was incorporated by an act of the legislature.

St. Philomena Cathedral at 9th and Harney was completed at a cost of \$50,000. It was furnished with the first pipe organ ever brought to Omaha. The ladies of the parish donated the \$4000 organ.

The Trinity Episcopal congregation built a new church at 18th Street and Capitol Avenue and moved from its previous location at 9th and Farnam Streets. However, fire damaged the new structure the following year. Parishioners then built a chapel—a mission church—next to the cathedral which stood in the middle of Capitol Avenue. The chapel became known as “the Church in the Middle of the Street”.

The Academy of Music, Omaha’s first real theater, opened. The two-story, 750-seat theater was located in the center section of the new Caldwell Block on the south side of Douglas between 13th and 14th Streets.

A three-stall, two-story fire station was built on the southwest corner of 16th and Farnam for \$4,241.61. Both companies moved into the new Firemen’s Hall. Andrew J. Simpson continued as fire chief, or chief engineer, until June 1868.

1868

“Sherman Barracks” or “Camp Sherman”, honoring Lt. General William Tecumseh Sherman, was established as a supply fort by Captain William Sinclair, 3rd U.S. Artillery. It was located on an 82.5 acre tract four miles north of Omaha and 1.5 miles south of Florence. In the same year, the federal government purchased this parcel of land from Augustus Kountze for the purpose of establishing a military reservation at what today is 30th and Fort Streets. Later the same year, the name was changed to “Omaha Barracks”.

Omaha continued its role as outfitter for the West as business and industry expanded. The railroads made the city’s future secure. Businesses including mills, bakeries, packing houses, smelters, and machine shops opened.

Official state records were moved from Omaha to Lincoln, the new capital of Nebraska.

The Omaha Gas Company was organized.

Construction began on the horse-drawn Omaha Street Railway.

Council Bluffs' street transportation is inaugurated with a mule car.

The first train from St. Joseph, Missouri reached Council Bluffs, and a rail line from Council Bluffs to Sioux City was completed.

A financial compromise between Omaha and Council Bluffs was reached for construction of the Union Pacific Railroad Bridge over the Missouri River.

The first Bohemians or Czech immigrants settled in Omaha along South Thirteenth Street. Most worked in South Omaha packing houses while three-fourths of them owned their own homes and a few rose in professional and business fields. They were one of the best organized nationalities in Omaha. For instance, the Sokol, a society that promoted gymnastic and cultural activities, is still well known today.

St. Mary Magdalene Church was dedicated on Christmas Day. Located on Douglas Street between 16th and 17th Streets, it became known as the "Little German Church" or the "Doll Church".

General Ulysses S. Grant visited Omaha.

The first Knights of Pythias Lodge in Omaha was organized.

The first business that could properly be called a "department store" was begun by Ross and Cruikshank on the northeast corner of 14th and Farnam Streets. The inventory inside the small frame structure consisted mostly of dry goods and notions along with a department of household furnishings. Ross and Cruikshank eventually became Thomas Kilpatrick & Company in 1895. The new company emphasized a wholesale and retail trade in dry goods and women's furnishings.

Florence Mill, one of the leading flour mills in Douglas County, began when George Hugg and Jacob Weber built a sawmill at Florence. They added a grist mill in 1874.

1869

The first session of the legislature was convened in Lincoln.

Omaha was declared a “City of the First Class” by an act of the legislature.

A joint resolution was adopted by the legislature submitting the question of holding a constitutional convention to the people of the state. Although a convention met for two months and produced a constitution, the voters ultimately rejected it.

The Nebraska Legislature donated the old territorial capitol building at 20th and Dodge Streets to Omaha to be used as a high school. Upon closer inspection, the old capitol building on the hill was declared unsafe and torn down in 1870. Construction of the new “Omaha High School” was completed in 1871 at the same location. In its first year, the school used all but one of its 28 rooms for primary grades. Its first graduating class in 1876 consisted of nine girls and two boys.

The headquarters of the Union Pacific Railroad was located at the four-story Herndon House Hotel on the northeast corner of 9th and Farnam Streets.

The tracks of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroads were joined at Promontory Summit, Utah completing the transcontinental railroad. Thomas Durant drove the golden spike uniting the two railroads on May 10th. The citizens of Omaha and the nation took note of the event with wild celebrations.

The Omaha Street Railway Company opened.

Omaha’s first gas works was constructed at a cost of \$150,000. For the first time, street lights and some homes were lit by gas.

The Nebraska School for the Deaf and Dumb opened in Omaha.

The Omaha Medical College, the first school of medicine in Nebraska, was founded.

Wahoo was founded.

Between 1846 and 1869, more than 70,000 Mormons traveled west along the Mormon Trail to Salt Lake City. Omaha was a favorite stopping place not only because it was close to Winter Quarters, but also because the Missouri River was the last point on the trail at which to buy supplies

and equipment for the remainder of the trek west. Omaha merchants such as Megeath & Co. did a brisk business that ran as high as \$2,000 a day as outfitters for Mormon wagon trains. The company continued to do a forwarding and commission business with the Mormons by providing them with portable warehouses for the storage of their goods along the way as track for the Union Pacific Railroad was being built. Megeath & Co. did business with the Mormons that amounted to \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000 annually during this period.

John I. Blair, an official of the Sioux City & Pacific Railroad, purchased a 1,075-acre tract of land, platted it and named it after himself. The land had belonged to the Carter brothers and other early settlers in the area. Lots were sold at auction, and by the end of the year, residents voted to move the Washington County seat to the growing town of Blair.

The Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific and the Burlington and Missouri River Railroads reached Council Bluffs.

1870

Omaha's population was 16,083. Nebraska's population was 122,993 and that of rural Douglas County was 3,899. Council Bluffs had 10,020 residents.

Omaha was made a Port of Entry by an act of Congress, and S.A. Orchard was appointed the first Surveyor of Customs.

The Omaha Smelting Company was organized.

For the first time, a partially paid fire department was created. The fire chief, assistant chief, engineers, drivers and stokers became paid employees while other members remained as volunteers in service to the city. A new Gamewell Fire Alarm system was installed that used telegraph technology to report fires. The Gamewell system was used in Omaha for 85 years until it was replaced in 1955.

St. Joseph's Hospital opened at 12th and Marcy Streets. St. James Orphanage was founded.

The town of Ashland was organized with a population of 653.

The towns of Greenwood and Papillion were founded.

1871 David Cook opened the first meatpacking establishment in Omaha. Another early meatpacking plant was established by Giesselman and Potter.

The name of the post office was changed from “Omaha City” to “Omaha”.

Edward Rosewater established the Omaha Bee newspaper.

Ezra Millard purchased land from E.A. Perley that adjoined Dr. Harvey Link’s farm about ten miles southwest of Omaha, platted it, and offered lots for sale in the new town of Millard. The ground also straddled the Union Pacific tracks. At the time, the only building in the town was the farmhouse of Henry Kelsey. By this time also, Ezra Millard was a successful banker, cable-railway investor, hotel builder, civic leader and mayor of Omaha from 1869-1871.

Waterloo was platted on lands owned by J.H. Logan and G.A. Kelsey. The Union Pacific, in return for building a depot, was given a half interest in the town site. Waterloo is located on the west bank of the Elkhorn River and the Union Pacific Railroad and is 31 miles from Omaha by way of the old Ox-bow Route. A post office, school and store were established there in the 1860s.

The mother of Joseph Barker Jr. died in England. Joseph’s letters to his family stopped.

1872 James E. Boyd opened a meatpacking plant and became a leading packer along with David Cook and J. Phipps Roe.

The Union Pacific Railroad Bridge across the Missouri River was completed and opened to traffic.

The first United States Courthouse and Post Office was built in Omaha.

A new four-story, red brick structure took the place of the old territorial capitol building at 20th and Dodge Streets and was the new location for Omaha High School. Built for \$225,000 on an impressive ten-acre campus, its 150-foot tower dominated the horizon. John H. Kellom was the first principal.

The Omaha Public Library was opened.

The publication offices of the Omaha Daily Bee were destroyed by fire.

An earthquake was recorded in Omaha for the first time.

Andrew J. Hanscom and James G. Megeath donated 73 acres of land for Hanscom Park, the city's first park that was named for Hanscom. It became a showpiece for other parks to follow.

Grand Duke Alexis, brother of the Czar of Russia, arrived in Omaha as a guest of General Philip Sheridan. At a social event were Colonel George Custer, "Buffalo Bill" Cody, Mayor Smith Caldwell, Governor William James and others. The Grand Duke visited Omaha on his way to the plains for a buffalo hunt.

The Nebraska State Board of Agriculture adopted J. Sterling Morton's Arbor Day Resolution, and the first observation of Arbor Day in Nebraska took place.

1873

The era of street improvements began when a radical grade was established for St. Mary's Avenue. Opposition developed, and a compromise was reached. Street improvements included the removal of large amounts of earth as hills were graded down and ravines filled.

The town of Millard began to grow when the Union Pacific Railroad constructed a section house and depot there. A mill, the Millard House Hotel, a new schoolhouse, and several businesses opened during the next few years.

One of the worst snowstorms in the history of the West occurred in April. Telegraph lines were torn down, railroad traffic was impeded, and there was heavy loss of life and property. Three persons perished in the open country just east of Council Bluffs.

The Grand Central Hotel opened at 14th and Farnam Streets as the most elegant hotel in Omaha. The interior included fireplaces, imported chandeliers and mirrors. A large hotel, it was built to take the place of the Herndon House, now the UP headquarters.

The Nebraska State Fair was held on the site of the Douglas County Fair Grounds in north Omaha on land located between Boyd and Laird Streets, 16th and 20th Streets that eventually was developed into residential blocks.

The second proposal for a constitutional convention was submitted to the people by the Legislature in Lincoln.

1874-1875 Omaha suffered from the economic depression and hard times because of the grasshopper plague that destroyed crops. For months, wagon caravans of disappointed settlers from the West passed through Omaha on their way East. Grasshoppers were a nuisance in Omaha as well.

1874 The first U.S. Post Office and Customs House was completed at 15th and Dodge at a cost of \$300,000. The building also housed the federal courts and was the scene of the trial of Ponca Chief Standing Bear five years later.

Edward Creighton died at the age of 54 without having written a will. His widow, Mary Lucretia, died fourteen months later. It was her will that contained a bequest of \$100,000 to buy land for the purpose of establishing a nontuition Catholic college for boys that became Creighton University. John Andrew Creighton, executor of Mary Lucretia's will, became co-founder of the new school.

Samuel D. Beals became superintendent of the Omaha Public Schools. He accomplished the task of grading the public schools from primary through high school levels and later taught at Omaha High School from 1880-1900.

Roman Catholic Bishop James O'Gorman died and was succeeded by the Rt. Reverend James O'Connor who was appointed Vicar General of Nebraska and titular Bishop of Dibona.

1875 The Omaha Fire Department relied on water stored in cisterns for fighting fires between 1865 and 1881. Some were used as late as 1899, long after the city had a waterworks system. Each cistern had a capacity of 1,000 barrels, or 31,500 gallons of water, not enough to fight a really big fire.

McCormick, Barriger, and Davis built the first grain elevator in Omaha.

By now, the Douglas County Agricultural Society had merged into the Omaha Driving Park Association, a corporation that purchased and operated forty acres of racing grounds north of Omaha in an area bounded by 16th and 20th Streets, Laird to Boyd Streets. The site was the location of the Douglas County Fair since 1858. The Driving Park Association built a good race track and several buildings and fenced the

grounds. County fairs, and later the Nebraska State Fair, were held on the racing grounds for several years.

Omaha citizens organized the Nebraska Humane Society.

The Nebraska State Bar Association was established.

President Ulysses S. Grant, accompanied by Mrs. Julia Grant, some of the cabinet officers and others, visited Omaha in November.

King Kalakaua of the Hawaiian Islands stopped in Omaha for a visit.

The Union Pacific Railroad Depot was completed and became affectionately known as the "Cow Shed". The UP Dining Hall and Emigrant House was located to the east of the "Cow Shed".

General George Crook was appointed Commander of the Department of the Platte. Crook had a reputation as the army's most successful Plains Indian fighter.

The first African American Masonic Lodge was established, Rough Ashler Lodge, Missouri Jurisdiction of the Prince Hall Masons.

The Sarpy County seat moved from Bellevue to Papillion where it remains today.

The Nebraska Constitution was revised to contain a provision that limited membership to no more than 100 members in the House and no more than 33 in the Senate, formerly referred to as the Council during the territorial period.

1876

A meeting of the governors and scientists of the western states was held in Omaha to develop means of exterminating the grasshoppers which were a problem across the region.

Mary Lucretia Creighton, widow of Edward Creighton, died and left \$100,000 for establishment of a college to realize her husband's dream.

The first graduating class of Omaha High School, the city's first public high school, had eleven members, nine girls and two boys.

Electrical engineers rigged lights up in the tower at Omaha High School to give Omaha its first demonstration of electric lights on July 4th, the nation's centennial anniversary.

Dom Pedro II, Emperor of Brazil, visited Omaha, accompanied by three of his royal advisers.

The U.S. Supreme Court handed down a decision that upheld the claim made by representatives of Council Bluffs that the western Iowa town was the official eastern terminus of the Union Pacific Railroad.

1877

During a minor flood, the Missouri River suddenly changed its channel and a pear-shaped piece of land that had been part of Iowa ended up on the Nebraska side of the river. "Cut-Off Lake", later known as "Carter Lake", consists of 1,600 acres that became a subject of dispute between the two states.

The two eastern spans of the Union Pacific Railroad Bridge over the Missouri River were wrecked by a tornado.

Employees of the Smelting Works struck against a reduction in wages. The matter was resolved by arbitration later the same month.

Construction of Creighton College began on a seven-acre site northwest of Capitol Hill. The land was purchased from five individual parties at a total cost of \$12,000.

The Ponca Tribe, original inhabitants of Nebraska, was forced to relocate to Oklahoma Indian Territory. Eventually, the forced removal led to a split in the tribe into the Northern and Southern bands.

The YMCA was reorganized and put on a more secure basis.

The Omaha City Council assigned a quarter-mill tax levy and raised it to a half mill the following year as a means of support for the Omaha Public Library.

1878

Creighton College opened as a grade school with 120 boys and six faculty members. By January, 1879, student enrollment peaked at 170. Eventually, the school began teaching college-level courses. Founders of Creighton College were Edward and Mary Lucretia (Wareham) Creighton and John and Sarah Emily (Wareham) Creighton.

A vigilance committee of 150 members was organized in Omaha “to suppress crime”.

Omaha got a new street numbering system.

The Grand Central at 14th and Farnam, Omaha’s finest hotel, was destroyed by fire. Built to replace the Herndon House, it was the pride of Omaha for five years. The hotel was closed for renovation when the fire started from a candle that was carelessly left burning by a worker. Tragically, five firefighters lost their lives in the inferno, the first to be killed in the line of duty in Omaha. The building was a complete loss with damage estimated at \$300,000.

“Omaha Barracks” was renamed Fort Omaha when it became Headquarters for the Department of the Platte, a territory that stretched from the Missouri River into Montana and from Canada to Texas. General George Crook was the Department Commander. Quarters One (the General Crook House Museum today) was built for him at Fort Omaha for about \$7,800.

1879

The two-day trial of Ponca Chief Standing Bear, Standing Bear v. Crook, began in United States District Court in Omaha on May 1st and attracted widespread attention. Judge Elmer Dundy rendered his verdict on May 12th in favor of Standing Bear, saying for the first time, that a Native American is a human being with rights of citizenship under U.S. law.

Telephone service was introduced to Omahans when the Omaha Electric Company was organized. The first exchange was established shortly afterwards. The first telephone directory was printed and included 121 listings.

General Ulysses S. Grant, former President, and his wife, Julia, stopped in Omaha on their return trip from a journey around the world.

An Omaha team played its first professional baseball game as part of the Northwestern League. Although this league lasted only one year, the Western League followed and provided young Omaha males the chance to play baseball for professional and semi-professional teams.

Creighton College was incorporated as Creighton University although it remained a grade school until the late 1880s.

John A. Creighton, his cousin James, “Long Jim” Creighton and John A. McShane purchased the Omaha Nail Company and turned it into a thriving enterprise. The company employed 85 workers who produced 350 kegs of nails a day.

The Women’s Christian Temperance Union of Omaha was organized in June at the Methodist Church on Davenport Street. Within a few months, a large number of female members of other large influential churches enrolled as members.

1880 Omaha’s population was 30,518. Nebraska’s population was 452,000 and that of rural Douglas County was 7,127. Council Bluffs had a population of 18,063.

A riot at the Smelting Works resulted in Governor Nance’s ordering out the state militia to restore order. This was Omaha’s first major strike.

The Nebraska School of Medicine was established with fourteen students, two of them women. The following year the school took the name and charter of the Omaha Medical College.

President Rutherford B. Hayes, accompanied by Mrs. Hayes, General W.T. Sherman and others, spent a few hours in Omaha, visiting Fort Omaha and other points of interest.

The grounds of the Omaha Driving Park Association were sold to a group of businessmen that included John D. Creighton, James E. Boyd and W.A. Paxton. The new owners spent \$14,000-\$15,000 to improve the grounds, and for several years after this, the Nebraska State Fair was held here.

Irvington consisted of a general store, a schoolhouse, and a small Congregational church. Established several years earlier, the village served as a trading center on the Military Road.

The Synod of the Nebraska Presbytery approved Bellevue as the site of a new Presbyterian institution of higher learning. On October 16th, Bellevue College was organized, the Articles of Incorporation signed, and the Board of Trustees elected.

Roman Catholic Bishop James O’Connor purchased twelve acres known as Park Place at a location that later became 36th and Burt Streets. His goal was to establish a Catholic boarding school for girls. The site was purchased from Frederick B. Lowe for \$2,533.34.

John Elk, a Winnebago Indian, filed suit in U.S. Court in Elk v. Wilkins. At issue was registrar Charles Wilkins' refusal to allow Elk to register to vote even though Elk had renounced his ties to the Winnebago Tribe and had lived among whites in Omaha for more than a year. Elk sought \$6,000 in damages. Attorneys Andrew J. Poppleton and John L. Webster argued that Elk was a U.S. citizen under the Fourteenth Amendment whose right to register and vote was protected by the Fifteenth Amendment. The court ruled against Elk. An appeal was taken to the U.S. Supreme Court.

George Joslyn opened an office of the Western Newspaper Union at 523 South 13th Street, which printed inserts for small-town weeklies. At the time of his death in 1916, Joslyn had created a virtual monopoly of the "auxiliary printing" in the U.S., owning 31 plants in 25 states that serviced about 12,000 newspapers.

The City of Omaha awarded a contract to the City Waterworks Company for construction, maintenance and operation of a waterworks system for 25 years. It required the plant to be built and in operation within two years. A clause in the contract gave the city the right to purchase the system when the franchise expired.

1881 Boyd's Opera House at 15th and Farnam opened. With a seating capacity of 1,700, it expanded Omaha's facilities for musical and dramatic theater.

The City Waterworks Company completed construction of Omaha's first waterworks and sewer system using direct pressure and gravity systems. A pumping station located close to the river and north of the Omaha Smelting Works had a capacity of 5,000,000 gallons. It delivered water to a storage reservoir on Walnut Hill, 305 feet above the low water mark of the Missouri River. Capacity of the reservoir was 10,000,000 gallons. The new system included seventeen miles of pipes and went into operation in September.

Mother Margaret Dunne and the Religious of the Sacred Heart opened the Sacred Heart Convent and Academy at a temporary location in a rented house at 9th and Howard Streets in October. Enrollment at the new boarding school for girls was three. By Christmas, enrollment grew to fifteen at the school that later became known as Duchesne College.

Following a renowned winter in the northern Plains that is recalled in the writings of O.E. Rolvaag and Laura Ingalls Wilder, the Missouri River rose 23 feet in one of Omaha's greatest floods. The lower parts of the city

were submerged, business suspended, and property damage was high. The “Great Flood of 1881” covered low ground five miles wide between Omaha and Council Bluffs. Lake Manawa was created as a result of this flood.

The Omaha Medical College was incorporated as the new Nebraska School of Medicine.

An amendment to the state constitution to give women the right to vote was passed by the legislature, but voters rejected it in the next general election in 1882 by almost a two-to-one margin.

The Nebraska State Farmers’ Alliance was organized.

Jonas L. Brandeis, founder of the Brandeis Department Store chain, opened his first store called The Fair at 506 South 13th Street. The business prospered and was later operated as the Boston Store.

The first hydraulic elevator in Omaha was installed in a large brick office building at 1115-1117 Farnam Street, the first four-story business/office building in the city.

Former Fire Chief Joseph F. Sheeley (or Sheely) opened a packing house at 27th and Martha Streets. The nearby neighborhood soon bustled with immigrants who came to work at the plant. The area became known as “Sheeleytown”.

Springfield, Sarpy County, was founded on October 1st. One year later, the town had a population of 300 residents.

1882 Omaha officially became the county seat of Douglas County. The second Douglas County Court House was completed.

State militia and Federal troops were called out to settle the railroad workers’ strike of workmen on the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad.

A Board of Public Works was created with James Creighton, a cousin of Edward and John, as chairman. Work to improve the streets was started. Omaha’s first asphalt pavement was laid on Douglas Street, from 14th to 16th Streets.

Street improvements included drastic changes in the contours of the downtown bluffs. Ridges were graded down and ravines filled. Steam-powered shovels dug out the dirt under buildings that were jacked up and lowered to their new settings when the work was done. Three steam engines and about forty dump cars ran on special train tracks to remove the dirt which was used to fill in low-lying areas in Omaha and Council Bluffs. As an example, Harney, Farnam and Douglas Streets were lowered at least forty feet. The street redesign project took nearly forty years to complete and cost \$4 million.

A rally in support of women's suffrage was held in Omaha. A proposed state constitutional amendment for women's suffrage sparked a bitter battle. The two daily newspapers, the Omaha Bee and the Omaha Herald, were opposed to the amendment. Suffragists Susan B. Anthony, Belvill Lockwood and Phoebe Cousins advocated for the measure and challenged the opponents to a joint debate. In September, Anthony debated Edward Rosewater of the Bee in front of a large crowd at Boyd's Opera House. A few days later, Phoebe Cousins met Gilbert M. Hitchcock of the Herald in a debate before a large house at the same location. Voters defeated the proposed amendment at the general election in November.

Whistles were issued to Omaha police officers.

A sleighing contest was held between Omaha and Council Bluffs.

The Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad (the Milwaukee Road) entered Council Bluffs.

The first Paxton Hotel was built at 14th and Farnam Streets on the site once occupied by the Grand Central Hotel which was destroyed by fire four years earlier.

Wyoming cattle baron Alexander H. Swan, and two Omaha businessmen, Leverett M. Anderson and C.R. Schaller, purchased 1,875 acres of land southwest of Omaha this year and in 1883. Much of it was later platted as South Omaha with some of it to become the site of a livestock market center. Total price of the 1,875 acres was \$312,972.73 or about \$167 an acre.

General George Crook left Fort Omaha to command the Department of the Arizona.

The English actor/playwright Oscar Wilde appeared in Omaha.

Sacred Heart Convent and Academy opened at Park Place on the corner of 36th and Burt Streets in November. Enrollment was seventeen girls who were boarding school students. Bishop James O'Connor deeded the property at Park Place to the Religious of the Sacred Heart for \$1.00 in September. The Society of the Sacred Heart bore the expense for construction of the new building that housed the nuns and their students.

The Nebraska Telephone Company was incorporated and took over the business previously established by the Omaha Electric Company, the first telephone service provider in Omaha.

Omaha Indians voiced opposition to a new federal law that ended official recognition of their tribal status and awarded lands to them in severalty to individual Indian families. Lands in the western part of the reservation were sold to white settlers, but the tribe received few of the proceeds from the sales. Although now subject to state law, Nebraska law failed to protect the Omahas. Attempts at self-government failed. Within four years, the tribe's collective strength was significantly impaired, and its members were unable to manage their own affairs. Agents' reports of the deteriorating conditions of the Omahas were ignored. Instead, the Omaha "experiment" became the model for the 1887 Dawes Act which allotted the lands of many other tribes in severalty with similar disastrous results as those experienced by the Omahas. The allotment policy contained in the Dawes Act accelerated the detribalization process for numerous tribes.

1883

Omaha was connected by telephone with Lincoln and Plattsmouth.

Telegraph operators all over the United States went on strike.

Buffalo Bill's Wild West, Rocky Mountain and Prairie Exhibition made its first appearance on May 17th on the old fair grounds in north Omaha. The land was owned by the Omaha Driving Park Association. After its initial appearance in Omaha, the exhibition toured America and Europe and achieved world-wide fame.

William A. Paxton helped organize the Union Stockyards Company of Omaha (Limited) and the South Omaha Land Company. Other investors in the new stock yards company included Alexander H. Swan, John A.

Creighton, Peter E. Iler, John A. McShane, Thomas Swobe and Frank Murphy.

Classes at Bellevue College began in residences close to Clarke Hall, then under construction.

The cornerstone for Clarke Hall, the first classroom building at Bellevue College, was laid on Elk Hill, the sacred burial ground of Omaha Chief Big Elk, amid fanfare and celebration. Big Elk's grave and those of others were relocated closer to the entrance of the new classroom building. Bellevue businessman, Henry Tefft Clarke, contributed \$20,000 to the construction of the new facility.

The Northwestern Electric Light Company began business by establishing the city's first power house in the Strang Building at 10th and Farnam. It was the first company in Nebraska to operate arc and incandescent lights. Northwestern also got a five-year street lighting contract in 1883. The Sperry Electric Light Company was organized the same year.

The town of Waterloo was incorporated in January.

Clarkson Hospital was dedicated under the name Childs Hospital and Home.

Temperance leader Francis Willard spoke in Omaha.

A new Trinity Episcopal Cathedral replaced "the Church in the Middle of the Street" at 18th Street and Capitol Avenue.

The congregation of Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church built a new church at 16th and Harney Streets and occupied this site until it was sold in 1904.

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) was organized by Omaha women to provide practical assistance to women and children. The YWCA was first housed in three rented rooms in the old city hall building.

1884 The Union Stockyards in South Omaha received its first shipment of livestock—531 longhorns from Medicine Bow, Wyoming. In the beginning, the Union Stockyards operated as a feeding station for stock en route to eastern markets such as Chicago. The first livestock exchange building was in the former farmhouse of Frederic Drexel.

South Omaha was founded, surveyed and the plat recorded on July 18th. The tract was named South Omaha. The town developed in the vicinity of the stock yards on land originally owned by the South Omaha Land Company.

Temple Israel, the first synagogue in Omaha and Nebraska, was built and consecrated at 23rd and Harney Streets where it served the congregation until 1908.

The Omaha Club, the city's oldest social club, was organized with a membership of 245. It became the prototype for several country clubs in later years.

Fundraising in the predominantly Danish community of Blair resulted in \$3,000 in matching funds that were used to establish a folk high school of the kind residents were familiar with in Denmark. Founder of the new school that became Trinity Seminary was Pastor A.M. Andersen, who held classes for students in his home until a building was ready for occupancy on the new campus two years later. Even though classes focused on training men for the ministry, students studied theological and general academic subjects.

Upon completion of Clarke Hall, all 35 students enrolled in Bellevue College physically moved everything from blackboard erasers to desks up the hill into the gleaming new three-story structure in October.

Gottlieb Storz and J.D. Iler purchased the Baumann Brewery where Storz had been foreman and started beer production. The new Storz Brewing Company was located at 1819 Sherman Avenue, known today as North 16th Street.

The first transcontinental mail service became available in Omaha. Burlington "Fast Mail" began service between Chicago and Council Bluffs, linking to this service west from Omaha.

The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the lower court ruling in Elk v. Wilkins in a seven-two decision. The court maintained that the Fourteenth Amendment did not grant citizenship to Indians. On that basis, the Fifteenth Amendment's protection of the right of citizens to register and vote was denied. The ruling was a setback for Indian citizenship which ultimately was granted to all Native Americans in 1924.

The first residential electric service was provided in the knob hill area south of the Union and Burlington stations close to Brownell Hall. The rate was 23 cents per kilowatt hour.

1885

Gilbert Hitchcock founded the Omaha Evening World, a newspaper dedicated to presenting the news in an unbiased manner.

Omaha was designated a See within the Catholic Church. Bishop James O'Connor oversaw the largest bishopric in the country. The territory included Nebraska, Dakota, Wyoming, and the eastern part of Montana. Saint Philomena Cathedral was the seat of the Omaha See.

The Thompson-Houston Company was organized and soon was reorganized as the New Omaha Thompson-Houston Electric Light Company. Eventually, it provided power to the Northwestern Electric Light Company. The Sperry Electric Light Company was consolidated with the new Thompson-Houston Company in 1885.

Forest Lawn Cemetery was established.

The Knights of Labor organized its first assembly, Local Assembly No. 2845, at 1412 Farnam. Most of the 800 members were employees of the Union Pacific Railroad. Because it grew so quickly, other assemblies were organized soon afterwards.

The Douglas County Courthouse at 17th and Farnam Streets opened. The growth of the city and the increase in the volume of county business made it necessary to build this larger, more substantial building in less than 25 years.

The town of Millard was incorporated.

Receipts of livestock for the first full year of operations at the Union Stock Yards in South Omaha totaled 117,000 head of cattle, 153,000 hogs, 19,000 sheep, and 2,000 horses and mules. The Union Stock Yards Company spent \$60,000 to build a packing plant that was leased to George H. Hammond & Co., the first big national packing house to locate at the Omaha stock yards. At the end of the three-year lease, the property was given to the Hammond Company. Fowler Brothers of Chicago was given a \$200,000 bonus to locate in Omaha in a packing house built for them that was rent-free for five years. Larger than the one built for the Hammond Company, it had a capacity of 4,000 hogs per day.

Trinity Seminary was organized in Blair. Articles of Incorporation were adopted and signed. Pastor A.M. Andersen was elected president. The seminary eventually shared its campus with Dana College which arrived later.

The state legislature passed a civil rights statute guaranteeing equality to all citizens of Nebraska, but it was rarely enforced. Widespread discrimination against African Americans, Asians, Hispanics and Native Americans continued.

1886 South Omaha was incorporated as a village.

The Omaha Posten, the Midwest's only large Swedish weekly newspaper, was founded.

John S. Prince, world bicycle champion, raced Albert Schock, former champion, fifty miles for \$100 and a percentage of the gate at Omaha.

Calvary Baptist Church was organized.

Armour-Cudahy Packing Company completed a huge new packing house that had a capacity of 5,000 hogs per day. It was built on land given to Armour-Cudahy from the Union Stock Yards Company. The stock yards company also provided a \$350,000 bonus to Armour-Cudahy for building at the Omaha yards. The same year, G.F. Swift of Chicago was awarded \$200,000 and eleven acres of land upon which to build an immense new beef packing house that opened later in 1886.

John A. Creighton helped incorporate and became a director of the Stockyards National Bank.

The Omaha Illuminating Company was incorporated. For ten years, it leased all the rights and interests of the Northwestern Company and purchased its power from the Thompson-Houston Company. By 1901, the Thompson-Houston Company absorbed the interests of the Northwestern Company and its successor, the Omaha Illuminating Company. The South Omaha Electric Light, Heat and Power Company also became part of Thompson-Houston.

General George Crook was reassigned to Fort Omaha as Commander of the Department of the Platte where he served until 1888.

Herman Kountze donated to the trustees of Brownell Hall a new site on 10th Street near Worthington Street close to the location of Grace University today. In addition, he gave a generous donation to a fund for construction of a new large four-story school building. Omaha businessmen received word that a vein of coal had been struck at 4th and Prince Streets.

Gretna was founded on eighty acres of land purchased from the Lincoln Land Company for \$560. Located ten miles west of Omaha, the town's development was spurred by the Burlington Northern Railroad.

The town of Elkhorn was incorporated.

A new four-story main building that became known as "Old Main" was dedicated in October at Trinity Seminary in Blair. It was built on land donated by three Blair residents. Construction costs were borne by the town's citizens and members of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church Association, known as the Blair Synod. During the same year, an academy or high school was organized and shared the new building with Trinity Seminary.

1887 The round house of the Missouri Pacific Railroad in Omaha was destroyed by fire.

The first electric street railway was completed.

Street car lines were laid between Omaha and South Omaha.

President Grover Cleveland and his wife, accompanied by Mr. Cleveland's private secretary and some of his Cabinet officers, spent a few hours in Omaha.

The Creche, the oldest organized charity in Omaha, was founded to care for the children of working mothers.

Dr. George L. Miller sold the Omaha Daily Herald to John A. McShane.

An area now comprising much of North Omaha was annexed to Omaha.

Benson Village, an Omaha suburb, was platted by Erastus Benson who attracted buyers by hiring Buffalo Jones to graze herds of buffalo along the Military Road.

East Omaha, an Omaha suburb, was founded by the CB&Q (Chicago, Burlington & Quincy) Railroad's East Omaha Land Company with Richard C. Cushing as president. A total of \$300,000 was spent to clear low-lying land of willows and to grade streets before lots were offered for sale.

The Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad founded the town of Irvington when the railroad built a station there.

The town of Bennington was established twenty miles northwest of Omaha when the Chicago and North Western Railroad took over the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad. Named for a Revolutionary War battle, its streets were named after the participating generals.

The Winnebago Tribe lost three-fourths of its reservation land during the Allotment Era of 1887-1934. The period was marked by tribal conflict that resulted in half of the tribe moving back to Wisconsin to form its own political unit.

By proclamation of the governor, South Omaha was designated a city of the second class when it met the requirement with a population of more than 5,000 persons.

The original South Omaha High School was located at 25th and L Streets. The school produced its first graduating class of five graduates in 1892.

The YWCA made plans to establish a home at 19th and Dodge Streets for young women working to support themselves. The following year, the Women's Exchange was established at 1617 Farnam Street where "articles of home manufacture" were sold.

The congregation of Westminster Presbyterian Church was organized.

The City Marshall position was renamed the Chief of Police.

The Omaha Central Labor Union was chartered by the American Federation of Labor (AFL). It included all twenty-one local unions of different trades in Omaha, each of which was affiliated with the AFL.

Immanuel Hospital was founded.

William "Pa" Rourke started as a third baseman in the Omaha League and became a dominant figure in establishing organized baseball in Omaha.

The Nebraska Legislature passed an anti-miscegenation law that forbade marriage between whites and Japanese, Chinese and Negroes using the ¼ blood rule, i.e., a grandparent.

1888

A sudden fierce blizzard on January 12th brought life to a standstill in Nebraska and Omaha/Douglas County. A howling wind whipped the snow for twelve to eighteen hours into drifts that killed thousands of head of livestock across the state. Many persons died. In Omaha and Douglas County, winds of 42 miles per hour created enormous snowdrifts, and temperatures fell to thirty degrees below zero in a matter of hours. Omaha got 34 inches of snow. The severe weather conditions resulted in the deaths of two Omahans a few hundred feet from their homes. No human lives were lost in rural Douglas County, but livestock losses were high.

The Douglas Street Bridge connecting Omaha with Council Bluffs was dedicated and opened to traffic.

The first electric trolley cars of the Omaha Motor Railway Company began running.

Joseph LaFlesche, last great Chief of the Omaha Indians, died.

The Lininger Art Gallery opened at 18th and Davenport behind the home of G.W. Lininger, wealthy businessman and art collector. The Omaha Woman's Club met there regularly.

St. John Catholic Church on the Creighton campus was dedicated. Also at Creighton College, Father M.A. McGinnis, S.J., established the League of the Cross temperance society and invited "all Catholic students to stand up and swear off" drinking. Not mentioned was the fact that most Creighton students at the time were in grade school.

Fort Crook, an Army infantry post, was established in Sarpy County.

The parish of St. Cecilia was founded as well as St. Agnes Church in South Omaha.

The Coliseum was built at 20th and Lake Streets at a cost of \$45,000 by a stock company that included Samuel E. Rogers, Julius Meyer, William Mardis, E.S. Flagg and John S. Prince. A frame structure, 200 x 300 feet, the Coliseum had a seating capacity of 8,000 with standing room only for about the same number. Designed as a concert and convention center,

the building also was used for bicycle races and walking and running contests.

The Boston Store on the northwest corner of 16th and Douglas Streets opened at 114 South 16th Street. Jonas Brandeis built the department store in partnership with his three sons—Arthur, Hugo and Emil—who ran the store under the firm name of J.L. Brandeis & Sons.

President Grover Cleveland toured Omaha.

The YMCA moved to the four upper floors of a new association building on the corner of Douglas and 16th Streets. Constructed for \$90,000, the ground floor was rented for stores. Pierce C. Himebaugh was instrumental in securing the ground, constructing the building and in putting the YMCA on a firm footing during this period.

Robert and Elia Peattie moved to Omaha from Chicago when Robert was hired as managing editor of the Omaha Daily Herald. Elia began writing features for the Herald which became the Omaha World-Herald in 1889.

1889

The Omaha Waterworks at the Minne Lusa pumping station went into operation on August 1st. The previous pumping plant was moved six miles upriver to Florence where the water supply was free from contamination by sewage. The new station had increased capacity and was more useful than the previous pumping station. Built at a cost of \$1,500,000, the plant processed river water and piped it into homes and businesses. By January, 1891, the city had 158 miles of water pipe and 1,344 fire hydrants.

The Omaha Daily Herald newspaper was purchased, and two papers merged under the name Omaha World-Herald with Gilbert Hitchcock as the chief owner.

The Omaha Park Commission was organized with Dr. George Miller as its first president.

Elmwood Park was acquired. It contained more than 200 acres, much of it donated by businessmen. It had a spring that became a favorite location for country excursions.

The Omaha Horse Railway and Cable Tramway Company were consolidated under the name Omaha Street Railway Company.

The Merchants and Manufacturers Exposition was held.
The New York Life Building, 1650 Farnam, was constructed at a cost of \$750,000. At ten stories, it was Omaha's tallest structure and the city's first skyscraper. Later, it became known as the Omaha Building when Omaha National Bank purchased it.

The Omaha Livestock Exchange was organized.

South Omaha was designated a "City of the First Class" by proclamation of Governor Thayer. South Omaha's population was more than 8,000, but less than 25,000 inhabitants. It was called the "Magic City" because of its phenomenal growth from farmland in 1880 to a booming stockyard and meatpacking town of 26,000 people in 1900.

1890 Census figures revealed Omaha's population was about 102,430. Original census records for 1890 were destroyed by fire. The population of Douglas County was 158,008. Council Bluffs had a census count of 21,474.

Mayor R.C. Cushing and representatives of the Masonic Grand Lodge laid the cornerstone of the new City Hall Building at 18th and Farnam.

James E. Boyd built a second theater at 17th and Harney in addition to the first Boyd's Opera House at 15th and Farnam. During the same year, Boyd became the first Omaha resident to be elected Governor of Nebraska.

The Woodmen of the World Life Insurance Society was founded in Omaha.

The "Big Four" packing plants—Swift & Co., Geo. H. Hammond & Co., the Cudahy Packing Company and the Omaha Packing Company were the cornerstone of business in South Omaha, a city of 8,062 residents.

Omaha was the third-largest pork packing center in the country.

Omaha's first attempt to annex South Omaha failed by only 98 votes.

Buildings of the Carter White Lead Company were destroyed by fire.

The first University of Nebraska football game was played in Omaha against a team from the YMCA. Nebraska won with a score of 10-0.

Henry M. Stanley, the famous African explorer, visited Omaha where he had lived 23 years before as a reporter for the St. Louis Democrat. Mrs. Stanley accompanied him.

The Omaha Driving Park Association was reorganized, and a new tract of land was secured about a mile west of the city limits. Buildings were constructed and a new track one mile long and one hundred feet wide was built for racing and county and state fair purposes.

Omaha ministers protested the publication of newspapers on Sundays.

Roman Catholic Bishop James O'Connor died on May 27th and was succeeded by the Rt. Reverend Richard Scannell, who was installed as bishop on April 12, 1891. Bishop Scannell made the decision to build a new cathedral in Omaha and selected St. Cecilia as the cathedral parish.

Sacred Heart Parish was organized in the area that included Fort Omaha and Kountze Place. A small church and rectory were constructed on 26th Street between Sahler and Sprague. However, low ground that flooded during wet weather made the site unsuitable.

Plumbers Union Local #16 was chartered.

The Tangier Shrine Temple was dedicated in Omaha.

Dundee School opened in a six-room white frame structure near 50th and California Streets.

The town of Valley was incorporated. It became an important shipping point and business center for residents of the Platte and Elkhorn River valleys because of its location at the juncture of two divisions of the Union Pacific Railroad and the rich farming country that surrounds it.

General George Crook died of a heart attack while he was Commander of the Department of the Missouri, headquartered in Chicago. He is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

1890-1894 Omaha and Douglas County suffered from a world-wide economic depression. Crops and gardens were ruined by drought and heat.

1891 Gibson, Miller & Richardson's printing house was destroyed by fire at a loss of \$100,000.

President Benjamin Harrison and party visited Omaha. According to the newspapers, the President addressed “a large and enthusiastic gathering from a speakers’ stand at the corner of Seventeenth and Farnam streets.”

The first Creighton College class of five male students graduated with A.B. degrees.

The 10th Street viaduct opened.

An angry mob stormed the county jail and lynched George Smith, a black man, who was being held for the rape of a five-year-old white girl, Lizzie Yeates. The incident followed the scheduled hanging of convicted murderer, Ed Neal, a white man, earlier the same day.

A branch of the Civil War’s Union Veterans Corp. was organized in Omaha.

Nebraska Savings Bank was renamed Packers National Bank.

Well-known businessman and civic leader, Byron Reed, died and left to the city his coin, manuscript, and rare-book collections and a valuable piece of property at 18th and Harney Streets. The property was intended to be used either for a library or museum.

Boyd’s Theater and Opera House opened at 17th and Harney. Its first play production was Alabama. Five stories tall and built and furnished for \$250,000, its main auditorium provided seating for 2,000. The greatest entertainers of the day performed on its stage and included Sarah Bernhardt who appeared in La Tosca.

Bellevue College briefly ceased to exist due to a change in its charter when it became the University of Omaha. Trustees’ plans called for Bellevue College to become the arts and sciences school of an educational complex that included the independent medical school then in Omaha. The experiment lasted until 1908 when the trustees returned the school to its original name and program.

1892 The American People’s or Populist Party convention was held at Omaha’s Coliseum at 20th and Lake Streets in July. Delegates and observers numbering 10,000 filled hotels. Some arrived by covered wagon from as far away as 1,000 miles. James B. Weaver of Iowa was nominated for the U.S. Presidency, and General Field of Virginia won the nomination for Vice-President. In spite of their enthusiasm, Grover Cleveland was

elected to a second term in the fall. The platform adopted by the Populist Party was notable because it foretold of major national reforms accomplished by the next generation.

The General National Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church met in Omaha.

The Tuesday Musical Club was organized.

The north wing of the Douglas County Hospital and Poor House collapsed.

The John A. Creighton Medical College at Creighton University opened at 12th and Mason Streets. The charter class of 36 students from six states included Kate Drake, the first female to attend a Jesuit University in the United States.

Florence Boulevard was laid out.

The Child Saving Institute opened.

Dr. Matthew O. Ricketts, a Republican from Omaha, became Nebraska's first black officeholder when he was elected to the Nebraska House of Representatives. He served two terms and was the first of six African-Americans from Omaha to serve in the legislature. The others are John Adams Jr., John Adams Sr., Edward R. Danner, George Althouse and Ernie Chambers.

The town of Bennington was incorporated.

An exhibition organized by the Manufacturers' and Consumers' Association of Nebraska that featured goods manufactured in the state drew 50,000 visitors to the Coliseum from June 11th—22nd.

1893 Boyd's first opera house at 15th and Farnam was destroyed by fire.

The Commercial Club, a forerunner of the Omaha Chamber of Commerce, was organized to improve the city's economy.

Mail carrier Edwin Overall became the first black candidate to run for the Omaha City Council. He finished 18th in a field of 23 candidates who ran for nine council seats.

Omahans formed the Thurston Rifles Unit. Named in honor of Senator John Thurston, it became part of the Nebraska National Guard and competed successfully in national drill and marching competitions.

William Jennings Bryan brought the idea of a multistate agricultural fair to Omaha leaders after he attended the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. From this, plans were developed for Omaha to be the site of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition five years later.

The Nebraska Legislature passed a law that barred racial discrimination in public places by making such discrimination a misdemeanor with a \$25 to \$100 fine. Nebraska civil rights law was generally not enforced, but by the mid-1900s, it became significant in the civil rights movement in Omaha.

1894

The Omaha City Hall was completed at a cost of \$550,000. It rivaled Omaha High School in Gothic splendor.

The Omaha Woman's Club was founded. It later assisted in the founding of the Visiting Nurse Association of Omaha.

The Omaha Public Library opened its doors in a new building at 18th and Harney Streets, a facility designed specifically for use as a library. This was the first time the public library operated in a building not previously used for another function. Designed by Omaha architect Thomas Kimball, the library cost \$112,000 to construct. At the time of its opening at the new building, the library had a collection of 46,000 volumes.

William Jennings Bryan became the editor of the Omaha World-Herald and served in the post for two years before being nominated for the U.S. Presidency.

Fire destroyed the Exposition Building, the Fifteenth Street Theater and the First Baptist Church on Capitol Avenue between 14th and 15th Streets. Total property loss was valued at \$125,000.

Unemployed members of Coxey's Army passed through Omaha.

The City of Omaha founded Riverview Park which later became the site of the Henry Doorly Zoo.

The Boston Store, 114 South 16th Street, was destroyed by fire. A new larger store, four stories tall, was soon built on the same site.

The same fire that destroyed the Boston Store also swept away the “Little German Church”. St. Mary Magdalene parishioners built and dedicated a new church on the site of the old one before the year was over. The parish remained in its Douglas Street location for eight more years.

Mrs. Amelia Jenks Bloomer of Council Bluffs died. She was a pioneer in the women’s suffrage movement and an advocate of the garment that bears her name.

The first skulls indicating the presence of primitive man in Nebraska were unearthed at Long’s Hill north of Omaha. The hill, conical in shape, rises 250 feet above the Missouri River.

Dundee was incorporated as a separate municipality by county commissioners in December.

1895

The Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben (“Nebraska” spelled backwards), a nonprofit organization, was founded by Omaha businessmen. It was designed to promote patriotism, advertise Omaha as a good place to live and work, “and create a friendly feeling among neighbors”. The organization held its first parade and coronation ball in conjunction with the Nebraska State Fair, a week-long event for which the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben provided entertainment. Judge E.M. Bartlett and Meliora Woolworth, daughter of Omaha attorney, James M. Woolworth and Mrs. Woolworth, were crowned the first King and Queen of Ak-Sar-Ben.

The goldenrod was adopted by the Legislature as Nebraska’s floral emblem.

The Omaha Fire Department hired its first black firefighters under Chief John Redell. A five-member all-black company formed and went into service as Hose Company No. 12 at 27th and Jones Streets, formerly Hose Company No. 5. Except for the occasional assignment of a white officer, the all-black company remained segregated until desegregation took place in the fire department in 1957.

The lagoon system at Riverview Park is fed by two deep wells. Thousands of Japanese koi swim in the lagoon. Several species of primates, spider monkeys, gibbons and ring-tailed lemurs live on the islands during the warmer months.

1896

The first army companies arrived to occupy Fort Crook near Bellevue. The fort was organized in 1888 when Army General George Crook determined that Fort Omaha lacked space to adequately house and drill the men. Crook was commander of the Department of the Platte at the time the decision for an additional fort was made.

Fort Omaha was abandoned and a “For Sale” sign was posted. However, no sale was ever completed. Fort Omaha served as the command post for the U.S. Army’s Department of the Platte. A supply fort rather than a defensive fortress, it was the gathering point and dispersal center for troops ordered into action on the western frontier.

William Jennings Bryan, editor of the World-Herald, was nominated as the Democratic candidate for President of the United States but failed to win the election.

The United States Supreme Court ruled that “Carter Lake” belonged to Iowa.

Joel Cornish, Omaha banker and park commission member, conceived the idea of joining all the major Omaha parks by boulevards. This was accomplished with minimal interruptions in the street system.

Anna Millard organized the Visiting Nurse Association of Omaha with the assistance of the Omaha Woman’s Club and Clarkson Hospital nurses.

The first X-ray was taken in Omaha.

Sensational grave robberies at Mt. Hope Cemetery caused a stir in the Omaha community.

The Omaha City Council granted the City Waterworks Company an extension of its franchise to operate the waterworks system even though the original franchise was effective for twelve more years. The extension was granted over the mayor’s veto. This set off a fight for municipal ownership of the waterworks system that lasted for several years.

Robert and Elia Peattie moved back to Chicago where Elia took a job as literary critic for the Chicago Tribune. During her eight years as a journalist with first, the Omaha Daily Herald, and later the Omaha World-Herald, her byline was featured on more than 800 editorials, columns, features and fiction stories. Her writings about social issues and her portrayals of Omaha and the West earned her a national reputation.

1897 The Omaha Savings Bank failed with liabilities of almost \$1,000,000.

James Whitcomb Riley appeared at Boyd's Opera House.

House-to-house mail delivery began.

The cornerstone for the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition and Indian Congress was laid in April and the project got underway a week later. Thomas Kimball, chief architect for the Trans-Miss Exposition, supervised the design of classical buildings around a central lagoon, which became the "Grand Court" and centerpiece for hundreds of activities. The Trans-Miss was located on 184 acres of land in North Omaha donated by the Kountze family.

Grace Lutheran Church was dedicated.

Overcrowding and inadequate ventilation became serious problems for teachers and students at Omaha High School. The school board took action during the 1897-1898 school year to construct a larger school at the same location. Some opposition developed. Nevertheless, construction began in 1900.

Benson was incorporated as a village.

E.H. Harriman and other investors purchased the Union Pacific Railroad at a receivership auction after the original railroad company went bankrupt. The auction was held on the steps of the railroad's freight house at 9th and Jackson Streets. Shortly afterwards, Harriman began a massive rebuilding process for UP that took several years to complete.

Armour & Co. established the country's largest packing plant at the Omaha stockyards. During this time, South Omaha attracted large numbers of immigrants who came to take jobs at the stockyards and in the packing houses.

The state legislature acted to pass a bill saying no franchise for the Omaha waterworks system could be granted without a vote of the people. Nevertheless, the new city council granted the franchise to the City Waterworks Company. Eventually, the new franchise was struck down by the Nebraska Supreme Court.

1898

President McKinley declared the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition open at noon on June 1st via electrical current transmitted from the White House. The Exposition brought new economic life and light to Omaha. One of its major attractions was the electrical effects. It marked the beginning of the “Golden Age” for Nebraska farmers. The first horseless carriage appeared on Omaha streets.

The Exposition was held in north Omaha on a tract of land owned by the Kountze family and on the site of the old fair grounds between Laird and Boyd Streets, and 16th to 20th Streets.

The Omaha Street Railway ordered additional new cars, repaired and refurbished older cars, and allocated \$100,000 for improvements to the streetcar system in anticipation of providing transportation to as many as 100,000 visitors a day to and from the Trans-Mississippi Exposition. The allocation included the purchase of equipment for an additional 1,200 horsepower of capacity to the power plant at 20th and Nicholas Streets.

The Burlington Railroad completed construction of its terminal by July 4th in time to welcome visitors traveling to Omaha for the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition and Indian Congress. The exposition lasted nearly five months and is the largest event Omaha has ever hosted.

President William McKinley visited Omaha and the Exposition on October 12th, the day of the armistice that ended the Spanish-American War. The Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben escorted the President from the railway station to City Hall. On that day, 98,845 passed through the Exposition’s gates. Between the spring and fall of 1898, despite the Spanish-American War, over 2.6 million visitors were counted and an anticipated profit of \$356,011.46 was reported. There was money enough to repay stockholders over 90% of their investments, an incredible achievement then or now.

The Department of Missouri absorbed the Department of the Platte with headquarters in the “Army Building” at 15th and Dodge.

Omaha became a center of troop mobilization for the Spanish-American War. The Thurston Rifles Unit was among the first to volunteer for service. The First and Second Regiments of the Nebraska National Guard were mustered into the United States service in Lincoln.

The first woman graduated from Creighton’s medical school.

The Rees Printing Company plant in today's Old Market area burned to the ground at a loss of \$125,000.

Omaha Field Club, the city's first country club and golf course, was founded on land leased to it by the county poor farm.

The new post office opened at 16th and Dodge Streets. It served as Omaha's main post office until 1964.

The Nebraska Clothing Company moved from 14th and Douglas to 15th and Farnam Streets. The company was founded in 1886.

The Logrolling National Convention was held in Omaha.

The first Ak-Sar-Ben Electric Light Parade was held. Floats were positioned to run on streetcar tracks with electric power provided by trolleys from the wires overhead. The Omaha Street Railway Company supplied the power and use of the tracks.

The animal population at Riverview Park included deer, a grizzly bear, two bison on loan from Colonel William F. ("Buffalo Bill") Cody and 120 other animals.

1899

Otto Bayesdorfer built a vehicle he called the Ottomobile and became the first of nearly a dozen Omaha car manufacturers. The Ottomobile weighed 265 pounds, had two cylinders, and could achieve a speed of fifteen miles per hour. However, it could not climb Omaha's hills.

H.E. Fredrickson established the first Omaha automobile agency.

Fred Austerlitz, later Fred Astaire, was born in Omaha but lived here only a few years.

The Greater America Exposition was held on the rebuilt grounds of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition of the previous year. It showcased the people and lifestyles of the territories acquired as a result of the Spanish-American War. About 800,000 visitors attended the event scheduled from July 1st through November 1st.

Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, noted iconoclast, lectured at Boyd's Opera House. His appearance occasioned a good deal of newspaper comment. Nebraska Governor W.A. Poynter praised the World-Herald for its editorial refuting statements made by Ingersoll about Christianity.

Richard Mansfield appeared in Cyrano de Bergerac at Boyd's Opera House.

The Daily News was established and increased to three the number of large daily newspapers in Omaha. The other two were the Bee and the World-Herald.

Dana College was established as a separate educational institution when Elk Horn College, a Danish folk high school founded in 1878 in Elk Horn, Iowa, was moved to Blair. Trinity Seminary and Dana College shared the same campus for over 50 years.

By an act of the legislature, Lincoln became the permanent site of the Nebraska State Fair. Ak-Sar-Ben Festivities became known as "Ak-Sar-Ben Carnival Week" once the state fair was no longer held in Omaha.

Eastern newspapers featured flattering reports about the increase in business in Omaha and in Nebraska.

The Illinois Central Railroad reached Council Bluffs and subsequently Omaha.

1900 The census listed an Omaha population of 102,555. The total population of Douglas County was 140,590. Council Bluffs now had a population of 25,802.

South Omaha, a suburb of Omaha known as the "Magic City", was a booming stockyard and meatpacking town of 26,000 people. Irish or southern and eastern-European immigrants made up a majority of its population.

Dundee Village, an Omaha suburb, began as a real estate development that became a fashionable place to live with a population of 400 residents.

Edward Cudahy Jr., son of a major Omaha meatpacker, was kidnapped by Pat Crowe, a former employee at the Cudahy plant. A \$25,000 ransom was paid in gold, and the boy was returned. The family relocated to Chicago.

The Illinois Central Bridge over the Missouri River was completed.

Kate Moores, wife of Omaha Mayor Frank Moores, was killed in an accident involving a runaway horse.

The Omaha Auditorium Company was formed to raise funds for construction of a new city auditorium.

Construction of the present day Central High School began. John Latenser Sr. was commissioned as the architect. Builders began with the east side, and the building grew one section at a time as construction continued around the old high school for twelve years. Finally, the old tower building itself was razed and removed before the last or north side of the new school was completed in November, 1912.

The Ak-Sar-Ben Carnival attracted crowds of people to Omaha and brought business to the city. Eventually, the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben purchased the Coliseum on North Twentieth Street where it entertained dignitaries that included Presidents Roosevelt and Taft. The Coliseum, known as the Ak-Sar-Ben Den, was also the site of the organization's coronation ball.

By an overwhelming majority, voters approved issuance of bonds for the purchase of the waterworks system, but the Omaha City Council chose not to act.

1901 William Jennings Bryan founded his own newspaper, the Commoner, in Lincoln. Modeled after J. Sterling Morton's the Conservative, the Commoner was a national weekly dedicated mainly to political and religious topics. It remained in publication for twenty years.

Sarah Bernhardt appeared in La Tosca at Boyd's Theater and Opera House at 17th and Harney Streets.

Ground was broken for construction of a new city auditorium on the southeast corner of 15th and Howard Streets. Omaha architect John Latenser was in charge of the design.

The Nebraska State Fair was permanently moved to Lincoln. When the state fair left Omaha, the Douglas County Agricultural Society held its fair in conjunction first, with the Ak-Sar-Ben Carnival in 1900, and later with the annual Ak-Sar-Ben festival.

1902 Buffalo Bill Cody visited Omaha.

The Omaha chapter of the Knights of Columbus was organized.

The Nebraska School of Medicine became part of the University of Nebraska system. Students attended classes in Lincoln their first two years and in Omaha the final two years.

J. Sterling Morton of Nebraska City died.

The Governor of Nebraska appointed a new police board for Omaha and ordered the closure of all illegitimate enterprises.

Union Pacific boilermakers went on strike. In reprisal, 137 machinists were laid off in Omaha. Labor leaders, Samuel Gompers and James O'Connell, took charge locally.

President Theodore Roosevelt reviewed the Ak-Sar-Ben parade from his vantage point at City Hall.

R.B. Howell, former city engineer, was elected to the Nebraska legislature where he secured passage of a bill in 1903 that required the Omaha City Council to purchase the water plant as mandated by the voters in 1900. The new law also provided for establishment of the Omaha Water Board. The city council responded by assigning appraisers to determine the value of the water plant.

Gilbert M. Hitchcock, principal owner of the Omaha World-Herald, won the first of three terms he served in the U.S. House of Representatives.

North Western Railway inaugurated mile-a-minute service between Omaha and Chicago.

The cornerstone of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary was laid.

Ground was broken for a new St. Mary Magdalene Church at 19th and Dodge Streets in March. Construction was completed in time for services to be held in the new church on Christmas Day, the 34th anniversary of the dedication of the parish's first house of worship in 1868.

Sacred Heart Church was dedicated in June on its new site at 2206 Binney Street. Built on land donated by Kountze Place developer, Herman Kountze, many prominent Omahans attended the dedication ceremony. Cost of construction was \$25,000.

The Omaha and Council Bluffs Street Railway was established as a combination of all the electric-powered railways in the Omaha-Council Bluffs area.

1903 Alamito Dairy began operations.

The 30th Infantry returned to Fort Omaha from the Philippines.

President Theodore Roosevelt visited Omaha and spoke to a crowd of 12,000 people at the Ak-Sar-Ben Den, also known as the Coliseum.

A city-owned outdoor market opened on Capitol Avenue.

A record rainfall of 7.03 inches was recorded in Omaha.

The Omaha Business Men's Association (OBMA) was established to counter the power of local labor unions by returning the "open shop" in which workers were hired without regard to union membership. Just days after the announcement of the formation of the OBMA, teamsters, waiters, cooks, bartenders and carpenters struck. Much of the city's business ground to a halt or was severely diminished when as many as 2,900 workers went on strike. The OBMA implemented a war of attrition and imported strikebreakers from outside the city and state. The 1903 strike was a serious setback for the local trade union movement and became a decisive turning point in Omaha's labor history.

Burlington Railroad offered a round trip from Omaha to Chicago on a special excursion train for \$12.75.

The Chicago Great Western Railroad reached Council Bluffs and eventually Omaha.

The Omaha Electric Light and Power Company was organized and took over all interests of the Thompson-Houston Company. F.A. Nash was president of the new company which had capital stock valued at \$4,000,000. The new company furnished the city with 2,600 street lights that included 1,400 arcs and 1,200 incandescent lights. Omaha Electric Light and Power Company also provided power to a large number of private consumers and manufacturers.

The National Editorial Association convention was held in Omaha.

Businessman Jonas L. Brandeis died. His son, Arthur Brandeis, became the head of J.L. Brandeis & Sons upon his father's death.

South Omaha brewer Frederick Krug took over Tietz Park on the northwest corner of what is now 52nd and Maple Streets when the park's developer, Charles Tietz, died. Krug expanded the twenty acres into an amusement park that featured several rides.

1904 A Senate committee investigated corruption charges against Nebraska State Senator Charles H. Dietrich.

A new building was built for South Omaha High School at 23rd and "J" Streets. The auditorium seated over a thousand people.

The Omaha Municipal Auditorium opened at 15th and Howard Streets. Well-known performers such as Sarah Bernhardt and Enrico Caruso later performed there. The new hall had a capacity of 6,000 people.

Creighton Law School opened at the Edward Creighton Institute, 210 South 18th Street, with 23 students.

First Baptist Church was dedicated at Park Avenue and Harney Streets.

The Omaha Grain Exchange opened for business. Organized in 1903, its first president was Gurdon W. Wattles, and membership totaled 155. During the first year of operation, total receipts of grain were 16,433,285 bushels, the largest in Omaha's history up until that time.

The Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben purchased the Coliseum on North 20th Street from its owners, Wilson Graham and William Ure, for \$12,000. Known as the Ak-Sar-Ben Den, the building was acquired mainly as a location to build the organization's parade floats. This year's coronation ball was held at the city's new auditorium.

1905 The Mercer Block and Hotel at 12th and Howard Streets suffered the effects of a devastating fire.

The first radio message was received in Omaha.

A Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) monument was dedicated at Forest Lawn Cemetery to honor Douglas County's Civil War dead.

Fort Omaha reopened as a school for non-commissioned officers of the U.S. Army Signal Corps.

The cornerstone for the new Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church was laid at its new site at 26th and Farnam Streets. The completed building was dedicated in 1906. The church is named in recognition of the family of Herman Kountze who made a large contribution toward construction of the first church and donated a significant gift used in building the new church.

Work began on construction of St. Cecilia Cathedral on the corner of 40th and Burt Streets on what was known as Walnut Hill. The architect was Thomas R. Kimball.

The Temple Theater at 25th and "N" Streets was the first to charge admission to see a movie. Omaha's first fulltime movie theater, the Parlor, opened soon afterward.

The state legislature took action on a bill that deprived the Omaha City Council of all authority regarding the waterworks system and vested it in the Omaha Water Board.

The Creighton University School of Dentistry opened downtown at the Edward Creighton Institute. Enrollment was 113 students. During the same year, Creighton University trustees purchased the Omaha School of Pharmacy and located it at Creighton's medical school at 14th and Davenport Streets. Today it is known as the School of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions.

Samuel A. Orchard and Charles M. Wilhelm moved their furniture and carpet business to a new location at 16th and Howard Streets.

1906 John Andrew Creighton celebrated his 75th birthday. Creighton University band members played in the new uniforms he purchased for them, and all students enjoyed a holiday from school in his honor.

The cornerstone for the new Methodist Hospital was laid at 38th and Cuming Streets.

Edward Rosewater, founder and editor of the Omaha Bee, died.

Appraisers reported the value of the Omaha water plant at \$6,253,000. The city appealed the appraisal which set off a court battle between the city and the waterworks company that went to the U.S. Supreme Court.

St. Bernard's parish was established in Benson.

Benson was incorporated as a city. James A. Howard was elected the first mayor.

Construction of the eight-story J.L. Brandeis and Sons Store on the southwest corner of 16th and Douglas Streets was completed at a cost of \$650,000. Designed by architect John Latenser Sr., it became the flagship store of the J.L. Brandeis and Sons regional department store chain.

The Sprague Street Driving Park was broken up into 100 lots and offered for sale for residential purposes. The driving park was the last unoccupied part, with the exception of Kountze Park, of the huge tract of land upon which the Trans-Mississippi Exposition was held. The tract belonged to the Redick estate.

J.R. Roberts began home delivery of milk produced by his herd of sixty cows near Lincoln. The business became Roberts Dairy that later was headquartered in Omaha.

The Social Settlement Association of Omaha was founded.

James C. Dahlman was elected Omaha mayor and served in that capacity until 1918. He again served as mayor from 1921 until his death in 1930.

Robert Gilder discovered skulls of primitive man at Long's Hill.

Members of the W.C.T.U. (Women's Christian Temperance Union) crusaded against nude art on public billboards.

The Douglas County Association of Nebraska Pioneers was organized.

1907

Two important Omaha business leaders died, William A. Paxton and John A. Creighton. During his lifetime and as a result of his will, Creighton donated about \$2 million to Creighton University. His monetary support helped the institution survive during the difficult financial times of the 1890s.

The All Saints Episcopal Church opened at 26th Street and Dewey Avenue.

Benson had a population of 1,500 residents and qualified as a city of the second class.

The last services were held at the old St. Philomena Cathedral at 9th and Harney Streets. The property was sold to John Deere & Company. Until their new church was completed, parishioners worshipped at St. Mary Magdalene Church. A new St. Philomena Church was built on William Street between 9th and 10th Streets and dedicated in August, 1909. Cost of construction was \$41,500.

The cornerstone for St. Cecilia Cathedral was laid in an elaborate ceremony on October 6th. The dimensions of the new church were 158 feet by 255 feet with twin towers that would soar 187 feet. The style of architecture is Spanish Renaissance Revival. Walls were faced with Indiana limestone. Bishop Richard Scannell dictated that construction would continue as funds became available. For this reason, more than fifty years passed before the cathedral was completed.

The size of the Creighton University campus doubled to a little more than eleven acres with the acquisition of land between 25th Avenue and 26th Street, California to Burt Streets. Purchase price was \$18,500. In addition, the city vacated 25th Avenue and donated it to the school.

The Happy Hollow Country Club was established. The clubhouse was located in the Patrick family mansion located on a farm estate that is now the site of Memorial Park at Dodge Street and Happy Hollow Boulevard. Dundee Village was located nearby.

1908

The National Corn Exposition was held in Omaha. Omaha businessman, Gurdon W. Wattles, was president of the exposition, a regional show organized to publicize the role of Omaha as a grain center.

Levi Carter Park opened. Lake Nakoma was renamed Carter Lake.

Voters approved a bond issue to build a new courthouse at 17th and Farnam Streets.

The Union Pacific lane cut-off over Papillion Creek in Millard was dedicated.

The University of Omaha was founded and incorporated in October. The Reverend Daniel E. Jenkins was founding president. The university

operated as a private, religious-oriented institution until 1931 when it became a municipal university. Three of Omaha University's first four presidents were ordained Presbyterian ministers.

The first "around-the-world" automobile endurance race came through Omaha.

Republican candidate for President, William H. Taft, visited Omaha and spoke to a large audience at the auditorium.

Voters approved a bond issue to finance construction of a new Douglas County Courthouse at a cost of not more than \$1,000,000.

Creighton University celebrated its first Founders' Day to pay tribute to the Creighton family one year after the death of John A. Creighton.

1909

An anti-Greek riot broke out in South Omaha, and one person was killed. Homes and businesses were destroyed in "Greek Town" on "Q" Street. The immediate cause of the riot was the shooting and killing of a police officer, Ed Lowery, by a Greek who was being arrested for vagrancy. The long-term causes of the riot probably had to do with antagonism toward the Greek Orthodox Church and the fact that Greeks had been used by packinghouse owners as strikebreakers.

Several hundred street railway employees struck for a pay increase and union recognition in September. The president of the company was Gurdon W. Wattles, also a banker and well-known local booster. Wattles used the strike as an opportunity to break the union in the street railway company. He had the support of the Omaha Business Men's Association (OBMA) in his efforts. Strikebreakers were imported from the East, and the street railway strike ended as a defeat for union workers. Founded in 1903, the OBMA was a strong force in Omaha labor history until 1939.

For the first time, classes were held at the University of Omaha in Redick Hall, the former Redick Mansion, at 24th and Pratt Streets. This was the university's only building. The school opened on September 14th with 26 students attending classes.

President William Howard Taft visited Omaha in September. As guest of the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben, the President was treated to dinner at the Omaha Club where guests attending paid \$20 a plate. After dinner, he enjoyed viewing the comic opera, "Paprika Schnitzel", at the Ak-Sar-Ben Den.

The National Corn Exposition was again held in Omaha. Prize-winning corn sold for \$2,345 a bushel; wheat sold for \$800.

“Uncle Billy” Snowden, Omaha’s first settler, died at the age of 83.

Omaha National Bank purchased the New York Life Building, 1650 Farnam, after the insurance company developed financial problems. Cost of the purchase was \$675,000. The building became known as the Omaha Building.

The first successful balloon flight occurred at Fort Omaha. Captain Charles De F. Chandler was pilot of the flight which marked the beginning of the Army’s first regular lighter-than-air center. Earlier installation of a balloon house and hydrogen gas-making facility made the flight possible.

Dr. C.C. Criss founded Mutual Benefit Health and Accident Association. Dr. Criss, with the assistance of his wife, Mabel, managed the new company. Overshadowed in its early years by another local insurer, the Fraternal Woodmen of the World, the company that became Mutual of Omaha grew and became the nation’s top health and accident insurer in the 1950s.

Construction of the new Douglas County Courthouse at 17th and Farnam Streets began in the spring.

1910 St. Catherine’s Hospital opened at 9th and Forest Streets.

The City National Bank, an amazing sixteen stories tall, was completed at 16th and Harney Streets.

Rome Miller, associated with the Rome Hotel, started the first auto-taxi service in Omaha.

The first air show was held in Omaha when Glenn Curtiss brought his aerial circus to town.

The Midwest Aviation Meet was held in Omaha.

Gilbert Hitchcock won election to the U.S. Senate where he served for two terms. Before his election to the U.S. Senate, he served three terms in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Arthur Brisbane spoke at a convention of advertising men.

Omaha had a population of 124,096 persons. The total population of Douglas County was 168,546. South Omaha population stood at 26,259, and Council Bluffs had 29,292 residents.

Omaha's growing prominence is reflected in its position as the country's second largest marketplace for corn and livestock, fourth largest railroad center and grain market, and home to more than 30 insurance companies.

Former President Theodore Roosevelt visited Omaha for a second time during a pleasure trip to the West. That evening he was initiated into Ak-Sar-Ben.

A bomb placed on the porch of city political boss Tom Dennison's home did not cause any injuries. It was a political hoax, and the alleged perpetrator was acquitted at trial.

The Rod and Gun Club opened at Carter Lake.

Dundee had a population of 1,023 according to the U.S. Census.

For the first time, the college commission appointed by the Nebraska Presbytery recognized Bellevue College "...as an independent institution, with Presbyterian approval and declare the college at Hastings to be the Synodical College of the Presbyterian Church in the State of Nebraska and the only educational institution in the State under the care of the Synod." The loss of its synodical title meant a loss of prestige as wealthy friends of the school from eastern states who had contributed \$200,000 in the past now donated their money to other causes. Debt accumulation at Bellevue College reached \$45,000 by 1910.

1911 Claudia Galloway became the first graduate of the University of Omaha (OU).

Omaha University held its first athletic competition when the OU football team defeated the Nebraska Deaf and Dumb Institute by a score of 25-0.

The Creighton University basketball team played its first season.

The Woodmen of the World Life Insurance Co. began construction of a new eighteen-story office building at 1323 Farnam Street. At the time,

Woodmen of the World was the largest fraternal life insurance company in the world.

Anna Wilson, the city's most famous madam, died and left a \$250,000 estate to charitable and public causes in Omaha. Prospect Hill Cemetery, Clarkson and Wise Hospitals were among the beneficiaries. Wilson is buried in Prospect Hill Cemetery next to her friend, gambler Dan Allen.

By an act of the legislature, Omaha's restricted red light district was abolished when brothels were banned. However, police enforcement was half-hearted, and prostitution spread into rooming houses and hotels instead.

A style show was held in Omaha for the first time.

The city's new million-dollar courthouse, nearing completion, was the scene of a dynamite explosion. Damage was not extensive.

William "Pa" Rourke rebuilt the old baseball park at 15th and Vinton Streets. The stands at Rourke Park held 9,000 fans, admission was 50 cents, refreshments were sold, and fans could watch the game from their cars in an "auto yard". Omaha baseball provided mass entertainment enjoyed by many as a popular social occasion.

The winter of 1911-1912 produced an all-time snowfall record for Omaha of 67.5 inches.

1912 Mercer Boulevard and Caroline Mercer Park were donated to the city.

Emil Brandeis died on the Titanic at age 44. Several months later, his brother, Hugo, died following surgery at age 43. This left the surviving brother, Arthur, to run the J.L. Brandeis & Sons store. He was joined by a cousin, George Brandeis, of Chicago who moved to Omaha to help Arthur administer the business.

Harry Jerome was Omaha University's (OU's) second graduate.

The village of Ralston was incorporated. Established by the Skinner and Chase Real Estate Company on Seymour Park, the former private estate of Dr. George Miller, the location was ideal as a distributing center. The CB&Q and the Missouri Pacific railroads served the area. C.A. Ralston, a Chicago industrialist, was recruited to start an industrial center. His

automobile factory produced eight horseless carriages and one truck designed by Ralph Rogers.

The Woodmen of the World (WOW) Building was dedicated at 14th and Farnam Streets. At eighteen stories tall, it was the tallest building between Chicago and the Pacific coast. Cost of construction was about \$1.5 million.

Construction of the north side or last phase of Central High School was completed in November. Built in four phases over a period of twelve years, the final cost of construction was \$750,000. Removal of the heating and ventilating plant in the center of the four wings left a vacant space that was converted into a courtyard.

The cornerstone was laid for the Scottish Rite Cathedral at 20th and Douglas Streets.

A new Douglas County Courthouse was completed on Farnam Street between 17th and 18th Streets at a cost of \$1,000,000. It occupies the same site as the second courthouse. John Latenser and Sons designed the building constructed of Indiana limestone with a rotunda that is topped by a dome 110 feet above the floor.

The City of Omaha took possession of the Omaha Waterworks plant on July 1st ending a fifteen-year struggle for municipal ownership. The plant was purchased for \$6,319,261 with the proceeds from a bond issue.

The commission form of government, officially nonpartisan and elected at-large, went into effect. Voters elected a board of seven commissioners who selected a mayor from their own number. As part of a reform effort, each commissioner was responsible for one city department. The mayor was also president of the commission and superintendent of the Department of Public Affairs. In spite of reformers' efforts to get the "Citizens' Ticket" elected, it was defeated by the Dahlman ticket of commissioners who chose "Cowboy Jim" Dahlman as mayor to succeed himself.

Theodore Roosevelt visited Omaha as the Progressive Party's candidate for President on September 20th. Later, on October 5th Woodrow Wilson, the Democratic Party's candidate for President, spoke at the Municipal Auditorium. In November, Wilson was elected to his first of two terms in the White House.

1913

Omaha's worst tornado struck suddenly and without warning on Easter Sunday, March 23rd, about 6 PM. It resulted in the deaths of 140 people and the injury of 400 others in Omaha alone. The storm followed a path roughly from 55th and Center Streets northeast through Bemis Park and to Levi Carter Park where it crossed into Iowa. It measured about one-quarter mile in width, was seven miles long and was strewn with the debris of homes, schools, churches and businesses. The worst damage was in the neighborhood of 24th and Lake Streets. Seventeen people were killed at the Idlewild Pool Hall at 24th and Grant Streets. The Academy of the Sacred Heart, 3601 Burt Street, and the George A. Joslyn "Castle" residence at 39th and Davenport Streets were heavily damaged as were thousands of other homes, large and small. About 3,000 people were made homeless, and property damage was estimated at \$8.7 million. The Easter Sunday tornado is Omaha's worst natural disaster to date.

Omaha Public Schools (OPS) held its first vacation school at Central High School. A total of 250 high school students and 600 elementary students were enrolled. Ninety-two percent of the students passed in all subjects in which they were enrolled. Total cost of the vacation school was approximately \$3,000 or ten cents a day for each student.

President Gerald Ford was born Leslie King, Jr. in Omaha. His home was at 3202 Woolworth Avenue.

The Fontenelle Forest Association was incorporated.

Krug Park reopened after three years with a variety of new attractions. They included an "airplane" ride, a penny arcade, a 72-horse merry-go-round, the Big Dipper "rolly coaster", aerialists, human cannonballs, parachutists and horses that dove off a platform into a tank of water.

Omaha University (OU) held its first formal commencement. Shortly afterwards, the OU Alumni Association was founded by the school's first graduating class of eleven graduates on June 6th.

An all-University alumni association was organized at Creighton. During the same year, women were admitted for the first time to the school's undergraduate program but were limited to participating in summer school classes for teachers. On another front, Creighton University students helped with community clean-up after the devastating March tornado. Students from Creighton's medical, dental and pharmacy schools staffed emergency relief stations.

Total receipts of grain at the Omaha Grain Exchange were 66,983,800 bushels, and membership was 193, up from 155 members when the exchange was organized ten years earlier.

OPS opened the Fort School, a “Special School for Boys”, to provide students the academics as well as training in a trade or occupation. At first, 20 boys were enrolled, but the figure quickly grew to 50. By December, there was a waiting list of 17, and plans were made to add another room to the school the following year.

By year’s end, the Omaha Public Library had established branches within several OPS elementary schools. Buildings with branches included Castelar, Edward Rosewater, Kellom, Monmouth Park, Pacific and Train. The schools furnished the room and equipment while the Library provided the books and trained attendants.

The War Department closed the Signal Corps balloon facilities at Fort Omaha and moved most of the equipment to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

The state legislature created the Metropolitan Water District as a subdivision of the state. The new subdivision had control over the entire area that was provided water by the city waterworks system. This included the subsequently annexed areas of South Omaha, Benson and Florence.

The Nebraska Legislature revised the 1887 anti-miscegenation law to define Negro according to the 1/8 blood rule, i.e., a great grandparent. The notorious octoroon rule was the same standard as that used in the Jim Crow South.

1914 An election proposition passed setting the fare for seven streetcar rides at 25 cents.

“Go to Church Day” on March 29th filled Omaha’s churches.

The first transcontinental telephone service was available in Omaha.

Jane Addams spoke to a large crowd on women’s suffrage, but Nebraska voters rejected suffrage later the same year.

The Updike Grain Company shipped a million bushels of wheat to England.

Boyd's Theater and Opera House was sold to the Burgess-Nash Company but continued to operate as a theater until 1920.

The Omaha Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was founded by John A. Williams, an Episcopal priest, and Harrison J. Pinkett, an attorney.

1915 The latest frost day was recorded in Omaha.

Boxer Jess Willard visited Omaha.

The Hotel Fontenelle opened at 18th and Douglas Streets. Designed by architect Thomas R. Kimball, the main feature of its façade was an ornate "crown" of terra cotta spires that faced its top three stories. Named for Logan Fontenelle, a leader of the Omaha tribe, the "crown" symbolized an Indian headdress similar to the type Logan Fontenelle might have worn. Each of the hotel's 350 rooms had a telephone. Cost of construction was \$1,000,000.

Omaha annexed South Omaha in June, adding over 25,000 residents to Omaha's population. In the same proclamation, Governor John H. Morehead declared that the village of Dundee was also now a part of the City of Omaha.

The first Gateway newspaper was published at Omaha University.

The Central High School Athletic Department held the first Road Show, an eight-act vaudeville-style presentation to raise money. Successfully clearing \$200, the show continues today. It annually showcases the talents of Central High students, some of whom went on to achieve stardom. Names like Lindsay Bloom, Peter Buffett, Lars Erickson, Inga Swenson, Henry Fonda and Dorothy McGuire are a few who went on to successful careers as actors and entertainers after their Road Show experience.

The Academy of the Sacred Heart launched a four-year college course in September. Eventually, the school became known as Duchesne College.

Creighton held its first all-University commencement April 29th, but actual diplomas for undergraduates were awarded later at a separate commencement in June after seniors passed final exams.

The Liberty Bell of Philadelphia, PA was placed on exhibit on Jackson Street, between 9th and 10th Streets, while on its way to the San Francisco Exposition.

The City of Omaha purchased the auditorium located on the southeast corner of 15th and Howard Streets from the Auditorium Company for \$150,000.

The Reverend Billy Sunday held an eight-week revival meeting in Omaha.

The Omaha Drama League was organized.

Buffett & Son Grocery Store opened at 5001 Underwood Avenue in a section known as the Harte Block, named for its builders. Later, the store occupied two other locations in Dundee. The last was at 5015 Underwood Avenue, which it moved into in 1929.

Leo A. Daly, Sr. established an architectural firm when he opened an office at 17th and Farnam Streets in a building the company later renovated to create the first entirely air-conditioned structure west of Chicago.

1916

Fort Omaha was reactivated as the Balloon Section of the American Expeditionary Force, known as the Fort Omaha Balloon School. As the site of the country's first military balloon school, its personnel was responsible for training some 16,000 young men who put their balloonist skills to work on the front in France during WWI. Captain Charles De F. Chandler, pilot of the first balloon flight in 1909, was commanding officer.

General Grenville M. Dodge, chief engineer of the eastern terminus of the transcontinental railroad, died at his home in Council Bluffs.

Helen Keller spoke in Omaha.

Republican Vice-Presidential candidate Charles W. Fairbanks spoke at the Commercial Club at noon and at the auditorium in the evening during this year's presidential campaign. In November, President Woodrow Wilson was elected to a second term by defeating Republican Presidential candidate Charles Evans Hughes, former governor of New York.

U.S. troops en route to Mexico to fight Pancho Villa passed through Omaha.

The first Women's State Golf Tournament was held.

The "Human Fly" climbed eighteen floors of the exterior of the Woodmen of the World (WOW) building at 14th and Farnam Streets in 50 minutes.

The golf course opened at Elmwood Park.

Nineteen parochial schools began the school year with an enrollment of almost 5,000 students in the Omaha Diocese.

President and Mrs. Woodrow Wilson visited Omaha to attend the Nebraska Semi-Centennial celebration of statehood in October. While here, he reviewed the industrial parade of Ak-Sar-Ben in the afternoon and spoke at the Municipal Auditorium in the evening.

The OU Alumni Committee chose red and black as the school colors.

The Federal Farm Loan Bank was located in Omaha.

The Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant was constructed at 1524 Cuming Street. Designed by architect John Latenser, Model T Fords were built there until 1932.

The Omaha Central Labor Union included more than 50 local unions affiliated with the central body and represented over 7,000 male and female workers from a variety of trades and occupations.

George Joslyn donated \$25,000 (50% of total cost) to construct Joslyn Hall at 24th and Pratt Streets, which then served as the home for Omaha University until 1938, when it moved to its current location on Dodge Street.

Creighton achieved accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities.

Arthur Brandeis, last surviving son of Jonas L. Brandeis, died. Arthur's son, E. John, assumed administration of the department store with his father's cousin, George Brandeis. E. John and George Brandeis were responsible for adding two stories to the top of the Brandeis Building at 16th and Douglas in 1921.

An amendment to the Nebraska Constitution instituted prohibition two years before national prohibition went into effect. Law enforcement was lax, and Omaha retained its rowdy reputation.

1917

Close to 20,000 men from Omaha enlisted in World War I. A total of 15,139 men from Omaha enlisted in the U.S. Army, and 3,571 joined the U.S. Navy. Eighteen men were indicted for refusal to register for the war draft.

Florence Field, 119 acres of land about one mile north of Fort Omaha along Martin Avenue, was leased by the U.S. Government in October and cleared for balloon operations. Many Fort Omaha recruits received field training here in a simulated “on the front” balloon operations experience. Parachuting, in its infancy, was tested here too.

Florence and Benson were annexed to Omaha.

Father Edward Flanagan founded Boys Town with a borrowed \$90 to pay the first month’s rent. The first residents were five boys—three wards of the court and two homeless newsboys. The institution was housed at Byron Reed’s old mansion at 25th and Dodge Streets. It then moved to the German-American Club on South 13th Street with a capacity for 150 boys. Its last move was to Overlook Farm, its current location, ten miles west of Omaha.

The Masonic Temple was completed at a cost of \$500,000.

Iowa State College graduate and former Montana cowboy, H.H. Henningson, founded Henningson Engineering Company in Omaha. The goal of the civil engineering firm was to assist new Midwest cities and towns in building water and sewer systems.

The Missouri River reached its highest flood stage in 25 years.

J.J. Simon and his son, B.A., founded Table Supply Meat Company in downtown Omaha to provide Midwestern beef to restaurants and grocers in the Omaha area. It became the Omaha Steaks Company.

The packing house strike was settled by a government mediator.

The Omaha Electric Light and Power Company was reorganized, and the name was changed to the Nebraska Power Company. James E. Davidson

was president of the new company. It provided power to the City of Omaha, and its homes and businesses until 1946.

As a result of R.B. Howell's efforts, the legislature authorized the establishment of the Omaha municipal ice plant which began operations in 1919 to provide ice to homes and businesses. The initial cost was \$271,000. The Omaha Water Board provided supervision.

Nebraska went dry one year before nationwide prohibition took effect.

The state legislature passed a bill that gave Omaha, the state's only city of the metropolitan class, the authority to unilaterally annex a town of fewer than 10,000 residents. Lincoln, the state's only city of the primary class, was given the authority to annex a town of 100-800 citizens.

1918

Russell Hughes was the first soldier from Omaha killed in WWI.

A statue of Friedrich Schiller at Riverview Park was removed for safekeeping from those expressing anti-German sentiment.

The sale of World War I Liberty Bonds began in Omaha.

First Lieutenant Jarvis Offutt became Omaha's first air fatality during World War I.

A captured gun from World War I was placed in front of City Hall. The signing of the Armistice to end the war was celebrated in Omaha.

In August, Fort Crook was assigned to the Division of Military Aeronautics as a sub post of Fort Omaha by order of the Secretary of War. Fort Crook became a basic training center for recruits entering balloon service.

Omaha's Boy Scouts program began. Two years later, the Camp Fire Girls program got underway, and in 1925, the Girls Scouts program was organized.

Krug Park, 52nd and Maple Streets, added a swimming pool, a bath house, a waterfall and a wave-making device.

A slate of reformers took over city government, and Ed Smith emerged as Omaha's mayor. For the time being, Jim Dahlman's leadership as mayor ended, a position he held since 1906.

State lawmakers authorized the City of Omaha to assign the operation of the city's gas system to the Metropolitan Water District. The name was changed to the Metropolitan Utilities District (M.U.D.) in 1923.

Omaha public officials closed churches, schools, theaters and other public venues to combat the spread of Spanish influenza that killed tens of millions worldwide. The closures occurred during the months of October and November.

1919 Omaha Kiwanis organized.

Streets and alleys were closed to facilitate the construction of the new Ak-Sar-Ben Field on Center Street in April. In July, the first harness race took place at the new Ak-Sar-Ben track. During the same year, the Ak-Sar-Ben Exposition Company was founded, and the idea of an annual livestock show was conceived. Plans were made for the exposition grounds to be located at Ak-Sar-Ben Field.

The first Mass was celebrated at St. Margaret Mary parish.

The new Dundee Presbyterian Church was dedicated.

A white mob lynched Will Brown, a black man, at the Douglas County Courthouse in Omaha. In the same incident, the mob nearly succeeded in hanging Mayor Ed Smith, and started a fire that damaged the courthouse in excess of \$500,000. Brown had been accused of raping a white woman, but a trial was never held.

Harvey Newbranch, editor of the World-Herald, won the Pulitzer Prize for his editorial, "Law and the Jungle".

President Eaman de Valera of Ireland gave a speech in Omaha.

The Junior League of Omaha was established by Harriet Smith Whiting, Rachael Kincaid Gallagher and Elizabeth Davis. The organization provided assistance to many charitable groups, the first of which was the Visiting Nurse Association.

The Omaha Fire Department replaced the last piece of horse-drawn equipment with a new motorized rig at Station No. 22 at 27th and Madison Streets. All the new rigs had right-hand drive, a hold-over from the time of horse-drawn equipment when drivers sat on the right side.

King Albert and Queen Elizabeth of Belgium visited Omaha.

The Prince Hall (African American) Grand Lodge of Nebraska Masons was incorporated.

Joseph Malec Sr., a Czech immigrant who moved to Omaha from Detroit, opened Peony Park on ten acres located five miles west of Omaha's city limits. Located at present-day 8100 Cass Street, it took its name from "Peony Gardens", a well-known landmark located across the street to the south.

Balloon equipment and troops were removed from Fort Omaha and Fort Crook. Eventually, the Fort Omaha Balloon School was phased out of existence although Fort Omaha remained under Army command.

Bellevue College was forced to close after 36 years of operation due to low enrollment and dwindling financial support. Initially under the sponsorship of the Presbyterian Church, its records and debt were transferred to Hastings College in Hastings, Nebraska, the other Presbyterian institution of higher learning in the state.

1920

A bank robbery in Benson resulted in \$115,000 stolen.

The Lake Manawa pavilion was destroyed by fire.

The former Boyd's Theater and Opera House at 1621 Harney Street was razed to make room for an annex to the Burgess-Nash Department Store.

A flood in north Omaha broke the Florence Lake levee.

Peony Park opened for the first time for dancing, a popular social activity for couples at the time. The meadow around the new Dance Hall was transformed into an outdoor garden, and a new filling station and ice cream shop drew customers from miles around—including Omaha, then five miles away.

Omaha's population was 191,601 inhabitants. This included 10,315 African-Americans: 5,598 males and 4,717 females. The city's population had doubled in ten years due largely to the migration of rural Southern blacks to Northern cities after WWI. The total population of Douglas County was 204,524. The population of Council Bluffs in 1920 was 36,162.

The City of Omaha adopted a zoning ordinance.

Use of public transportation reached an historic high of 61 million riders this year.

The grade of Dodge Street past Central High School was lowered from 12% to 7%. The work stopped traffic for more than a year until it was completed. The new construction left the school on a sheer cliff with a 20-foot drop. Later, new terraces and flights of stairs restored the campus to its current appearance. Farther east, St. Mary Magdalene parish had to build a new first story under the church when the city lowered the Dodge Street hill at 19th Street. When the street lowering project was completed this year, Dodge Street near 20th Street was 36 feet lower than it was in 1880.

The Ak-Sar-Ben racetrack was dedicated.

The King Fong Café opened at 315 South 16th Street.

Amaranthus Grand Chapter (African American) of the Order of the Eastern Star in Nebraska was incorporated.

An eleventh floor was added to the Omaha Building at 1650 Farnam, the headquarters for Omaha National Bank.

The Creighton College of Commerce opened.

The Religious of the Sacred Heart changed the name of the Academy of the Sacred Heart of Omaha, Nebraska, to Duchesne College and Convent of the Sacred Heart. The new name was in honor of Blessed Philippine Duchesne, founder of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

Nelson B. Updike bought the Omaha Bee ending Edward Rosewater's 49-year control of the newspaper.

Dr. George L. Miller, founder of the Omaha Herald, died.

By a vote of the people and through action by the city council, the City of Omaha took over ownership and operation of the gas works effective July 1st. The city paid \$5,000,000 for the plant, consistent with the recommendation of the board of appraisement. Management was assumed by the MUD board of directors.

Greater Omaha Packing Company began operations at the Omaha stockyards. By 2004, the company employed more than 800 people in a state of the art facility and had annual sales of \$820,000,000.

1921 The first direct dial telephones appeared in Omaha.

Two additional stories were constructed on top of the original J.L. Brandeis and Sons Store at 16th and Douglas Streets for \$120,000 making it a ten-story building. The size of the store increased to 525,000 square feet and included the first escalator in the Midwest. During the holiday season, the store's front window featured an animated display that was a favorite attraction for Omahans and visitors alike.

Boys Town relocated to Overlook Farm, a 160-acre tract of land near present-day 132nd and Dodge Streets, its current location. Father Flanagan purchased the farm for \$75,000 with the help of his supporters. Ten years later, he bought another 160 acres to the south of Overlook Farm.

Packing house workers went on strike. Helen Keller, visiting Omaha at the time, encouraged them.

Myers Funeral Home was founded in Omaha. It is the oldest surviving black business in Nebraska.

Voters numbering 10,000 signed petitions to urge "Cowboy Jim" Dahlman to run for the city commission. Dahlman was elected commissioner and emerged as Omaha's mayor. His slate of commissioners easily won the next three elections. Dahlman was elected mayor by the commissioners throughout.

The Creighton School of Dentistry moved into its own building on Creighton's main campus at 26th and California and remained there for over 50 years. Creighton's new Law School opened the same year also on 26th Street across from the new School of Dentistry.

The Nebraska Legislature created the East Omaha Drainage District to coordinate installation of a levee and flood wall to control flooding along thirteen miles of the Missouri River.

1922 The national postal convention was held in Omaha.

Five thousand railway workers went on strike in Omaha.

The city's first radio station, WAAW, began broadcasting.

For the first time, The O-Book was noted as a publication of the senior class of Central High School. Previously, the school's yearbook was a publication of the students of Omaha High School.

Carl S. Baum Druggists opened for business in the Harte Building at 5001 Underwood Avenue and earned a reputation as "Dundee's Dependable Druggist".

Gilbert Hitchcock was defeated in his third bid for the U.S. Senate by R.B. Howell, former secretary of the board of directors of the Metropolitan Utilities District, and early advocate for the municipal ownership of gas and water utilities.

Roberts Dairy opened a plant in Omaha. As many as twenty new customers were added daily to each route. Today, the site of the first plant is the dairy's headquarters.

The Omaha Sun, a descendant of an old South Omaha newspaper, became firmly established.

The Women's Division of the Omaha Chamber of Commerce was established as an outgrowth of the Omaha Business and Professional Women's League which was formed in 1893. The Women's Division of the Chamber of Commerce lasted until 1976.

1923 The fire at the Armour Packing Co. resulted in putting 1000 men out of work.

The cruiser USS Omaha was commissioned.

Technical High School, the largest school in Douglas County, was completed at a cost of \$3.5 million.

Through the efforts of the Police Department, Omaha became one of the first cities in the country to establish school safety patrols.

Omaha and Douglas County's first commercial radio station WOAW began broadcasting from downtown studios in the Woodmen of the World building. The call letters were changed to WOW three years later.

Harry Houdini performed in Omaha.

The College of St. Mary was founded by Mother Mary Leo Gallagher and the Sisters of Mercy as a two-year teacher's college dedicated to the education of women in the liberal arts. The new school occupied the old Continental Hotel at 15th and Castelar Streets.

The Omaha Home for Boys was founded by the Masons. George W. Megeath donated a mansion on South 33rd Street in memory of his father, Omaha pioneer, J.G. Megeath, to house the new institution.

The Community Chest was organized after three years of study by the Omaha Chamber of Commerce. It became the central collection agency for 33 charitable organizations in the city.

James G. "Jim" Jewell was one of the first black men to build in North Omaha. His two-story Jewell Building at 24th and Grant Streets became home to the Dreamland Ballroom on the second floor. The club featured big bands and jazz performances by musician-greats Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Lionel Hampton, Louis Armstrong and Nat King Cole, to name a few.

Omaha was the second largest livestock market in the world. The stockyards and packing houses employed 13,000 people with an annual payroll in excess of \$13,000,000. A total of 62 commission firms had offices in the exchange building. The "Big Four" packing companies were Armour & Co., Cudahy, Swift and Morris.

1924 The Nebraska Children's Home Society opened at 3549 Fontenelle Boulevard.

North High School was completed at a cost of \$959,000.

Actor Marlon Brando was born in Omaha at 1026 South 32nd Street.

The Omaha Symphony Orchestra and the Omaha Community Playhouse were established. The symphony played its first concert with Hungarian Sandor Harmati as conductor.

David Warfield appeared as Shylock in The Merchant of Venice.

Edna St. Vincent Millay lectured to members of the Society of Fine Arts.

Creighton's Blue and White teams got a new mascot: the Bluejay. During the same year, tuition was charged for undergraduate and high school students for the first time.

A small tornado hit Ak-Sar-Ben Field and destroyed an air hangar.

The first traffic streetlight in Omaha caused such confusion that the words "STOP" and "GO" had to be painted on the appropriate colors.

Happy Hollow Country Club opened a new golf course near 105th and Pacific Streets.

Worthington Hall, a three-story red brick and stone building, was completed as the first unit of Brownell Hall's new plant at Underwood Avenue and 54th Street. The building would be used as a dormitory.

Groundbreaking for the Jewish Community Center in downtown Omaha took place on November 30th. The cornerstone for the new building was laid on July 19, 1925.

1925 Dundee Theater opened at 50th and Dodge Streets.

The main altar at St. Cecilia Cathedral was consecrated.

KOIL radio station began broadcasting in Council Bluffs.

The Enchanted Cottage was the first play staged by the Omaha Community Playhouse. It was produced at the Mary Cooper Dance Studio near 40th and Farnam and starred Dodie Brando, one year after the birth of her son, Marlon. The cast included Jayne Fonda, sister of Henry Fonda, who was studying journalism in Minneapolis at the time. Six months later, Fonda started his acting career when he debuted in the Playhouse production, You and I.

Malcolm Little, a civil rights activist who later changed his name to Malcolm X, was born at 3448 Pinkney Street in Omaha. In his autobiography, Malcolm X wrote that white men on horseback continually terrorized his parents' home at night.

An addition was built to the former South Omaha High School at 23rd and "J" Streets with a main entrance that now faced 24th Street. Because South Omaha had been annexed by Omaha, the school's new name was now Omaha South High School.

The cornerstone for St. John's Episcopal Church was laid.

Bus services were introduced to first supplement, and later replace, Omaha's streetcar system.

In May, the new Peony Park Dance Hall opened to replace the first dance hall which burned to the ground the previous winter. Constructed for \$60,000, the new facility featured a cove ceiling and had stage settings built to produce special acoustic effects. Equipped with table service, the Dance Hall could accommodate 500 persons. Free parking was available with a capacity for 1,000 cars.

President Calvin Coolidge traveled to Omaha to attend the American Legion National Convention.

Memorial services for William Jennings Bryan were held at Municipal Auditorium.

1926

Sokol Auditorium opened at 13th and Martha Streets.

The new Benson High School Building opened at 52nd and Maple Streets. Construction cost for the combined junior-senior high school was \$481,000.

Al Jolson performed in Omaha.

The Omaha Philatelic Society was organized.

The first Jewish Community Center at 20th and Dodge Streets was dedicated on June 6th.

Queen Marie of Roumania visited Omaha. While here, her visit was protested by delegates to the National Convention of Hoboes meeting here at the same time.

Walter W. Head of Omaha was elected President of the Boy Scouts of America.

The Livestock Exchange Building was constructed on a hill at the stockyards. Designed by architect George Prinz, it provided office and meeting space and a grand ballroom for executives and livestock commission agents at the heart of a thriving Omaha livestock market.

A sniper, Frank Carter, terrorized Omaha, mortally wounding a mechanic and a doctor, injuring a railroad worker in Council Bluffs, and shooting into a downtown drug store. Carter was captured in Iowa and later executed.

The Riviera Theater was constructed at 2001 Farnam Street. Built to resemble a Moorish palace, it had a seating capacity of 2,776. Glazed brick on the outside is arranged in diamond-shaped patterns to give it a distinctive appearance. Today, it is known as The Rose Theater.

1927 The first talking sound movie was shown in Omaha at the World Theater.

General John J. Pershing visited Omaha.

The first Boeing Airlines flight arrived in Omaha. Boeing later became United Airlines.

The closing sale of the Lininger Art Gallery was held.

Immaculate Conception Church was dedicated at 24th and Bancroft Streets.

The Fontenelle Park pavilion was dedicated.

The new Orpheum Theater opened at 16th and Harney Streets. Chicago architects, Rapp and Rapp, designed the building which was constructed in sixteen months. Cost of construction was \$2 million. Built as a vaudeville house, the 2,600-seat proscenium theater was later converted to a movie theater. The Creighton Orpheum Theater built by John A. Creighton stood at the same location from 1906-1926.

Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig came to Omaha to play in an exhibition game.

Roman Catholic Archbishop-Bishop Jeremiah Harty died after a long illness. At the time of his death, Omaha was still recognized as a diocese. Reference to Bishop Harty as “archbishop” refers to his work as Archbishop of Manila before he was assigned as Bishop of the Omaha diocese.

The Omaha Bee was consolidated with the Omaha Daily News and became the Omaha Bee News.

A large welcoming crowd greeted Colonel Charles Lindbergh when he stopped in Omaha.

Fire destroyed the old Ak-Sar-Ben Den on North 20th Street. Ak-Sar-Ben Field, a 260-acre tract of land at 63rd and Shirley Streets, became the focal point for Ak-Sar-Ben's activities.

Prince William of Sweden visited Omaha.

The first telephone call from Omaha to London was completed.

The Omaha Urban League began operation in November. Formed to provide recreational and educational programs for residents in North Omaha, it became the Nebraska Urban League after 1968.

1928

The new pavilion was dedicated at Hanscom Park.

The new Robbins School was named after a boy who died while trying to save his invalid mother from their burning home.

An Indian pageant marked the founding of Camp Gifford.

Democratic Presidential candidate Al Smith spoke at the Auditorium.

The Omaha Bee News was sold to William Randolph Hearst.

Omaha University held its first homecoming highlighted by a downtown parade that featured decorated cars and floats.

A "temporary" theater was constructed in a record 28 days on a cow pasture at 40th and Davenport donated by Mrs. Sarah Joslyn to house productions of the Omaha Community Playhouse. Omahan Henry Fonda starred in Merton of the Movies, the second production in the new theater. Mrs. Dorothy Brando, the mother of Marlon Brando, and Dorothy McGuire also acted in roles during the early years of the Playhouse.

Carter Lake, Iowa, separated from Council Bluffs and was incorporated as a village.

The first hangar at Municipal Airport was dedicated.

Clarence Darrow debated Rabbi Frederick Cohn of Temple Israel.

The Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben built a Coliseum at 63rd and Shirley Streets. The 5,200-seat facility was constructed with revenue from racing. The Ak-Sar-Ben Coliseum became home to the annual Livestock Exposition and Rodeo, an ice arena and location for big-name entertainers who performed for Ak-Sar-Ben members.

A new School of Nursing opened as part of Creighton University.

1929 Jack Dempsey and James J. Corbett refereed a boxing match in Omaha.

The Omaha Symphony performed Handel's Messiah for the first time.

The Jazz Singer, the nation's first feature length talking movie, opened in Omaha.

The Union Bus Station opened at 16th and Jackson Streets.

The new Paxton Hotel opened at 1403 Farnam Street. The \$1.5 million, 325-room modern hotel was named for businessman and community leader, William A. Paxton, a founder of the Union Stock Yards Company and Paxton-Vierling Steel Co. Wealthy cattle barons regularly stayed at the Paxton when Omaha was a leader in the livestock industry.

The Lincoln Highway (Hwy. 30) was routed to cross the Missouri River at Blair on the newly constructed Abraham Lincoln Memorial Bridge.

The Plattsmouth Bridge across the Missouri River was completed.

Public transportation had 41 million riders this year, a significant decrease from the historic high of 61 million riders in 1920.

1930 Mayor James Dahlman died while in office. "Cowboy Jim" Dahlman was mayor from his initial election in 1906 for all but three years (1918-1921) until his death, having won seven out of eight mayoral campaigns. For this reason, he became known as Omaha's "perpetual mayor". Dahlman's era paralleled that of Tom Dennison's boss rule, although the extent of their connection is not clear.

Henry Fonda returned to Omaha to play opposite Omahan Dorothy McGuire in an Omaha Community Playhouse production of A Kiss for Cinderella.

Aviator Amelia Earhart visited Omaha.

The roller coaster at Krug Park crashed, killing four and causing injury to seventeen of the 23 passengers on board. It was the beginning of the end for Krug Park. Soon after, the Omaha City Council approved an ordinance banning roller coasters.

The first night baseball game was played in Omaha.

The population of Omaha was 214,184 residents. The total population of Douglas County was 232,982. The population of Council Bluffs was 42,048.

A gymnasium, auditorium and band room were added to the north side of Central High School.

The three-day Sixth National Eucharistic Congress was held in Omaha in September. Roman Catholic Bishop Joseph Rummel was host for the Eucharistic Congress.

Warren Buffett was born in Omaha.

The Burlington Railroad Station was dedicated after an extensive renovation. The renovation was undertaken to compete with the new Union Station that opened nearby a year later. The exterior and interior of the building were dramatically altered. Examples include removal of 24 of 28 pink Colorado granite columns from the outside and removal of the grand double staircase on the inside.

Omahans voted to establish the Municipal University of Omaha founded originally by the Reverend Daniel E. Jenkins in 1908.

OU had the first NCAA football team to travel by airplane to a game when it traveled to Fremont to play Midland Lutheran College. The game ended in a 0-0 tie, and OU returned to campus by bus.

Northern Natural Gas Company was founded in Omaha. Its headquarters was in the City National Bank Building on 16th Street between Harney and Howard Streets. By the end of the year, Northern was supplying natural gas to 44 communities in Nebraska, Iowa and Kansas.

The Waubonsie Bridge at Nebraska City was dedicated.

1931 The Visiting Nurse Association opened a pre-school clinic.

A hunger march was held in Omaha during the Depression.

The Joslyn Memorial Art Museum opened and quickly became a cultural center for the Omaha community. The Joslyn Memorial contained 155,000 square feet and housed ten large galleries and a 1,000-seat concert hall. The \$3.5 million structure was a gift to the city from Sarah Joslyn in memory of her late husband, George Joslyn, who made a large fortune in the printing and paper industries.

The “darkest day” in Omaha banking occurred on August 15th when the closing of Union State Bank ignited a run on every bank in Omaha. Two of the three largest banks—Omaha National and U.S. National—kept their doors open until 9 PM, nine hours beyond the usual Saturday closing time. \$3,000,000 in additional currency was flown in from the Federal Reserve Bank in Kansas City while bank officers served lemonade and sandwiches to Omaha National Bank customers waiting in line to withdraw their deposits. By Monday, most clients returned their money for deposit when they realized the banks were not going to fail.

Omaha police tested bulletproof windows.

Charles “Speed” Holman was killed at the Omaha Air Races.

Auto liability insurance was required.

Radios were used in police cars for the first time.

The Municipal University of Omaha was created on January 21st. The university operated as a municipal university until 1968.

Peter Kiewit took over the family construction firm after his father’s death. Under his leadership, the company grew into one of the country’s largest builders.

The new art deco-style Union Station building opened. Today it houses the Durham Western Heritage Museum. By 1948, the terminal saw 80 passenger trains daily while its neighbor across the tracks, the Burlington Station, hosted 34 trains each day. The total for the two terminals helped to make Omaha the fourth-largest rail center in the country by 1954.

Unemployed groups marched to city hall and presented eight demands for relief to Mayor Richard Metcalfe.

The City of Omaha appropriated \$5,000 for ten recreation centers.

Harry Lapidus, businessman, philanthropist and outspoken critic of Tom Dennison's machine, was found shot to death near Hanscom Park. The mysterious murder shocked the entire city.

1932 The concert hall in the Joslyn Memorial Art Museum opened.

Saddle Creek Road was paved.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt visited Omaha.

Federal offices began a five-day work week.

A farm strike resulted in a blockade of roads into Omaha to prevent milk and other farm products from reaching markets in the city. The strike was an effort to bring about an increase in prices paid for farm produce. For three nights in late August and early September, sheriff's deputies and pickets engaged in pitched battles at the city limits. On one occasion, 1,000 bystanders watched as 40 deputies were pelted with logs and rocks as they guided farm trucks through a line of 150 pickets on Dodge Street.

Crime became a grave problem for the city. Changes were made in police personnel.

Tom Dennison was indicted in a liquor conspiracy case. The trial resulted in a hung jury, and mistrial was declared.

Unemployed groups marched to city hall and presented demands to Acting Mayor Arthur Westergard.

The Douglas County Hospital was built at a cost of approximately \$1,000,000 including its equipment. Built to accommodate 400 patients, the hospital was designed by Omaha architect, John Latenser and Sons, and is located on 42nd Street between Pacific Street and Woolworth Avenue.

1933 The Army Corps of Engineers established its first office in Omaha.

The Millard Hotel fire resulted in the deaths of seven firemen.

Omaha felt the full force of the Great Depression. Bank clearings fell from \$2.9 billion in 1929 to \$997 million in 1933. During the same time, deposits dropped from \$115 million to \$83 million. Militant farmers joined the Farm Holiday movement to halt mortgage foreclosures.

New Deal work relief projects started in Omaha during the 1930s. Both the PWA (Public Works Administration) and the WPA (Works Progress Administration) employed thousands of Omaha citizens and had a positive impact on the economy until the effects of the Great Depression decreased with the onset of WWII.

The cornerstone of the new Federal Building at 15th and Dodge Streets was laid.

After three decades, boss rule in Omaha came to an end when political boss Tom Dennison's ticket lost to a slate of moderate reformers headed by Roy Towl. Dennison died in 1934.

Ten monkeys escaped from Monkey Island in Elmwood Park.

St. Paul United Methodist Church opened.

Tarzan the alligator got loose in Riverview Park.

Beer sales resumed in Omaha once prohibition was repealed.

A 55-mile per hour dust storm swept the city and fanned 44 fires in eight hours. Only one fire resulted in great damage.

Johnny Goodman, winner of the U.S. Open Golf Tournament, was welcomed home to Omaha. Goodman is the last amateur player to win the U.S. Open.

A walkathon attracted big crowds and netted the promoter \$22,000.

Peony Park founder, Joseph Malec Sr., started the Tower Tourist Village, a 36-unit motel near Peony Park that eventually expanded to 100 units. It later became the New Tower Hotel Courts with a total of 340 rooms.

U.S. Senator George W. Norris spearheaded a petition drive to place the issue of a nonpartisan one-house legislature on the ballot as a constitutional amendment in Nebraska.

1934 An explosion at the Cargill Elevator killed four men.

Senator Gilbert Hitchcock died in Washington. He served three terms in the U.S. House of Representatives and two terms in the U.S. Senate for a total of 18 years. On the home front, he was the principal owner and driving force behind the Omaha World-Herald newspaper.

The first Golden Gloves boxing match was held in Omaha.

The new Federal Building at 15th and Dodge Streets was dedicated.

Federal Housing Authority loans became available.

Two strikes by members of the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees against the Omaha Traction Company failed to win union recognition, a wage increase or resolution of other demands. This was in spite of federal arbitration efforts.

The first Union Pacific streamlined passenger train was exhibited shortly before it went into cross-country service. The new train could achieve a maximum speed of 110 miles per hour.

Nebraska voters approved a constitutional amendment that provided for a nonpartisan, one-house or unicameral legislature by a voting margin of 60% to 40%.

The Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska reorganized with tribally-elected officials under the Indian Reorganization Act.

1935 George M. Cohan performed in Ah, Wilderness at the Omaha Technical High School auditorium.

Streetcar and bus drivers went on strike against the Omaha Traction Company in April. The company employed 250 strikebreakers in heavily armed cars to continue service. Public sentiment supported the striking employees. By mid-June, heavy rioting broke out on the south side of Omaha and continued for three nights. Streetcars were burned and looting occurred that caused an estimated \$400,000 in damage. Two persons were killed and 100 were injured. Eighteen hundred National Guardsmen were called in to quell the violence.

Omaha voters approved the sale of liquor by the drink.

The worst dust storm on record hit Omaha.

The racehorse Omaha won the Belmont Stakes and the Triple Crown of horse racing.

Admiral Richard E. Byrd spent his 47th birthday in Omaha.

Nebraska's bicameral legislature met for its last regular session. The session lasted 110 days, resulted in the passage of 192 bills and cost \$202,593. Two years later, the first Unicameral session ran 98 days, 214 bills were passed and the cost was \$103,445. The year 1936 marked the first election process to select the charter members of the newly-adopted Nebraska Unicameral Legislature which convened for the first time in 1937.

1936

The South Omaha Bridge, 4,300 feet long, was opened to traffic on January 18th. The new bridge provided a more direct route for farmers in southwest Iowa to deliver livestock to the Union Stock Yards in Omaha.

The early months brought protracted extremely cold weather. A heavy snowstorm brought out horses and sleds. Doctors made house calls on horseback. During the summer, Omaha suffered from dust storms and heat. Five deaths were recorded when the temperature set a new record of 114 degrees.

A new location for the Municipal University of Omaha was selected at 60th and Dodge Streets on 52 acres of land. The university had outgrown its original home at 24th and Pratt Streets.

The Omaha tribe was incorporated under the Indian Reorganization Act. Government by a seven-member tribal council began.

The first main bus line service was inaugurated in Omaha.

The Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra, directed by Leopold Stokowski, performed in Omaha.

Boys Town was incorporated.

The settlement of Two Rivers was organized and incorporated.

The old Rourke Park Municipal Stadium, 15th and Vinton Streets, was destroyed by fire on August 13th. It was the park used by the Western Baseball League.

Omaha's first rescue squad went into service on June 4th.

Parking meters were established in the City of Omaha by Ordinance #14414 effective on August 27th.

1937 Taxi cab drivers went on strike. Several drivers were beaten and cabs demolished.

Mayor Butler's censorship of Tobacco Road and Idiot's Delight and his banning of the movie, Ecstasy, led to accusations that Omaha was puritanical and brought snickers from around the country.

The Archdiocese of Omaha established a home at 63rd and Dodge Streets.

William Randolph Hearst sold the Omaha Bee News to the Omaha World-Herald which secured that paper's monopoly on Omaha newspaper circulation.

The OU Alumni Association was incorporated.

Rose Blumkin (later known as "Mrs. B") founded the Nebraska Furniture Mart in the basement of a small shop at 1312 Farnam Street.

The first session of the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature convened on January 5th. U.S. Senator George W. Norris, an outspoken advocate for the unicameral system, addressed the newly-elected body. A few days later, a resolution naming the legislature the "Senate" was adopted, and lawmakers took the title, "State Senator". Membership in the Unicameral was 43 Senators in contrast to 133 House and Senate members in the bicameral. The number of committees was reduced from 61 to 18 in the new Unicameral. A total of 581 bills were introduced in 1937 as opposed to twice that number in the last session of the bicameral in 1935.

1938 The world premiere of the movie, Boys Town, was held at the Orpheum Theater with Father Flanagan and stars, Spencer Tracy and Mickey Rooney, in attendance. Boys Town earned Spencer Tracy an Oscar for his portrayal of Father Edward J. Flanagan. The movie helped to bring in

donations from around the world that enabled Boys Town to expand to 1000 acres with 50 buildings.

The Administration Building, now Arts & Sciences Hall, was dedicated on the OU campus. At the time, it was the only building on the new campus at 60th and Dodge Streets. Matching PWA (Public Works Administration) monies helped to finance the construction.

The Logan Fontenelle Homes on 24th Street, a project of the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, was completed at a cost of \$2,000,000.

The Omaha Star newspaper was founded and published by Mildred Brown. Under her leadership, the Star grew into one of the most prosperous weekly newspapers in the country with a staff of 20 and circulation of more than 30,000. Brown became widely known in local and national political circles.

An ice rink was added to the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben Coliseum, making it possible to have hockey, public skating and ice shows.

1939

The world premiere of the motion picture, Union Pacific, was held at the Orpheum Theater. The premiere was held in conjunction with the Golden Spike Days celebration to commemorate the completion of the transcontinental railroad 70 years earlier.

The first community sing was held at Elmwood Park.

Nile Kinnick won the Heisman Trophy as the nation's outstanding football player at the University of Iowa. Kinnick starred for Benson High School and quarterbacked the Hawkeyes to a national title with a 6-1-1 record that included upsets of football powerhouses, Notre Dame and Minnesota.

1940

Gone with the Wind opened at the Paramount Theater at 20th and Farnam Streets.

Sarah Joslyn died.

The bison emblem was first used on Omaha Police Department badges.

George Burns and Gracie Allen came to Omaha to perform at the Ak-Sar-Ben Coliseum as a follow-up to the Golden Spike Days celebration the previous year.

The first all-state Nebraska electric service connected from Omaha.

The cornerstone was laid at the new Mutual of Omaha headquarters site at 33rd and Farnam Streets.

Omaha's population was 223,844 inhabitants. The total population of Douglas County was 247,562. Bellevue's population was 1,184, and Council Bluffs had a population of 41,439 residents.

1941 The USS Omaha captured a German ship on November 6th, marking the first U.S. military action of World War II.

Figure skater Sonja Henie opened Ak-Sar-Ben's winter season.

Two persons from Omaha died in the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Pershing Drive was dedicated.

CBS aired the first broadcast of the Boys Town choir.

A portion of Fort Crook was leased to establish the Martin Bomber Plant where B-26 and B-29 bombers were produced for use in fighting World War II.

Dowd Chapel at what is now Girls and Boys Town was dedicated. In the same year, Boys Town completed the square-mile site of its main campus when it purchased 320 acres from three Douglas County farmers at a cost of \$107,000. The square-mile is bounded by 132nd, 144th, Dodge and Pacific Streets and encompasses 640 acres.

Actor Nick Nolte was born in Omaha.

The Fairacres addition was annexed by Omaha.

The Brandeis Store used "charge-a-plate", an early name for today's credit card, for the first time.

The Omaha Home for Boys moved to 52nd and Ames Avenue where personnel provided care for 80 boys in five brick buildings.

The first of the “Big Boy” locomotives, the world’s most powerful steam locomotive, arrived at Union Pacific Railroad in Omaha.

1942 Creighton University played its last football game and lost to Tulsa University by a score of 33-39.

The Omaha World-Herald published the first booklet to inform readers about how they could support the country’s war effort. The newspaper initiated the National Scrap Drive. Over 25,000 Douglas County residents served in the military during WWII. A total of 120,000 Nebraskans served during the war.

The Glenn L. Martin Co. Bomber Plant began production of B-26 and B-29 bombers at Fort Crook in Bellevue. As many as 14,500 people worked at the plant, including thousands of women who had never done factory work before. In 1945, the plant produced the B-29s that dropped atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end the war.

During WWII, Fort Omaha served as a support installation for the 7th Service Command, an induction center, and as a work camp for Italian prisoners of war.

Ak-Sar-Ben Coliseum activities were put on hold through 1945 during World War II. The building and grounds were used as a U.S. Army vehicle depot.

Roberts Dairy used milk cartons instead of glass bottles for the first time.

The Benson branch library opened.

1943 The Martin Bomber Plant produced the 1,200th B-26.

The Kellogg Co. opened a factory in Omaha.

The Omaha & Council Bluffs Street Railway (O&CB) began training women as streetcar operators in October. The company experienced an acute shortage of male operators as more men were called into military service during WW II. The women learned quickly and became capable streetcar operators who were paid the same wages as their male counterparts.

Spring floods spurred a community sandbag effort that involved as many as 3,000 people. Volunteers and officials fought the rising Missouri River for a week only to lose the battle when homes and industries in eastern Omaha were flooded, including Municipal Airport. No lives were lost.

Grace Bible Institute, an inter-Mennonite Bible institution, opened with 23 students. Within a year, the college purchased Stuntz Hall, 1515 South 10th Street.

1944 Wendell Wilkie withdrew from the presidential campaign during his visit to Omaha.

Johnny Rosenblatt, member of the Municipal Stadium Committee, became a leading advocate for a new baseball facility. He believed such a facility would attract fans, tourist dollars and semi-professional farm teams to Omaha. An Omaha native and well-known semi-pro baseball player, Rosenblatt served as Omaha's mayor from 1954-1961.

Carver Savings and Loan Association, formed by a group of African-Americans, opened near 24th and Lake Streets in Omaha.

The Omaha Electric Committee purchased the Nebraska Power Company from its parent company, the American Light and Power Company in December. Nebraska Power was the main supplier of electricity to the City of Omaha, its homes and businesses.

1945 The first Italian POW camp was established at Fort Omaha.

A Japanese balloon bomb fell near 50th Street and Underwood Avenue in Dundee on April 18th. No injuries were reported.

Gas rationing ended in Omaha.

By a 3 to 1 margin, Omaha voters approved the first of two bond issues to finance construction of a new Municipal Stadium. The new facility would replace the old Western League Rourke Park Stadium that burned down in 1936. The first bond issue was for \$480,000; the second one, passed some years later, was for \$290,000.

The dance pavilion at Peony Park was expanded to accommodate 3,500 dancers. Ballroom dancing was very popular. Big Bands that included Lawrence Welk, Glenn Miller, Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey, Ray Anthony,

Guy Lombardo and Duke Ellington were a few of the famous names who played and drew crowds to the Peony Park pavilion during its heyday.

The Nebraska Furniture Mart moved to a new location at 2205 Farnam Street.

Pope Pius XII designated Omaha as an archdiocese. The Reverend James Hugh Ryan was installed as Omaha's first archbishop at St. Cecelia Cathedral on October 10th.

1946 The State of Nebraska created the Omaha Public Power District. OPPD, a governmental subdivision of the state, went into business in December. In doing so, it provided the last link in the state's unique all-public power system.

Plans were announced to build a new Veteran's Hospital at 42nd and Center Streets.

The Mayor's City-Wide Planning Committee recommended the appointment of five separate citizen commissions charged with allocating the expenditure of \$20,000,000 of bond funds for capital improvements for the city which the electorate approved. The improvements included upgrades for Omaha's streets and sewers and construction of public facilities. Voters agreed to the recommendation for the oversight commissions which added another layer to Omaha's commission form of government.

Fort Crook was renamed Offutt Field in honor of First Lieutenant Jarvis Offutt, Omaha's first air fatality during World War I.

Charles W. Durham and Willard Richardson became partners in the Henningson Engineering Company, which became HDR.

Following a national pattern of growing hostility toward labor unions, Nebraska voters approved a constitutional amendment that provided for the "open shop". An "open shop" is one which allows the employment of non-union workers. Laws passed in 1947 and 1949 implemented this open shop, anti-union direction which was especially controversial in Omaha, a stronghold for organized labor.

1947 The District 66 school district was organized.

Omahans celebrated the toll-free status of the Ak-Sar-Ben Bridge, connecting Douglas Street to Council Bluffs, and the South Omaha Bridge. As owner of the bridges, the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben later donated both spans to the governments of Iowa and Nebraska.

Ak-Sar-Ben featured a World Championship Rodeo and linked it to an annual livestock show.

Headquarters, Fifth Army gave command of Fort Omaha to the Navy. The new official name for Fort Omaha was the Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

The cornerstone was laid for a new headquarters building for the Omaha World-Herald at 14th and Dodge Streets.

Creighton University's Reverend John Markoe, S.J. organized the city's first "sit-in" demonstration which resulted in the integration of Dixon's Café near the county courthouse. Founder of the DePorres Club, Markoe and the club's members picketed businesses, protested unfair labor practices and held watches at the homes of black families who moved into white neighborhoods.

1948

The former Martin Bomber Plant near Bellevue became Offutt Air Force Base. The new base was selected as the home of Strategic Air Command (SAC) headquarters. Within ten years, 20,000 military personnel and dependents were stationed here.

The state Republican and the state Democratic Party conventions were held in Omaha.

Children's Memorial Hospital began serving patients.

Omaha initiated a handicapped parking ordinance.

World-Herald employees moved into World-Herald Square, the newspaper's new headquarters, at 14th and Dodge.

Boys Town founder, Father Edward J. Flanagan, died in Germany.

76 West Dodge, Omaha's first drive-in theater, opened.

President Harry Truman placed a wreath at the base of the memorial arch to dedicate Memorial Park in June. The park was designed by Leo A. Daly Co. as a tribute to veterans of the First and Second World Wars.

Municipal Stadium was completed on a forty-acre tract of land west of Riverview Park at a cost of nearly \$1,000,000. The city-owned site was purchased a few years earlier for \$17 at a tax foreclosure sale. Weeds, trees and shrubs originally covered the nine-square block hilltop that had good streetcar service. A special Dedication Baseball Game attracted 10,000 cheering fans on October 17th when the ballpark was dedicated and opened to the public. Today it is known as Rosenblatt Stadium, home to the College World Series.

Elizabeth Davis Pittman became the first black woman to graduate from Creighton Law School and the first black woman to practice law in Nebraska.

Packing house workers in Omaha went on strike against all of the Big Four meatpackers as part of a national action sponsored by the United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA) of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). The strike ended in defeat as UPWA strikers went back to work under the same terms as those offered by their employers before the walkout occurred.

1949

Power was restored to South Omaha after a substation explosion.

WOW-TV (now WOWT) and KMTV began broadcasting. Johnny Carson, one of WOWT's early announcers, hosted a daily fifteen-minute local show.

The first football game was played at Al Caniglia Field when OU took on a team from Northern Illinois.

Municipal Stadium got its first tenant, a St. Louis Cardinals Class A Western League team, the Omaha Cardinals, who played at the stadium until 1959. The Los Angeles Dodgers moved their AAA farm team to Omaha in 1961 and stayed here through 1968. The Kansas City Royals established their No. 1 farm team in Omaha beginning in 1969. The Omaha Royals remain at what is now Rosenblatt Stadium today.

A new pavilion was built adjacent to the Ak-Sar-Ben Coliseum replacing the old barns.

The Nebraska right-to-work provision approved by voters in 1946 was ruled constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court. The provision allowed the open shop in the work place. This means workers are not obligated to join the union at any time as a condition of employment. Nebraska remains a right-to-work state today.

A vote of the people in Council Bluffs won approval for the city manager form of government which went into effect in 1950.

1950

The Q Street viaduct opened.

Actor Clark Gable visited Omaha.

An Omaha University team played its first basketball game in what is now known as the Lee and Helene Sapp Fieldhouse. The opposing team was from Creighton University.

The population of Omaha was 251,117 residents. The total population of Douglas County was 281,020. Bellevue grew to 3,858 residents, and Council Bluffs had a population of 45,429.

For the first time, the College World Series (CWS) was held in Omaha at Municipal Stadium. The Texas Longhorns won the series and the NCAA Division I national baseball championship title. Before moving to Omaha, the first three CWS tournaments were held in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Omicron Delta Kappa Circle was founded at Omaha University.

The Sisters of Mercy purchased eighty acres of land next to 72nd Street, then a dirt road, and what would become Mercy Road. The \$150,000 site was the future home campus of the College of St. Mary.

Robert C. Cooper donated his farm to the Omaha Home for Boys. There the boys could take advantage of opportunities to participate in livestock feeding and a variety of 4-H projects.

Uta Halee was founded by Protestant churchwomen as a haven for homeless girls. Uta Halee is a Native American term for “on the sunny side”.

Voters in Omaha defeated a plan to change from a commission to a city manager form of city government.

Elizabeth Davis Pittman became the first African-American to serve on the Omaha Public Schools Board of Education. She served until 1951.

The new official name for the Henningson Engineering Company was Henningson, Durham & Richardson (HDR). Local projects included work for the Strategic Air Command at Offutt Air Force Base. HDR added an architectural department in the mid-1950s to provide total in-house services to clients.

The Reverend Carl Reinert, S.J. became president of Creighton University. His fundraising efforts included appeals to Omaha business leaders for advice and contributions. He also appealed to Creighton alumni for donations, and money rolled in from both segments. Creighton underwent a period of expansion on campus.

1951 Calvary Cemetery opened.

Veteran's Hospital opened.

The Marr Baking Co. made the first commercial ice cream cones in Omaha.

Augustana Lutheran Church, 3647 Lafayette Avenue, was dedicated.

A bakery strike was held in Omaha.

An Air Force ROTC program began at Omaha University.

Fort Omaha was designated the U.S. Naval Personnel Center.

1952 The Mormon Pioneer Bridge opened to traffic on December 14th at the exact location where the Mormons first crossed the Missouri River into Nebraska in June 1846. Girls from the Uta Halee Home were the first passengers to travel across the bridge on opening day. Formal dedication of the Mormon Pioneer Bridge was held on June 1, 1953.

A Missouri River flood emergency was called. Omaha experienced the river's highest flood stage when it crested at 30.4 feet on April 17th. A strong system of dikes, a flood wall of steel and concrete and quick action by volunteers kept Omaha and Council Bluffs from being devastated. Nevertheless, one person died, and damage to homes and businesses was reported at \$1.4 million. Following the great flood of 1952, a levee extending from what is now Eppley Airfield to the railroad bridge on the

south edge of downtown was built. The Missouri River has not flooded downtown Omaha since construction of the levee.

A polio epidemic hit Omaha.

Table Supply Meat Company President Lester Simon started the company's first mail order business. Direct mail fliers and catalogues were initially sent to customers in 1963.

In its first televised athletic contest, the OU football team defeated Doane College 27-0 on what was then WOW-TV.

The Omaha Zoological Society was organized to improve the zoo and provide administrative assistance to the City of Omaha.

1953 The Sisters of Mercy began a \$3 million construction project to build the new home for the College of St. Mary.

1954 A huge birthday cake was the centerpiece for Omaha centennial celebration shows held at Turner Park during the summertime. The show, Omaha! Chuck Wagon of America, featured a cast of 1,500.

Ten railroads converged on the city making Omaha the fourth-largest rail center in the country.

The first one-way streets were designated in Omaha.

In August, a light turnout of voters approved holding a charter convention. Convention delegates were to address the issue of whether to revise the current commission form of government or recommend an entirely different form of city government.

1955 The Omaha Civic Auditorium at 1804 Capitol Avenue was dedicated on January 2nd. It replaced the old Municipal Auditorium at 15th and Howard. Designed by architect, Leo A. Daly Co., it was built for \$7,000,000.

The last streetcar made its final run in Omaha.

The College of St. Mary became an independent corporation and opened its new campus at 1901 South 72nd Street on the outskirts of Omaha with an enrollment of 255 students. By 1958, the College of St. Mary became a four-year fully accredited college.

Omaha University defeated Eastern Kentucky State in the Tangerine Bowl with a score of 7-6.

Omaha acquired its first Class AAA baseball franchise, a St. Louis Cardinals team, which would play at Municipal Stadium. A Class AAA franchise is the highest minor league status. By the end of the 1955 season, more than 317,000 fans came to watch the Omaha Cardinals at Municipal (now Rosenblatt) Stadium. It was the third highest attendance of any minor league park in the country in 1955.

The Omaha Stockyards was the largest livestock market in the world and remained so until 1973.

The Center shopping mall opened at 42nd and Center Streets. It was Omaha's first enclosed shopping center.

J.L. Brandeis & Sons began development of a shopping center on the west edge of Omaha. Crossroads Mall was intended to be an adjunct operation to business at its flagship department store downtown.

1956

Eppley Library, now the Administration Building, was dedicated at the University of Omaha. It was built with an \$850,000 gift from the Eugene C. Eppley Foundation, the largest such contribution OU had ever received.

A Parish House was built next to Trinity Episcopal Cathedral at 18th Street and Capitol Avenue.

Werner Enterprises was founded by C.L. Werner in Council Bluffs when, as a nineteen-year-old, he used his car as a down payment to buy a 1956 Ford truck with a V-8 engine. Later, the trucking company's corporate headquarters was moved across the Missouri River to the Omaha area.

Omaha voters elected fifteen delegates to participate in a Charter Convention with the goal of making a recommendation as to the form of government Omaha would have in the future. Most of the delegates were male, middle-aged business leaders who volunteered their time and worked through the summer in a non-air conditioned room on the top floor of city hall. A.V. Sorensen, president of the Chamber of Commerce, chaired the convention charged with completing its work within 120 days. The delegates finished their work on the 119th day. Later, Sorensen recalled it was the worst job he ever had in terms of getting

fifteen minds to agree on one recommendation. He later served as mayor for one term, 1965-1969.

The new Home Rule Charter was approved by voters in November. It authorized implementation of a strong mayor/city council form of government and extended the term of the mayor to four years. The Charter placed the selection of the mayor back into the hands of the voting public.

The Greater Omaha Historical Society was organized at a meeting held at the Joslyn Art Museum. Dr. John M. Christlieb was elected the society's first president, a constitution was adopted, and annual dues were set at \$1. Membership was open to anyone interested in local history.

HDR got its first large architectural project, the Omaha Federal Building.

A 390-acre tract of land southwest of Omaha and northeast of Millard was purchased for construction of a huge Western Electric manufacturing plant. Groundbreaking occurred in June, and the plant opened in the fall of 1959.

A major fund drive at Creighton University resulted in \$14 million over ten years. The money paid for a new library, medical school, dormitories, and science and commerce school buildings, and included funds for scholarships and operating expenses.

1957

The mayor-city council form of government took effect in Omaha. For the first time in almost fifty years, John Rosenblatt, succeeding himself, became the first directly elected mayor.

The cornerstone was laid for Creighton Preparatory School at 7400 Western Avenue.

The last burial took place in Potter's Field. Over 3,900 people were buried at the cemetery at 48th and Young Streets during the seventy years between 1887 and 1957.

KETV began on-the-air broadcasting.

The Omaha Press Club held its first dinner show at the Birchwood Club on October 26th. The purpose of the event was to raise money for aspiring journalists and to spoof news stories of the previous year. Two scholarships were presented for \$50 each.

The Omaha Fire Department was desegregated and the seniority system of advancement came to an end. The first five-member, all-black company of firefighters was formed and put into service in 1895.

The one-year-old Greater Omaha Historical Society filed Articles of Incorporation with the secretary of state in Lincoln. The purposes of the non-profit organization were to encourage research and inquiry into history and establish libraries, museums and permanent records.

1958 Massachusetts Senator John F. Kennedy and his wife, Jacqueline, were pictured together at the Fontenelle Hotel.

Elvis Presley performed at the Omaha Civic Auditorium.

A recall was attempted for the mayor and three city councilmen.

Creighton Prep moved from the Creighton University campus to its new 35-acre campus at 7400 Western Avenue.

The Omaha Civic Opera Society was organized as an all-volunteer community opera association. A year later, it presented its first production, Puccini's Madame Butterfly. The organization's name was changed to Opera Omaha in the mid-1970s.

Omaha was designated an All America City by the National Municipal League and Look Magazine. The new charter was regarded as a feature of civic progress that brought national recognition to Omaha by means of this award. City spokesman and former Chairman of the 1956 Charter Convention, A.V. Sorensen, was recognized as "Omaha's Top Salesman" by the Omaha Sales Executive Club.

The Omaha Plan, a \$68 million proposal to provide for construction of thirteen capital improvement projects by means of general obligation bond issues, was soundly defeated by voters in a special election in June. One of the proposals was for a new airport terminal building. Many of the proposals for street and sewer improvements and new public buildings won voter approval during the next decade.

1959 The 22nd and Lake Street area flooded.

St. Cecilia Cathedral was consecrated. Just prior to the consecration, work was completed on the 187-foot-tall twin towers that are topped by identical domed cupolas.

The racehorse, Omaha, died and was buried at Ak-Sar-Ben Field.

The musical Say, Darling opened the new Omaha Community Playhouse at 69th and Cass Streets.

The Omaha Airport Authority was created by action of the state legislature to undertake the task of modernization and expansion of the Omaha Municipal Airport. However, the new semi-autonomous board of five members did not have taxing authority. In June, the Federal Aviation Agency approved an \$885,000 grant to assist in funding construction of a new terminal building. This was supplemented in December by a \$1,000,000 grant from the Eugene C. Eppley Foundation.

Leo A. Daly Co. moved to a new 40,000 square-foot office building at 8600 Indian Hills Drive, where the firm's headquarters remain today.

Construction began in September on the Crossroads Mall, a \$10 million, 600,000-square-foot shopping center.

Western Electric Omaha Works opened with more than 4,000 employees west of Omaha. Workers at the large plant produced telephone cable and dial equipment for the Northwestern Bell Telephone Company. Omaha was the headquarters for Northwestern Bell. Its president, A.F. Jacobson, was instrumental in making the decision to locate the Western Electric plant in the Omaha area. The new manufacturing facility stimulated the growth of the city as Omaha expanded westward.

1960 The Village of LaVista was incorporated.

Push-button banking was introduced in Omaha by the National Cash Register Co.

Sears was the first store to open at the new Crossroads Shopping Mall at 72nd and Dodge Streets. Brandeis was the other anchor store at the new shopping center which opened in September.

Telephone numbers in Omaha increased from six to seven digits.

Two buildings on the OU campus were dedicated. They were the Student Activities Building, now the Milo Bail Student Center, and the Applied Arts Building, now the Engineering Building.

Omaha's population reached 301,598 persons. The total population of Douglas County was 343,490. Bellevue's population was 8,831, while Council Bluffs had 55,641 residents.

Omaha's Bob Boozer, a member of the U.S. basketball team at the Rome Olympics, became the only black Nebraska athlete to win an Olympic gold medal.

A record snow depth of 27 inches was recorded at Eppley Airfield.

United Airlines began Boeing 720 jet service to Eppley Airfield in August.

Trinity Seminary, Blair, Nebraska, merged with Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. Dana College now had its own campus.

1961 Groundbreaking occurred for construction of the new post office at 12th and Mason Streets.

The first long distance direct dialing capability became available in Omaha.

Interstate 80 reached Omaha when the 52-mile stretch of highway called the Omaha-Lincoln Freeway linking the two cities was officially opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony in August.

Omaha's Kilpatrick's Department Store, one of the city's pioneer mercantile establishments, became a wholly-owned subsidiary of Des Moines-based Younker Brothers, Inc.

Construction of the new Eppley Airfield Passenger Terminal was completed in September. It was almost triple the size of the old terminal.

1962 Plans for an interstate highway system through Omaha were announced.

The OU football team defeated East Central Oklahoma by a score of 34-21 to win the All-Sports Bowl.

Nebraska voters approved an amendment to the state constitution that provided for staggered four-year terms for state senators. This means

that about one-half of all the seats in the Unicameral are up for election every two years. Originally, state senators in the Unicameral served two-year terms.

The U.S. Government revoked the Ponca Tribe's federal standing. The revocation resulted in a loss of land, culture and identity for Ponca Tribal members.

1963 Mutual of Omaha's "Wild Kingdom" premiered on national television.

Postal ZIP codes were introduced in Omaha.

Margaret Hitchcock Doorly donated \$750,000 to the zoo with the stipulation that it be named for her late husband, Henry Doorly, chairman of the World Publishing Company.

The old Omaha Municipal Auditorium, 15th and Howard Streets, was torn down to make way for a parking lot. President Woodrow Wilson spoke there during his 1919 western tour to boost American participation in the League of Nations. Presidential candidates, Al Smith and Wendell Wilkie spoke at the Auditorium, and Enrico Caruso sang there. Musicians John Philip Sousa, Paderewski, Paul Whiteman, Fritz Kreisler, Rachmaninoff, Pablo Casals and Leopold Stokowsky performed at the old hall.

By means of nonviolent protest, Herb Rhodes, Betty Jo Moreland, and Dale Anders, along with fellow members of the NAACP Youth Council, succeeded in opening Peony Park's popular swimming pool to African-Americans for the first time. The group enjoyed the support of white colleagues to integrate this privately-owned business.

2,000 blacks gathered at City Hall to urge the Omaha City Council to adopt an ordinance banning discrimination in housing and employment.

Charles B. Washington, an Omaha civil rights activist, helped stage a sit-in at the downtown Omaha Woolworth & Co. store to protest discrimination against blacks in public places.

Edward Danner began his term as a member of the Unicameral and served until 1970.

Don Benning was hired as head wrestling coach at Omaha University (now UNO). When he accepted the position, he became the first black

head coach of any sport at a predominantly white university anywhere in the country.

The Eugene C. Eppley Institute for Research in Cancer and Allied Diseases was dedicated in June. The new center was constructed on the campus of the University of Nebraska College of Medicine with a \$2,500,000 grant from the Eppley Foundation.

1964 Bergan Mercy Hospital opened.

HDR completed construction of Nebraska Methodist Hospital, the company's first health care client. The hospital was also HDR's first interior design project.

A severe thunderstorm dumped more than eight inches of rain over the Omaha metro area on June 16th. Floodwater in area creeks rose so quickly full evacuation was prevented, and seven deaths occurred. About 18,000 acres were flooded in the communities of Omaha, Ralston, Millard, Papillion, Elkhorn, Bellevue and Bennington. It is the worst flood on record in the metro area's Papillion Creek watershed.

The Omaha City Council voted to rename Municipal Stadium the Johnny Rosenblatt Stadium in honor of the former mayor, a leading advocate for construction of the facility during the 1940s. It later became affectionately known as "The Blatt" to Omahans and visitors alike.

Mayor James J. Dworak was indicted by a grand jury for allegedly soliciting a \$25,000 bribe regarding a land rezoning petition from John B. Coleman, a Chicago real estate developer. The scandal played a role in the mayoral election the following year.

The Omaha Mustangs, a semi-pro football franchise in the Continental Football League, played at Rosenblatt Stadium this year through 1969. Former Husker standouts Ted Vactor, Jerry Patton, Bob Churchich and Frank Solich played on the team. Team owner Bob Adwers started the franchise partly to fill the pro sports void in Omaha at the time.

1965 William J. Bryan High School was dedicated.

Woodmen of the World merged with Woodmen Circle, the women's auxiliary of Woodmen, resulting in the addition of more than 130,000 members to the Woodmen organization.

KYNE (Channel 26/UNO television) went on the air.

A.V. Sorensen soundly defeated incumbent James J. Dworak in the election for mayor by a margin of nearly 24,000 votes. Sorensen won 62.5% of the total votes cast after a hotly contested race. Omaha City Council members elected were Arthur Bradley, Al Veys and Betty Abbott, the first woman ever to win a seat on the council.

The Omaha City Council took action to approve the annexation of a small area of land in Sarpy County. A court challenge followed on the grounds the City of Omaha lacked the authority to annex across a county line. The challenge was upheld by District Judge John C. Burke who ruled that Omaha did not have the power to annex land across county lines even though Nebraska statute did not specifically prohibit such action.

The first branch of the YMCA was the Maple Street YMCA which opened this year at 7502 Maple Street.

The Omaha Zoological Society was reorganized and charged with planning construction, and with the operation and maintenance of the zoo as a nonprofit organization for the city. The first phase of the zoo was dedicated to Henry Doorly. Included in this phase were the bear grottos, the gorilla and orangutan buildings and Ak-Sar-Ben Nature Kingdom.

1966 The first Omaha area soldier serving in Vietnam was designated as "Missing in Action" (MIA).

Masked men donated \$500,000 to the YMCA fund drive.

Groundbreaking for the new Woodmen Tower took place at 17th and Farnam Streets.

Omaha's main post office at 16th and Dodge Streets was razed.

The Thirty-First and Grover Streets traffic interchange on I-80 opened in Omaha. The interchange brings together traffic from the four compass points. Interstate 80 runs east and west. Interstate 480 goes north toward downtown, and the John F. Kennedy Freeway goes to South Omaha extending to F Street. Eventually, construction was completed to Q Street.

Work began on the North Freeway.

The Ak-Sar-Ben Coliseum was remodeled at a cost of \$2 million. The facility was completely renovated, and a new Ak-Sar-Ben Hall was built to accommodate 1,500 people for banquets and receptions.

A pop bottle thrown at a police officer touched off three nights of looting on Omaha's Near North Side. Five hundred National Guardsmen were summoned to clear 24th Street and quell the lawlessness.

Table Supply Meat Company opened a new plant and headquarters in Omaha. At the same time, the company's name was changed to Omaha Steaks International.

The Nebraska Supreme Court upheld a district court ruling which forbade the City of Omaha from annexing land in Sarpy County in Barton v. City of Omaha. Omaha could expand its borders by annexation but only within the confines of Douglas County.

Southroads Shopping Mall opened in Bellevue. Brandeis was the anchor store for the 420,000-square-foot shopping center.

Bellevue College opened with about 400 students.

1967 Cinema Center opened at 84th and Dodge Streets.

Cudahy Packing Company closed its Omaha operation. Closures by Armour, Swift and Wilson packing companies followed soon afterwards and marked the closing of a chapter in Omaha history. The stockyards and meatpacking houses were a staple in the city's early economic development, much like the role played by the railroads.

Public discussion about the future of Omaha's riverfront came about as the result of a class project by three architecture students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The students suggested the area should be developed.

Pachyderm Hill was built on the site of a former baseball diamond at Riverview Park, now the Henry Doorly Zoo. Today it is home to the zoo's population of African elephants and white rhinos.

The Eugene C. Eppley Foundation approved a grant for \$2,250,000 to the City of Omaha and Douglas County to purchase land for construction of a city-county building. The grant stipulated the new center was to be built

downtown at a location bounded by Farnam and Harney Streets on the north and south and Eighteenth and Nineteenth Streets on the east and west. Eppley directors selected this site just west of the Douglas County Courthouse for the convenience of the public.

1968

The Municipal University of Omaha (OU) became the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) as a result of its merger with the University of Nebraska on July 1st. OU's final commencement was held in June.

Sam Mercer began efforts to develop the Old Market area. The French Café opened in the Old Market.

Omaha native Bob Gibson of the St. Louis Cardinals won his first of two National League Cy Young Awards given annually to the league's top pitcher.

Disorder erupted during the Civic Auditorium appearance of presidential hopeful George Wallace, a segregationist and former governor of Alabama. The violence spilled out of the auditorium and into the streets. Ten businesses were looted, and two white motorists were beaten. Howard Stevenson, a sixteen-year-old black youth, was shot and killed by a police officer during widespread looting. Other violence occurred throughout the summer.

Armour Packing Company ceased operations in Omaha.

The Omaha Zoo Railroad made its inaugural run on 2.5 miles of track constructed by the Union Pacific Railroad.

Duchesne College closed, and the elementary school was phased out during the 1970s. The high school continued.

Westroads Shopping Mall opened at 102nd Street and West Dodge Road.

1969

The current downtown site of the YMCA of Greater Omaha was dedicated and opened at 430 South 20th Street.

The University of Nebraska at Omaha held its first formal commencement as UNO on January 25th.

The Omaha Royals baseball team played its first game at Rosenblatt Stadium.

The thirty-story Woodmen Tower, Omaha's tallest skyscraper, was completed at 17th and Farnam Streets at a cost of \$28 million. At 498 feet, it remained the city's tallest building until 2002 when First National Bank's forty-story, 633-foot office tower at 16th and Dodge Streets became Omaha's tallest building.

Swift Packing Company closed.

Union Pacific began to use the world's most powerful diesel-electric locomotive with a 6,600 horsepower capacity. In the same year, Union Pacific Corp. was created as a holding company for the railroad's valuable oil and mineral operations.

Fourteen-year-old Vivian Strong, a young black girl, was fatally wounded by a white police officer, James L. Loder, who responded to a prowling call at the Logan Fontenelle Homes in Near North Omaha. The death triggered five nights of rioting that torched much of North 24th Street. The violence resulted in one death, 21 injuries, \$750,000 in damages and 88 arrests.

The City of Omaha adopted an open housing law.

Members of the Black Liberators for Action on Campus (BLAC) presented a list of six black student demands to Omaha University President Kirk Naylor. Later, a nonviolent protest by BLAC members in the president's office ended peacefully. Students were dissatisfied with Naylor's response to the list of demands.

The General George Crook House, located on the grounds of Fort Omaha, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Center Shopping Center at 42nd and Center Streets suffered \$5 million in damage from an October 17th fire.

Omaha's oldest downtown department store, Thomas Kilpatrick & Company, closed. The store contained 140,000 square feet of retail space and had observed its centennial anniversary in 1968. The closing provided Kilpatrick's the opportunity to concentrate efforts on its two stores which remained open, one at the Center and the other at the Westroads Shopping Mall.

1970 UNO won the NAIA national wrestling championship.

Allwine Hall on the UNO campus was dedicated.

The population of Omaha was 347,328 residents. The total population of Douglas County was 389,455. Between 1950 and 1970, the populations of Douglas, Sarpy and Pottawattamie Counties increased from 310,249 to 542,646 inhabitants. Because of urban sprawl that followed WWII, it was no longer possible to gauge the extent of an urban area merely by considering the population of the central city. Bellevue's population was 19,449 and that of Council Bluffs was 60,348 residents.

Mayor Gene Leahy appointed a committee headed by businessman Mike Yanney to develop a "Back to the River" plan for downtown Omaha. The goal of the plan was to keep jobs downtown and increase the residential population in an area that traditionally had been Omaha's financial and business center.

Sea Lion Plaza opened at the Henry Doorly Zoo at the site of what had been a public swimming pool at Riverview Park in 1916. The pool was buried in 1944 and later "rediscovered" and converted into a sea lion pool that is home to California sea lions today.

Larry Minard, a white police officer, was killed by a booby-trap when he answered a call at a vacant house in Near North Omaha. Black Panther members, David Rice and Edward Poindexter, were arrested, convicted, and sentenced to life in prison for the crime.

Voters amended the state constitution to provide for annual sessions of the Unicameral with alternating lengths. Ninety-day or "long" sessions are to be held in odd-numbered years; sixty-day or "short" sessions are held in even-numbered years. Previously, the Nebraska Legislature met in session once every other year until 1970 unless extraordinary circumstances warranted the calling of a special session.

The Nebraska Furniture Mart opened a new store at 700 South 72nd Street to supplement business at its downtown store. The two operated in tandem until 1980 when the west Omaha store became the sole location.

The Creighton University "Centennial Thrust" development campaign resulted in more than \$100 million. The Omaha business community actively supported the fundraising effort.

1971 Kayser Hall on the UNO campus was dedicated.

UNO athletic teams became known as the Mavericks, a change from the previous name of Indians.

The Fontenelle Hotel closed and remained vacant a number of years before being razed.

The Orpheum Theater closed at the end of April due to declining attendance and deteriorating conditions.

The City of Omaha annexed Millard as a necessary step in Omaha's future expansion. The annexation occurred after a four-year court battle. There was no direct impact on either the Omaha or Millard school districts even though parts of Millard lay within Omaha's city limits. OPS enrollment was nearly 64,000 while Millard had just over 5,100 students.

Elizabeth Davis Pittman became the first woman and first black municipal judge in Omaha and in Nebraska.

The name of the Greater Omaha Historical Society was changed to the Douglas County Historical Society. Amended Articles of Incorporation were filed with the secretary of state in Lincoln. It was thought the name change would make it easier for the organization to receive tax support from Douglas County as a countywide organization.

Nebraska Consolidated Mills became known as ConAgra and evolved from milling into a company that offered a variety of products from livestock feed to grocery items. Under Charles "Mike" Harper's leadership, ConAgra went from an \$11.4 million loss in 1974 to a \$4.1 million profit a year later.

The bank cooperative that began in Omaha in 1969 was reorganized as First Data Resources, a private business.

The City of Omaha adopted a fair employment practices ordinance.

The City of Omaha assumed operation of the East Omaha Drainage District and gained control of hundreds of acres of land for flood control and development purposes. Mayor Leahy's "Back to the River" plan envisioned a park-like mall connecting the riverfront with downtown businesses.

1972 The Fontenelle Forest Nature Center was dedicated.

KVNO (FM 90.7) began broadcasting from its offices at UNO. By 2006, KVNO had an estimated 44,000 weekly listeners. A study by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting ranked it among the top ten per cent of public radio stations across the country for outstanding audience service and excellent financial health.

The Interstate system through Omaha, including I-680 and I-480, was completed. Hundreds of homes were moved or demolished to make room for the highways, and some close-knit neighborhoods never recovered. On the other hand, the interstate and freeway systems brought jobs, businesses and industry to the entire metro area.

The Council Bluffs YMCA merged with the YMCA of Greater Omaha.

The Ak-Sar-Ben waterfall was constructed at the Henry Doorly Zoo.

World heavyweight champion, Joe Frazier, defeated local wrestling star, Ron Stander, in a match for the heavyweight title at the Omaha Civic Auditorium Arena.

The Omaha Building, the city's first skyscraper at 1650 Farnam Street, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Dick Mueller opened the Firehouse Dinner Theater in the Old Market at 11th and Jackson Streets. Constructed in 1903 for just under \$30,000, the building was the city's first permanent firehouse. It was occupied as Fire Department Sub Station #1 from 1904-1944. The building stood vacant for several years before it was used for truck storage and automotive parts. Mueller's theater saved it from the wrecking ball and brought new life to the Old Market.

Groundbreaking for a new Jewish Community Center on South 132nd Street took place on November 19th.

Omahan Vinod Gupta borrowed \$100 to mail a brochure to 1,000 mobile home manufacturers announcing a list of mobile home dealers. The list was yet to be prepared. He and colleague, Glen Humphrey, received orders totaling \$35,000 within six weeks. The two men used 4,800 telephone directories from cities across the country to prepare a database of information about mobile home retailers that industry manufacturers could use to increase sales. Their work launched

American Business Lists Inc. that later became American Business Information Inc. known today as InfoUSA with headquarters in Omaha.

1973

The UNO Performing Arts Center (PAC), now known as the Willis and Janet Strauss PAC, was dedicated.

Members of the Omaha City Council voted to appropriate \$2,375,000 to begin construction of the Central Park Mall on the eastern edge of Omaha's downtown business district. After leaving office, former Mayor Eugene Leahy continued to promote development of the downtown and riverfront areas. He headed the Riverfront Development Foundation, a business-backed foundation to secure public and private funding to revitalize a roughly 200-hundred square mile stretch of land along the Missouri River, mostly in the Omaha area.

The Western Heritage Museum was founded by a nonprofit organization and had its headquarters at the former Union Station on 10th Street. Union Pacific Railroad gave the terminal to the City of Omaha.

A New York firm purchased the Omaha Union Stock Yards Company ending ninety years of local ownership.

Swan Valley and the Primate Research Building were completed at the Henry Doorly Zoo.

The Creighton School of Dentistry moved into a new 150,000 square-foot structure at 29th and Webster Streets. Named for Creighton benefactors, Harry N. Boyne and his wife, Maude Boyne, the building was constructed for \$10.3 million and featured state-of-the-art equipment.

1974

The USS Marlin arrived at Freedom Park.

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The new diet kitchen and educational classrooms were completed at the Henry Doorly Zoo.

The new Jewish Community Center at 333 South 132nd Street was dedicated on May 5th.

Metropolitan Community College was created when the Unicameral consolidated the original eight technical community college areas

(created in 1971) into six. The Omaha Nebraska Technical Community College Area merged with the Eastern Nebraska Technical Community College Area under the new name, the Metropolitan Technical Community College Area. First year enrollment for the new Metropolitan Technical Community College was 2,430 students in 1974-1975.

The Burlington Railroad terminal closed and sat vacant for most of the next thirty years.

The Fort Omaha Historic District achieved a listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Encompassing 825 acres that includes six buildings, it was the largest historic district in Douglas County for a number of years.

Omahan Chip Davis founded American Gramophone and developed it into one of the country's largest, most successful recording labels ever. His group, Mannheim Steamroller, sold nearly fifty million albums over thirty years and became the best-selling Christmas musical group of all time.

1975

The Western Heritage Museum opened in the former Union Station on South Tenth Street.

The ice arena at Hitchcock Park opened.

The grand re-opening of the newly-renovated Orpheum Theater occurred on January 7th and starred comedian Red Skelton. The Orpheum became the city's premiere concert and theatrical venue.

A January blizzard with winds of fifty-sixty miles per hour velocity buried parts of the city with as much as nineteen inches of snow and snowdrifts fifteen feet deep. Wind chills dropped well below zero. Hundreds of Omahans were stranded at their businesses or at hotels/motels. It took several days before several hundred abandoned vehicles were moved to allow for snow removal. As many as ten people died from shoveling snow or walking outside, most dying from heart attacks.

The new Omaha-Douglas Civic Center at 1819 Farnam Street was dedicated in March. The city-county building was in the planning stages since the mid-1960s.

A huge tornado struck Omaha on May 6th causing a nine-mile path of destruction from Ralston to Benson. Some two thousand square blocks

of the city were decimated. Especially hard-hit was 72nd Street, a main commercial thoroughfare. The Nebraska Furniture Mart sustained heavy damage and had to be rebuilt. Damage to homes and businesses was in the hundreds of millions of dollars. A siren-warning system and continuous information and instruction from personnel at radio stations kept the number of injured to 200 persons and the number of fatalities at three.

The first Summer Arts Festival was held in Omaha.

Omaha Steaks opened an inbound call center to keep up with consumer demand. Outbound telemarketing was added three years later, and in 1979, a toll-free customer service line was installed.

The Soviet Union's Apollo-Soyuz astronauts visited Omaha.

UNO won the Women's College World Series national softball title.

Senator Ernie Chambers was instrumental in getting a bill through the Unicameral requiring district election of members of the Omaha Public Schools Board of Education. Governor J.J. Exon vetoed the measure which was subsequently overridden by the legislature.

The 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a lower court decision and ordered the integration of the Omaha Public Schools. The court ruled that actions by the Omaha district, including the hiring and placement of black faculty members, contributed to segregation in OPS. The district was ordered to desegregate students by fall, 1976. The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the school district's appeal.

The College of Business Administration (CBA) Building, now known as Ron and Lois Roskens Hall, was dedicated at UNO.

Results of a Fortune magazine survey revealed that Union Pacific Railroad, with sales of \$1.7 billion, ranked as the fourth largest transportation company in the nation.

Omaha Typesetting Co., 1119 Douglas Street, was the first building to be demolished in an area that became the Central Park Mall. A year later, most of the site had been cleared for an estimated cost of \$15 million, financed largely through the use of federal funds.

Malashock's Jewelry Co. closed its store at 16th and Farnam Streets.

J. Joe Ricketts and three partners each invested \$12,500 to open First Omaha Securities, a discount brokerage business. The firm handled stock purchases for individual investors without the advice of full service brokers, a revolutionary concept. The rate was \$25 a trade. First Omaha Securities, Inc. later became TD Ameritrade.

Metropolitan Technical Community College received the deed to Fort Omaha from the federal government. The site became Metro's first permanent campus at 30th and Fort Streets. The campus sits on 73 acres of land and contains 32 buildings that encompass 377,701 square feet of space. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the buildings and grounds are maintained in the original 19th century architectural theme, although classrooms and offices have been updated to meet 21st century needs. Located on the perimeter of the campus, the Naval and Marine Corps Reserves still deploy troops from the Fort Omaha site.

1976 President Gerald Ford visited Omaha and broke ground for Bergan Mercy Hospital's East Tower.

The University Library at UNO officially opened.

The A.V. Sorensen Branch Library opened in August at 48th and Cass Streets on land donated by former Mayor A.V. Sorensen.

The Omaha Public Schools initiated a program of federally-mandated busing to achieve integration in response to the 1975 Eighth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in United States v. School District of Omaha. A total of 9,300 students were bused to other OPS schools outside their neighborhoods.

Wilson Packing Company, the last of the Big Four packing plants, ceased operations in Omaha. Closure of the Big Four—Cudahy, Armour, Swift, Wilson—resulted in the loss of more than 10,000 Omaha jobs and an estimated \$500 million annually in wages, services, purchases and taxes over a nine-year period since the closure of the Cudahy plant in 1967.

The Kutak, Rock and Campbell law firm, which started with offices in the Omaha Building in 1965, purchased the building at 1650 Farnam Street and spent \$4.5 million to renovate it. Renovation went into 1977.

J.C. Penney, 104 South 16th Street, closed its doors. The store was the last national clothing retail company to operate downtown.

HDR provided the master plan and design for an entire medical university in Saudi Arabia. Cost of the project: \$1.7 billion. Slated for completion in the mid-1980s, the Health Sciences Center for King Abdulaziz University would accommodate a population of 28,000 people.

The Great Plains Black Museum opened as the largest Black-American historical/cultural institution west of the Mississippi River. Housed in the original Nebraska Telephone Building that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it was located at 2213 Lake Street. Founder Bertha Calloway started the museum with a \$100,000 federal grant.

Quarters One on the grounds of Fort Omaha was dedicated as the General Crook House, a historic home built in 1878. Also in 1976, the Douglas County Historical Society leased the Crook House from Metropolitan Technical Community College located on its Fort Omaha campus. Intended for use as a historical museum, the historical society began restoration of the home the same year.

The first Omaha Steaks retail store opened in Omaha. The first store outside Nebraska opened in Houston, Texas in 1985.

Expansion of the Ak-Sar-Ben grandstand resulted in 1,500 additional seats which brought total seating capacity to 11,000. Cost of the expansion was \$2 million.

1977

In March, the W. Dale Clark Library at 215 South 15th Street opened. Located at the head of the new Central Park Mall, it is the headquarters of the Omaha Public Library system. The first section of the Central Park Mall was dedicated and opened later in the year.

The addition of a full-sized gymnasium was added to the north and east of the main building at Central High School.

Al Veys, a former city council member, finished second as the result of a write-in campaign for the mayoral primary. This entitled him to a place on the ballot in the run-off election for mayor in which he defeated Betty Abbott, a long-time city council member and the first woman to run for mayor. Veys served as mayor from 1977-81.

The Cat Complex, the largest cat breeding and management facility in North America, opened at the Henry Doorly Zoo. Capable of housing up

to 85 large cats, the population includes tigers, African lions, snow and clouded leopards and jaguars.

Charlie Mancuso died of a heart attack at age 49. He managed the Civic Auditorium for fifteen years before his death. Terry Forsberg, former TV newsman, was appointed acting city auditorium manager by Mayor Al Veys. He later took the post of manager.

In June, Elvis Presley appeared in concert before 10,500 fans at the Civic Auditorium. It was Presley's fifth and final concert in Omaha.

Bellevue College achieved accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.

1978 Metropolitan Community College opened its South Omaha Campus on 40 acres of land at 27th and Q Streets in the heart of South Omaha.

Creighton University observed its centennial anniversary. The 65-acre campus included several buildings constructed during the previous twenty years. New dormitories, three Criss Health Sciences buildings, the new 433-bed Saint Joseph Hospital, intended as a teaching hospital for health sciences students, the Boyne School of Dental Science, and the Ahmanson Law Center stood on the expanded campus.

Inmates Peter Hochstein, C. Michael Anderson and Dan Sheppard escaped from the maximum-security cell on the sixth floor of the Douglas County Courthouse. The escapees eventually were captured just south of the Canadian border.

Ardan Wholesale Inc. closed its downtown store at 1519 Douglas Street by the end of the year.

1979 The Council Bluffs YMCA opened at 7 South Fourth Street as part of the YMCA of Greater Omaha.

Union Pacific Railroad set a new freight-hauling record of 74 billion revenue-ton miles.

The hospital and nursery complex at the Henry Doorly Zoo opened.

Senator Ernie Chambers was instrumental in getting a bill through the Unicameral to require the election of members of the Omaha City Council

by district rather than on an at-large basis. The Council had been elected at-large since 1912.

The Beach Boys appeared in concert at Rosenblatt Stadium before an audience of 25,000 people—15,000 of them on the field. Up until then, it was the largest crowd at a rock concert in Omaha history.

Girls were admitted to Boys Town for the first time as a means of helping juvenile courts determine treatment needs for troubled girls. They did not become long-term residents on the Boys Town campus until some time later.

Central High School, formerly Omaha High School, and the Douglas County Courthouse were added to the National Register of Historic Places. The architect for both was John Latenser Sr. who implemented the French Renaissance Revival style of architecture in each building.

Goldstein-Chapman Co., a women's clothing store, closed its downtown location at 219 South 16th Street. Located on the northeast corner of 16th and Farnam Streets, the store opened in 1923. Abe Goldstein and his brother-in-law, Max Chapman, were partners in the new venture.

1980

The first Earth Day celebration was held in Omaha.

UNO's HPER Building was dedicated. The letters stand for "Health, Physical Education and Recreation".

The Peter Kiewit Conference Center, 1313 Farnam Street, was dedicated and began service as an extension of the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

A groundbreaking ceremony was held downtown for the new Central Park Plaza office building.

Northern Natural Gas Company changed its name to InterNorth, Inc. The new name reflected its diversification in the form of five operating companies. They included liquid fuels, petrochemicals, onshore drilling operations, Northern Coal Company and the original natural gas division.

The population of Omaha was 313,989 residents, and the metropolitan area had 569,614 inhabitants. The total population of Douglas County was 397,038. The population of Bellevue was 21,813 and that of Council Bluffs was 56,449.

Brandeis closed its downtown store at 16th and Douglas Streets by the end of the year. For nearly a century, J.L. Brandeis & Sons Inc. flagship store acted as a magnet drawing business not only to its own doors but to other merchants in a thriving downtown retail market area. Not long after its closing, Brandeis outlets in North Omaha, Columbus and Lincoln also closed.

The Jewell Building, 24th and Grant Streets, home of the Dreamland Ballroom, was designated an Omaha landmark. In 1983, it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Astro Theater at 2001 Farnam Street closed. Originally the Riviera Theater, it became the Paramount Theater in 1929 before it closed as the Astro. In 1981, Rose Blumkin, founder of the Nebraska Furniture Mart, bought the building from Creighton University for \$200,000 to save it from demolition. By then, it had been designated a city landmark before being listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Elkhorn Valley Campus of Metropolitan Community College opened at 204th Street and West Dodge Road. The new campus serves western Douglas County and parts of Dodge and Washington Counties.

1981

The W.H. Thompson Alumni House, now the W.H. Thompson Alumni Center, was dedicated at UNO.

The Northwestern Bell Building was dedicated downtown at its location on Douglas Street between 13th and 14th Streets. The sixteen-story building was later occupied by Qwest Communications. By 2007, it became home to offices of the Omaha World-Herald, its new owner. In doing so, World-Herald Square at 14th and Dodge Streets, occupied since 1948, was abandoned.

Alden Aust retired as city planning director after 25 years. Aust was a champion of the “Back to the River” plan as a way to keep jobs downtown and increase the number of residents living in the downtown area.

Fred Conley became the first African-American elected to serve as a member of the Omaha City Council.

The South-Southwest YMCA opened at 13010 Atwood Avenue just south of 132nd Street and West Center Road.

The Giraffe and Hoofstock Pastures Complex opened at the Henry Doorly Zoo. The Omaha zoo has one of the country's largest collections of hoofstock that includes zebras, sable, addax, Nile lechwe, gazelles and oryx.

Duchesne Academy celebrated its centennial anniversary as the only private, four-year high school for girls in the Omaha area that concentrates exclusively on college preparatory education.

1982

An extensive renovation of Central High School was undertaken during the 1981-1982 school year while school was in session. Toward the end of the project, a helicopter was used to lower supports in place for a translucent dome to cover the courtyard.

The Gerald R. Ford Expressway was dedicated.

The first River City Roundup was held.

The first major segment of the Central Park Mall from Fourteenth to Tenth Street, between Douglas and Farnam Streets was completed. The City of Omaha accepted possession of the Central Park Mall from A. Borchman Sons Co., the company that built it largely from federal grants.

Union Pacific merged with the Missouri Pacific and the Western Pacific railroads in its first major merger. It doubled the size of the Union Pacific and made it the country's third largest rail system with 21,500 miles of tracks. John C. Kenefick was president of Union Pacific at the time of the merger.

The Douglas County Historical Society occupied "Quarters Two" on the north end of "Officers Row" on the Metropolitan Community College campus at Fort Omaha. As the Society's Library/Archives Center, it is the official repository for Douglas County history. The historical society also operates from "Quarters One", the General Crook House Museum located next door.

1983

After several redevelopment efforts failed, the Fontenelle Hotel at 1806 Douglas Street was razed.

The Lee G. Simmons Free-Flight Aviary, the world's second-largest walk-through aviary, opened at the Henry Doorly Zoo. The sanctuary spans

four acres and includes over 500 birds. In it, flamingos, ibis, ducks, swans, saddle-bill storks and cranes fly free. It is the zoo's largest exhibit.

Fear spread through the metro area when two Sarpy County boys, Danny Joe Eberle, 13, and Christopher Walden, 12, were mysteriously abducted and murdered. Offutt airman John J. Joubert, 21, was arrested in 1984 and later convicted for the killings. He was executed in 1996.

An Omaha attorney pulled a 36-year-old woman to safety when she apparently was about to jump from the fifth-floor balcony ledge inside the Douglas County Courthouse.

Receipts of salable livestock at Omaha's packing industry stood at 1,245,300 head. Ten years later, receipts fell to 469,500 head.

Former TV personality Joni Baillon was hired to work for Civic Auditorium Manager Terry Forsberg as the new public events-media coordinator for an annual salary of \$21,500.

Investor Warren Buffett purchased 90% of the Nebraska Furniture Mart (NFM) business for \$60 million. NFM founder Mrs. Rose Blumkin (Mrs. B) and Buffett exchanged a simple handshake to seal the deal adding NFM to Berkshire Hathaway.

1984

The salt water aquarium opened at the Henry Doorly Zoo.

The breakup of the American Telephone & Telegraph Company (AT&T) meant the end of Northwestern Bell, which had an office in Omaha. Seven regional companies, including US West Communications, were established.

Members of the state legislature officially recognized the 50th anniversary of the Unicameral by naming the legislative chamber "The George W. Norris Legislative Chamber" in honor of the U.S. Senator's contributions to unicameralism in Nebraska.

1985

Pipal Park, a fifteen-acre recreational area at 7802 Hascall Street, was dedicated.

Brenda Council was elected to her first one-year term as the first black president of the Omaha Public Schools Board of Education. She was again elected president in 1991, 1992, and 1993, her last year on the board.

Omaha-based InterNorth, Inc., formerly Northern Natural Gas Company, purchased Houston Natural Gas for \$2.3 billion creating HNG InterNorth, Inc., the largest U.S. natural-gas pipeline system. Later the same year, the HNG-InterNorth board approved operating headquarters in Houston. Corporate headquarters were located in Omaha.

Telemarketing employed 11,000 persons in Omaha this year.

Owen Primate Valley, including the gorilla and orangutan buildings at the Henry Doorly Zoo, was renovated. Each building allowed for indoor and outdoor viewing.

Ak-Sar-Ben set a record attendance of 1,305,753 for a full race meet this year. A crowd of 21,792 watched horse racing on the season's final day on August 25th.

The Omaha Grain Exchange closed when railroad deregulation and computerized quotations of grain prices made it unnecessary.

The first transcontinental fiber-optic cable followed the Platte River Road.

Mayor Mike Boyle was elected to his second term. However, just nineteen months later, Boyle was recalled from office in 1987. In order of succession, Steve Tomasek, Jr., Bernie Simon, Fred Conley and Walt Calinger filled out his term until 1989 when Paul J. ("P.J.") Morgan was elected mayor.

Voters in Council Bluffs approved a change in their form of government from a city-manager system adopted in 1949 to a strong-mayor form similar to that of Omaha, Bellevue and Lincoln.

1986

The Arts and Sciences parking garage on the UNO campus opened.

The Casavant pipe organ at the Strauss Performing Arts Center on the UNO campus was dedicated.

Ken Lay was named chairman and CEO of HNG-InterNorth, Inc. Later the same year, Enron Corporation was adopted as the company's new name. Enron voted to move its corporate headquarters to Houston. So began the exodus of 2,000 Enron jobs from Omaha to Houston over a two-year period.

John C. Kenefick retired as chairman and chief executive of Union Pacific Railroad.

FirsTier Wolf Woods opened at the Henry Doorly Zoo.

The decline of Ak-Sar-Ben's horse racing track began when its gambling monopoly ended. Attendance at Ak-Sar-Ben fell 24% when dog racing began at Bluffs Run in Council Bluffs. In addition, new horse tracks in Kansas City, Minneapolis and Des Moines drew race crowds away from Omaha.

West Corporation began as an inbound telemarketing service bureau.

Mall of the Bluffs opened in Council Bluffs near Interstate 80 and Madison Avenue.

Borsheims Jewelry moved to Regency Court from its downtown location at 315 South 16th Street.

1987

The Durham Science Center at UNO was dedicated.

For the first time, five women were recruited to begin training as Omaha's first female firefighters. Not only was the 1987 class the first to include women firefighters, it also was the first class required to submit to drug testing before being hired by the fire department.

Work began on the eighty-year-old McKesson and Robbins warehouse to convert it into the Greenhouse Apartments at 900 Farnam Street.

Passage of LB 775, the Employment and Investment Growth Act, and LB 270, the Employment Expansion and Investment Incentive Act, resulted in tax concessions for companies that invested in Nebraska and expanded employment. The new tax laws assured that ConAgra headquarters would remain in Omaha. The shift in state tax policy spurred corporate construction that added nearly 3,000,000 square feet of work space downtown, the equivalent of fifty football fields.

Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom Pavilion opened at the Henry Doorly Zoo and featured close-up viewing of smaller animals along with hands-on exhibits, a Discovery Room, a classroom and an auditorium. The US West Plaza, a visitor services area, opened the same year.

Nebraska football legend, Bob Devaney, kicked off a \$775,000 “Let’s Go to Bat for Rosenblatt” fundraising campaign to match a grant from the Peter Kiewit Foundation for needed improvements at the stadium. The foundation agreed to pay \$1.7 million toward the project. The improvements were necessary to keep the College World Series in Omaha at Rosenblatt Stadium.

Senator Edward Zorinsky died of a massive heart attack about an hour after performing a musical spoof at the annual Omaha Press Club Gridiron Show and Ball at Peony Park. He was 58 years old. Zorinsky first served on the Omaha Public Power District Board before becoming Omaha mayor in 1973. In 1976, he was elected the state’s first Democratic U.S. Senator in 42 years. He was re-elected to the U.S. Senate in 1982 and planned to seek a third term in 1988.

Thomas P. Hanafan won a close election to a two-year term as mayor of Council Bluffs. As such, he was the first popularly elected mayor in two generations as the city changed to a strong-mayor system of government. Hanafan was elected to a four-year term as mayor in 1989 and won reelection in 1993, 1997, 2001 and 2005. To date, Mayor Hanafan has the longest record of continuous service as chief executive in Council Bluffs history.

1988 Omaha hosted the vice-presidential debate between Republican Senator Dan Quayle and Democratic Senator Lloyd Bentsen at the Civic Auditorium, 1804 Capitol Avenue.

The North Freeway was dedicated.

The ConAgra Corporation announced plans to build its new headquarters on Omaha’s riverfront and broke ground for the \$80 million project later in the year. Demolition began on the former Duncan Hines plant, 8th and Jackson Streets, the first step in razing Jobbers Canyon, Omaha’s historic wholesale district, for ConAgra and other developments.

Union Pacific’s earlier acquisition of the Missouri Pacific Railroad prompted a decision by UP to close its shops north of downtown and move the shop work to North Little Rock, Arkansas. The shops employed about 800 persons. With their closure, most of the adjoining tracks were dismantled. This left a large piece of unused land along the highway and the riverfront between downtown Omaha and the airport.

Construction began on the \$15 million Lied Jungle at the Henry Doorly Zoo. The zoo was also selected as one of three sites in the country for a breeding program for the black-footed ferret, North America's most endangered mammal. The ferrets were eventually housed in a small mammal building in the area where Dairy World is today.

The Omaha Lancers made Ak-Sar-Ben their home when they brought hockey back to the Coliseum.

The Chief Standing Bear Memorial plaque was dedicated on the northeast corner of the parade ground at Fort Omaha on the campus of Metropolitan Community College.

A fire destroyed "Old Main" on the campus of Dana College in Blair.

American Business Lists Inc. (now InfoUSA) announced plans for construction of a 30,000-square-foot warehouse-office facility in Carter Lake at 200 Owen Parkway. Iowa business growth incentives which were paid at the beginning of an expansion project were an attraction. By contrast, Nebraska's LB 775 incentives were awarded after a company has paid for a new building or equipment and hired new employees. Corporate headquarters remained in Omaha.

Accutrade, Inc., then the name for Ameritrade, was the first company to offer automated stock trades using touch-tone telephones for the first time.

1989

The Henningson Memorial Campanile on the UNO campus was dedicated. The campanile is 168 feet tall and has 47 four-octave –range bells that were cast in Annecy, France. The largest bell is five feet wide and weighs 4,397 pounds. Just eight inches wide, the smallest bell weighs only 29 pounds.

Union Pacific's new Harriman Dispatching Center opened just south of the new ConAgra campus downtown near Ninth and Jackson Streets. Located in UP's 1891 renovated freight house, the new high-tech center centralized dispatching in Omaha and gained a reputation as the world's most advanced rail control system.

The Durham Family Bear Canyon was dedicated at the Henry Doorly Zoo and featured polar bears, the largest of all bears, swimming in a 30,000-gallon pool with above and below water viewing. The display also featured grizzly bears and Malayan sun bears.

1990

Omaha's population was 335,795 persons. By 1994, the estimated population was 342,862. In 1996, the population was estimated to be at 348,894. By the mid-90s, the population of the Omaha metro area was estimated to be 662,801, making it the sixtieth largest urban center in the country. In 1990, the population of the metropolitan area was 639,580 residents. Also in 1990, the total population of Douglas County was 416,444 and that of Council Bluffs was 53,222 residents.

Bellevue's population was 30,982 inhabitants which represented a 42% increase during the 1980s. This made Bellevue the state's fourth largest city right after Grand Island, Nebraska's third largest community.

ConAgra cut the ribbon to open its new thirty-acre riverfront campus in October. Although the corporation funded its development, the city contributed to street and sewer redevelopment. The project also received tax subsidies. In the same year, ConAgra became the country's largest meat and poultry company.

Heartland of America Park, a Douglas County project, was completed and dedicated. A focal point of the park is a lake that is officially part of the ConAgra downtown campus but was paid for by the company and Douglas County. The lake is an early example of a "public-private partnership". The park links the new ConAgra Inc. campus to the east end of the Central Park Mall.

Dairy World opened at the Henry Doorly Zoo. It features a children's petting zoo, interactive exhibits and a concession area. A year later, the Birthday House opened as a place to have children's birthday parties and education classes.

The Omaha City Council approved a \$2-a-night hotel and motel room tax. Much of the revenue generated from the tax was used to pay for needed improvements to Rosenblatt Stadium during the 1990s.

The Ponca Tribe was restored as a tribal government on October 31st. The restoration resulted in federal recognition for tribal members.

For the first time, Omaha Steaks' customers could place online orders via computer. A web site was developed in 1995.

F.W. Woolworth Co. closed its downtown store at 120 South 16th Street. Not far away, Natelson's Clothing Store closed at 1517 Douglas Street.

1991 UNO won the NCAA Division II national wrestling championship, the school's first NCAA title in any sport.

The Creighton Bluejays played in the College World Series at Rosenblatt Stadium. Creighton's appearance was the first one by a Nebraska school in the CWS. Since then, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln team has played in the series.

1200 Landmark Center, a \$35 million office tower on Farnam Street, opened downtown.

Edmonson Youth Outreach, 4400 ½ Fontenelle Boulevard, merged with the YMCA of Greater Omaha.

The owners of Peony Park filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy citing heavy debts and continuing operating losses.

1992 The Fine Arts Building, now the Del and Lou Ann Weber Fine Arts Building, was dedicated on the UNO campus.

By a vote of the city council, the Central Park Mall was renamed the Gene Leahy Mall to honor the mayor who promoted riverfront development. Two years later, passage of a city bond issue provided funding to complete the Mall from Tenth to Eighth Streets.

The Lied Jungle and Durham's Tree Tops Restaurant opened at the Henry Doorly Zoo. The largest indoor tropical rainforest in the world, it spans 1.5 acres and encompasses re-creations of three separate geographic zones—the Asian, African and South American rainforests. It stands eighty feet tall and is roughly equal to the height of an eight-story building.

In the face of declining revenues, the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben sold the horse track, the Coliseum and the grounds to Douglas County.

Members of the Unicameral voted to change the name "Metropolitan Technical Community College Area" to "Metropolitan Community College Area".

Senator Bob Kerrey (D-NE) made an unsuccessful bid for the U.S. Presidency.

1993 The Castle of Perseverance, a sculpture and outdoor amphitheater that accompanies the Weber Fine Arts Building, was dedicated at UNO.

Ground was broken in June for a 58,000 square-foot addition to the Joslyn Art Museum. English architect Sir Norman Foster was in charge of the design that would provide enlarged exhibit space.

The old aquarium at the zoo was closed and construction began on a new aquarium. The Henry Doorly Zoo received a conservation award for its black-footed ferret management program and the Significant Achievement Award for the Lied Jungle.

Rose Blumkin and her family donated the vacant Astro Theater at 2001 Farnam Street to be the future home of the Emmy Gifford Children's Theater.

The Missouri River crested at 30.2 feet in the Omaha area, the second-highest level after the river's record-high crest of 30.4 feet during the great flood of 1952. The summer of 1993 brought significant flooding along the Missouri and Mississippi River systems that caused the loss of lives and extensive property damage in some locations.

Omaha Steaks completed a 60,000 square-foot building in southwest Omaha that was designed to house several departments, including the company's call center.

Oak View Mall opened at 144th Street and West Center Road.

Landon's Clothing Store closed at 115 North 15th Street.

Ameritrade, a full-service clearinghouse for the securities industry, opened a new corporate headquarters at 4211 South 102nd Street. The previous headquarters was located at 19th and Douglas Streets. The new location was purchased to provide space for an increase in personnel and more electronic broker systems.

1994 Bellevue's estimated population was 41,274 inhabitants, slightly more than the total for Grand Island, which for many years was Nebraska's third largest city.

The Kennedy Freeway into Bellevue opened as an important link between Omaha and Sarpy County.

The new addition to the Joslyn Art Museum opened November 19th. The Scott Pavilion added 58,000 square feet and included an atrium, café and galleries to provide more space for the museum's growing collection and to enhance opportunities to attract touring exhibits. The façade of the \$15.9 million addition is pink Georgia marble from the same quarry as that used to construct the original Joslyn Memorial Art Museum building.

The Union Pacific Engine House for the Omaha Zoo Railroad was completed. The house provides a place for state-of-the-art railroad maintenance of two live steam locomotives that pull a train along a circular route around the park. The train ride allows visitors a panoramic view of the 110-acre zoo and its grounds.

Peony Park, a favorite family entertainment center for generations, closed. An auction of its amusement park rides and other removable items yielded \$1 million. Sale of the site to a private development group was announced.

Mayor P.J. Morgan resigned less than one year after being elected to a second term.

Mega-Mart opened on the 77-acre campus of the Nebraska Furniture Mart. The new building was constructed to house the electronics and appliances division of NFM.

Omaha's Ameritrade became the first company in the world to receive orders for securities transactions over the Internet. A year later, Ameritrade's parent company, Ameritrade Holding Corporation, acquired K. Aufhauser & Co., Inc., the first brokerage firm to offer Internet trading via its WealthWEB.

Pottawattamie County voters approved the addition of riverboat casinos and the installation of slot machines at Bluffs Run dog-racing track.

Bellevue College became Bellevue University.

1995

The final segment of the Gene Leahy Mall, two blocks from Tenth to Eighth Streets, was completed. The mall now stretched from Eighth Street to Fourteenth Street, Farnam to Douglas.

The Butler-Gast YMCA opened at 3501 Ames Avenue.

The 72,000 square-foot Walter and Suzanne Scott Kingdoms of the Seas Aquarium opened at the Henry Doorly Zoo. It featured an 850,000-gallon coral reef/shark system with underwater tunnel and an Arctic penguin display that produces 20 tons of man-made snow daily. The zoo attracted more than 1.6 million visitors in 1995, a new record.

Omaha Officer Jimmy Wilson Jr. was shot and killed during a traffic stop on August 20th. Omahan Kevin Allen was convicted of the killing.

Western Heritage Museum began a multimillion-dollar restoration and renovation.

The Rose Blumkin Performing Arts Center, or “The Rose”, opened at the newly-renovated Astro Theater, 2001 Farnam Street. The Rose Blumkin family donated \$1 million to the \$6.5 million renovation of the building. Later, it became home to the Omaha Theater Company for Young People and the Omaha Theater Ballet.

Omaha investor Warren Buffett was ranked as the country’s wealthiest person.

The fifth floor of the Douglas County Courthouse was the setting for the filming of the CBS miniseries, “Gone In the Night”, starring Shannen Doherty, Kevin Dillon, Dixie Carter and Ed Asner.

Casino gambling began in Council Bluffs as the result of a \$19 million project to construct a casino addition to Bluffs Run. The new Bluffs Run Casino housed more than one thousand new slot machines in addition to continuing its regular program of dog racing. In the same year, the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission granted licenses to two Nevada gaming firms, Harveys and Ameristar Casinos, for the addition of riverboat casinos and construction of hotels, restaurants, entertainment venues and a convention center in Council Bluffs. The land-based facilities were critical in making Council Bluffs a destination for convention and tourism business.

1996

UNO won the NCAA Division II national volleyball championship by defeating Tampa to cap a 35-2 season. The Mavericks started the season with a school record of 20-straight wins.

UNO’s College of Information Science and Technology (IS&T) was established with an initial enrollment of 124 students. Within ten years, enrollment increased to more than 1,200. IS&T’s undergraduate degree

in bioinformatics was one of the first four such programs in the country offered by a major university.

The Union Pacific and Southern Pacific Railroad lines merged. During the 1980s, the Western Pacific and the Missouri Pacific were incorporated as part of UP. This latest merger made the Union Pacific the country's largest railroad in route-miles. In the same year, space needs dictated the closure of the railroad company's museum at its headquarters in downtown Omaha.

Live thoroughbred horse racing at Ak-Sar-Ben came to an end when this year's meet was canceled in February. It was the first time since the 1940s the horses did not run.

First Data Resources, a processor in one-third of the nation's credit card transactions, is Omaha's largest private employer this year. Its 6,500 employees worked in 41 buildings throughout the metro area.

The Bill and Berniece Grewcock Center for Conservation and Research (CCR) opened at the zoo. The world's first test-tube gorilla moved to the Henry Doorly Zoo.

One big new feature at Rosenblatt Stadium was a \$4.75 million press box built to accommodate up to 195 reporters, broadcasters and photographers. Renovations at the stadium since 1988 were numerous. The addition of about 7,800 permanent grandstand seats increased capacity from 15,000 to more than 22,000 seats.

The Upstream Brewing Company opened in the Old Market at the newly-renovated site of the former Firehouse Dinner Theater at 11th and Jackson Streets.

Peony Park was demolished. The 26-acre tract was sold to the Cass Street Partnership for about \$3.4 million. The group planned to build apartments and retail stores on the site.

HDR returned to being a fully employee-owned company in September. CEO Richard Bell led the employee buy-back and became the company's chairman in 1997.

The Hiland-Roberts Ice Cream Company was formed when Mid-America Dairymen sold the Gillette ice cream plant in Norfolk, Nebraska, to joint-

venture partners, Hiland Dairy of Springfield, Missouri, and Roberts Dairy of Omaha, Nebraska.

Ameristar and Harveys began operations in Council Bluffs. The opening of Bluffs Run Casino in 1995 and that of Ameristar and Harveys the following year resulted in the creation of nearly 2,400 jobs.

1997

UNO added men's hockey as a Division I sport and played its first NCAA hockey game against the University of Manitoba at the Civic Auditorium.

The Sarpy Community YMCA opened in Papillion at 1111 East First Street.

The Lozier IMAX 3D Theater opened at the Henry Doorly Zoo. The giant screen theater has an 83-foot wide screen that is six stories tall. The IMAX enhances the zoo's goals regarding public education by means of spectacular nature and eco-films.

Douglas County completed its sale of Ak-Sar-Ben to three new owners for \$10 million. The new owners are First Data Resources, the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and the Ak-Sar-Ben Future Trust, a nonprofit organization. First Data Resources bought the north 140 acres, 70 acres of which it donated to UNO to be developed as an information science, technology, and engineering campus. The bulk of the property, including the Ak-Sar-Ben Coliseum, will be owned and operated by the Ak-Sar-Ben Future Trust which received about \$4.5 million of the \$10 million proceeds from the sale.

Brenda Council narrowly lost her second bid to be elected mayor against incumbent Hal Daub. With 49.6% of the vote, Council came within one percentage point of defeating Mayor Daub. He won with an 878-vote margin of victory out of more than 109,000 votes cast. It was the second-closest mayoral election in recent Omaha history.

An October snow and ice storm caused a reported \$50 million in damages in the Omaha area. Since most trees still had leaves on them, the weight of the ice and snow caused branches to break and power lines to snap and fall. Nearly 300,000 homes and businesses were without electricity for several minutes, hours or days before power was restored.

A \$26.3 renovation of the Civic Auditorium resulted in a new main entrance, lobby, restrooms, an ice rink for hockey, and an electronic marquee. The Music Hall was also renovated and a new 450-stall parking garage was built on the west side of the building.

Mrs. B continued to work at the Nebraska Furniture Mart until she was 103 years old. Frequently seen moving around the store in her golf cart, she remained steadfast in her philosophy to “sell cheap and tell the truth”. Rose Blumkin, affectionately known as Mrs. B, died at age 104 in 1998.

American Business Information (InfoUSA today) began work to prepare and market a new database on 113 million private households throughout the country similar to the one it sold on businesses. The new database was sold to businesses for marketing and sales of products to individual consumers. Much of the information on the database was taken from Yellow Page and white page listings in the nation’s 5,000 telephone directories.

The Western Historic Trails Center opened off I-29 just south of Council Bluffs. Its exhibits pay tribute to overland travelers who passed through the Council Bluffs area on their way west during the nineteenth century. The Center was built by the National Park Service and operated by the State Historical Society of Iowa. The Iowa West Foundation, the Lied Foundation Trust and others contributed to the cost of construction.

1998

The Garden of the Senses opened at the Henry Doorly Zoo. The Lee G. Simmons Conservation Park and Wildlife Safari also opened 22 miles west of the Omaha Zoo at Exit 426 on I-80. It offered visitors the opportunity to drive through four miles of prairies and wetlands to view North American animals from the car.

First Data Resources opened its information technology center on the site of the former Ak-Sar-Ben property.

For the first time, Roberts Dairy products of Omaha were sold in all the markets in its six-state region.

Ameritrade introduced electronic trade confirmations by email. In the same year, the company opened a new service center in an abandoned department store at the Southroads shopping mall in Bellevue. A ten-year lease was signed for rental of 132,000 square feet of space to initially accommodate 200-300 employees who had been working in several locations. Plans called for the number of employees to increase to 900 at the Southroads location about a year later.

American Business Information shareholders approved changing the name of the company to InfoUSA to better reflect the company's broadening business base. The company's first Internet unit was created with infoUSA.com which was soon followed by VideoYellowPages.com. InfoUSA sold data on eleven million businesses and millions of private households throughout the country. Information was drawn from thousands of public sources, especially Yellow Pages telephone listings.

The Lied Transplant Center opened as part of the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) in November. The fourteen-story center at 43rd and Emile Streets housed four transplant-related programs for transplant patient care. Cost for the center and related construction was \$61.3 million making it the most expensive building project in the history of the University of Nebraska to date.

1999

The greatest rainfall ever recorded for a 24-hour period in Omaha took place on August 7th. The amount was 10.48 inches. One person died, and damage in a five-county area was estimated at \$17 million. The new record replaced the old one of 7.03 inches recorded in 1903.

UNO's Peter Kiewit Information Science Technology and Engineering (IST&E) Institute was dedicated, as well as University Village at the former Ak-Sar-Ben site.

The Omaha Public Schools ended its federally-mandated program of busing for integration and replaced it with a voluntary integration plan. The new plan established geographic attendance zones within which students had a choice of schools to attend. In the same year, voters approved the OPS \$254 million bond issue for urban schools.

The Omaha Livestock Market moved to Red Oak, Iowa, and the City of Omaha demolished the remaining livestock pens and most of the buildings.

First National Bank opened its new technology center.

Sue's Carousel, a 36-foot carousel that features thirty handcrafted animals including exotic wildlife, horses and chariots opened at the Henry Doorly Zoo near Dairy World. Construction of the Desert Dome began.

The old Medical Arts Building, later known as the Professional Tower, at 17th and Dodge Streets, was imploded to make way for the new forty-story First National Tower on that site. The building's terra cotta façade

was removed piece by piece, numbered and stored, and later reassembled on an interior wall of the new First National Tower.

Duchesne Preschool reopened for boys and girls.

Omaha Steaks moved its corporate and executive offices to a new 60,000 square-foot structure not far from its call center. The company continued to be the country's largest direct response marketer of steaks and a variety of other frozen gourmet foods.

Omaha-based InfoUSA completed its purchase of Donnelley Marketing, a division of First Data Corp., for about \$200 million in cash. The Donnelley Marketing office in Lincoln was closed. Donnelley employees compiled information on businesses and residents from phone books for sale to marketing companies and telemarketers, the same work that was being done by InfoUSA at its Papillion operations.

Ameritrade Holding Corporation began offering customers the option of trading stocks over the Internet using wireless telephones.

Harveys purchased Bluffs Run in Council Bluffs for \$165 million. Of that amount, \$115 million went to the Iowa West Foundation for charitable and public service works. During the same year, the foundation bought land for construction of a convention center-arena that became the Mid-America Center.

2000

By a margin of 63% to 37%, voters approved construction of a new riverfront convention center and arena on the site of an old rail yard on the north edge of downtown.

Scott Residence Hall and Conference Center opened on the UNO campus.

The Creighton University soccer team lost the NCAA men's championship game to Connecticut with a score of 0-2.

The population of Omaha was 390,007 residents. The total population of Douglas County was 463,585. Bellevue had 44,382, and Council Bluffs stood at 58,268 inhabitants. The population of the metropolitan area in 2000 was 716,998.

The Gallup Organization announced it would build its new headquarters and leadership training center along Omaha's riverfront between the airport and the new convention center-arena. Long-based in Lincoln, the

company wanted better access to airline connections and a more competitive market for telecommunications service.

The Paxton Manor, 1403 Farnam Street, closed. It was an assisted living facility for the elderly and mentally disabled that was housed in the old Paxton Hotel. The building stood vacant for several years before being developed into luxury condominiums, and commercial, retail and office space in 2005-2006.

US West Communications, with headquarters in Denver, Colorado, was acquired by Qwest Communications in June.

Nebraska voters approved an amendment to the state constitution that limited state senators to two consecutive four-year terms in the Unicameral. The term limits provision went into effect in the 2006 election. Term-limited lawmakers are ineligible to serve in the Unicameral until at least four years after leaving office.

The “Dale Chihuly: Inside and Out” traveling exhibit at the Joslyn Art Museum set a new record for attendance. It attracted 161,726 viewers from February 12th—June 4th when it closed.

The Field Club Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in November.

Renovation of the Nebraska Furniture Mart was completed.

Children’s Hospital opened at 8200 Dodge Street. Designed by HDR architects, the cost of construction was \$87.6 million. The 142-bed facility featured private rooms specifically designed for children. In 2007, the hospital announced plans for construction of a new five-story, \$55 million outpatient care facility that will house specialty clinics to treat children with heart and lung disorders and cancer and developmental disabilities. Children’s is the area’s sole full-service pediatric specialty hospital.

Ameritrade introduced Express Account Opening to pave the way for the paperless opening of accounts. During the same year, Ameritrade Holding Corporation opened a customer service center in Ft. Worth, Texas to house 500 employees. The center also provided computer and telephone backup to the online stock brokerage headquarters in Omaha.

The South Omaha Outreach Program, a special initiative at Bellevue University, was launched to enroll, retain and educate residents of South Omaha and Bellevue. Emphasis was placed on students from Latino and low-income families. Gina Ponce directed the new scholarship program which includes language instruction, mentoring and assistance for child care and transportation.

2001

UNO won the NCAA Division II national softball championship.

Scott Business and Technology Development Center opened at UNO for companies that develop from research conducted at the Kiewit Institute.

The Omaha World-Herald completed its new Freedom Center production facility downtown at Fourteenth Street and Capitol Avenue at a cost of \$125 million.

Aaron Ferer & Sons Co. removed 37,000 tons of scrap metal from its four-acre site to make way for the Gallup Organization's riverfront campus. The Port of Omaha, Miller's Landing and Kenefick Park also occupied part of the 60-acre tract that would become Gallup's new corporate headquarters and training facility north of downtown.

First Data Resources opened its second office building at the former Ak-Sar-Ben site.

April and May hailstorms in the metro area resulted in 250,000 insurance claims filed for damages to homes and cars, totaling \$500 million.

Renovation of the Zorinsky Federal Building at 17th Street and Capitol Avenue began in August and was expected to be complete by January 2004. Estimated cost was \$40.6 million. Numerous delays for a variety of reasons caused the project to continue into 2007. The revised estimate for the construction cost was placed at \$49.4 million.

President George W. Bush flew to Offutt Air Force Base on the day of the 9/11 terrorist attacks to hold a National Security Council meeting by teleconference.

The Seward High School marching band suffered tragedy during an October trip to Omaha. As the bus left the city, it toppled over a low barrier in a construction zone at 168th and West Dodge Road and dropped sixty feet. Four passengers died and 27 others were injured in the accident.

The Omaha Performing Arts Society (OPAS) announced plans to renovate the Orpheum Theater for \$10 million. Also announced were plans to build a new \$90 million concert hall that became the Holland Performing Arts Center, 1200 Douglas-On-The-Mall.

Job cuts at Ameritrade call centers in Omaha and Ft. Worth totaled about 830 regular and temporary employees. Nationwide, Omaha-based Ameritrade had 2,300 employees and was the country's fifth largest online brokerage. The cuts began to take effect in December, 2000 and were due to lower trading volumes and market conditions that affected other large online brokerage companies as well. Joe Moglia was named CEO of Ameritrade to replace J. Joe Ricketts, Ameritrade founder and previous CEO. Ricketts retained his position as chairman.

2002

Employees of First National Bank moved to a new home office in the First National Tower constructed on a full square block bounded by 16th, 17th, Dodge and Douglas Streets. Designed by Leo A. Daly Co., the 635-foot, forty-story tower contains nearly 1,000,000 square feet and is the tallest structure between Chicago and Denver. Construction cost was \$208 million.

Rick's Café Boatyard opened at 345 Riverfront Drive on the historic Lewis and Clark Landing, which was dedicated in 2003. A restaurant with an upscale atmosphere, Rick's also serves as an anchor for new development along Omaha's revitalized riverfront.

The final livestock show and rodeo were held at the Ak-Sar-Ben complex.

Downtown Omaha was host to a celebration marking the passage of the Olympic torch on its way to the cauldron at the 2002 Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City, Utah. The torch was carried by 11,500 people during its 65-day, 13,500 mile relay journey to the site of the Olympic Games.

The population of Omaha was 399,357 residents. The city's estimated population in 2003 was 404,267.

The Desert Dome, the world's largest indoor desert, opened at the Henry Doorly Zoo. Inside, under the world's largest glazed geodesic dome, exhibits from three different deserts are featured—the Namib, the Central Australian and the Sonoran. Construction of Hubbard Gorilla Valley began.

The City of Omaha granted the Omaha Performing Arts Society a fifty-year lease to manage the Orpheum Theater through 2052. The city retains ownership of the theater, the renovation of which was completed in 2002.

The Nebraska Furniture Mart opened a state-of-the-art 651,000 square-foot warehouse and distribution center on its 72nd Street campus. It included a newly-renovated Mrs. B's Clearance Center and Factory Outlet store.

The Mid-America Center opened in Council Bluffs. The new facility contained 42,500 square feet of meeting space and banquet capacity for 1,500 guests.

Omaha-based investment broker Ameritrade purchased Datek Online Holding Corp. of New Jersey for \$1.3 billion. The merger immediately made Ameritrade the industry leader in daily volume of transactions.

2003

A new \$291 million convention center and arena opened on September 1st, creating a dramatic signature element on Omaha's evolving skyline. The Qwest Center Omaha, 455 North 10th Street, included an exhibit hall, ballrooms and an arena for concerts and sporting events with a seating capacity of 17,000. In 2006, seating was expanded to more than 18,000 seats. With 64,000 square feet of meeting space and banquet capacity for 2,100 guests, the Qwest Center provides the largest amount of meeting space in Nebraska.

Creighton University celebrated its 125th anniversary and ranked No. 1 among Midwest universities that offer master's degrees and some doctorates in U.S. News and World Report's listing of college rankings for 2004. Student enrollment was 6,327, and the school's annual budget was \$255 million. A new master plan was introduced.

Scott Village residence halls at UNO were dedicated. Ten residence buildings encompassing 480 bedrooms were opened for UNO students.

The new Gallup University corporate headquarters and training center opened in August. The 285,000 square-foot main building has Class A office and training space for 500 employees and a nearly 25,000 square-foot child development center for their children. As many as 5,000 students are expected to participate in Gallup University training programs each year, most of whom are mid-career executives. The final

cost of the Gallup project was \$46 million. The campus is part of the \$1.8 billion revitalization of Omaha's riverfront area.

The Twin Rivers YMCA opened in Valley at 6100 Twin Rivers Circle. The Mills County YMCA opened in Glenwood, Iowa three years later. Also, in 2006, plans were announced to build the Armbrust Family YMCA near 168th and Q Streets to open in 2007. All three sites are part of the YMCA of Greater Omaha.

Eugene T. Mahoney Kingdoms of the Night, the world's largest nocturnal exhibit, opened beneath the Desert Dome at the Henry Doorly Zoo. It features a wet cave, caverns, a bat cave and the world's largest indoor swamp. A reverse-light cycle is used so visitors can observe animals when they are awake and active.

Mayor Mike Fahey appointed Thomas H. Warren as the city's 28th Chief of Police and the first African-American to hold this position. Warren's salary was \$107,326.

Omaha Police Sgt. Jason Tye Pratt was fatally shot by parolee Albert Rucker, who was then mortally wounded by another officer. Pratt's widow, Stacy, began an effort to keep armed felons from avoiding justice.

Results of a study by Compass Facility Management Inc. of Ames, Iowa recommended a need for the Civic Auditorium to remain even though the new Qwest Center and Arena opened in September.

The Nebraska Furniture Mart opened a huge new store in Kansas City, Kansas. With more than 700,000 square feet of retail and distribution space, the new location was the first store outside of Omaha that offered NFM's full complement of products.

Roberts Dairy gained national recognition when it was named a Quality Award winner for its milk and culture products.

Regency Court completed a \$10 million renovation which brought in upscale specialty retailers that included Williams-Sonoma, Pottery Barn and Ann Taylor Loft.

The new Union Pacific Railroad Museum opened in the old Carnegie Library in Council Bluffs on May 10th, the 134th anniversary of the driving of the golden spike that signaled completion of the transcontinental

railroad in 1869. Council Bluffs is the eastern terminus of the Union Pacific.

UNMC's Durham Research Center was dedicated in November. The 10-story \$77 million state-of-the-art facility was designed to be competitive with other leading academic centers for medical research. At the time of the dedication, plans were underway to build a second research tower nearby which would focus on biodefense and other programs.

The White House Office of Management and Budget expanded the boundaries for the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) to include eight counties, an increase of three more than the previous five. In Nebraska, Saunders County was added to Washington, Douglas, Sarpy and Cass Counties. In Iowa, Pottawattamie County was joined by Harrison and Mills Counties. The estimated population of the new eight-county Omaha-Council Bluffs MSA was 767,041. An MSA includes counties in which at least 25% of their workers commute to work in the central county of the metro area.

2004

I-80 just east of 42nd Street carried an average of 167,000 vehicles daily. At the same time, Omaha had the third-shortest commute time among cities with populations of 250,000 and more, according to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau statistics. The average Omaha resident could get to work in 17.3 minutes.

In January, Governor Mike Johanns announced Union Pacific Corp. would move 1,038 jobs from St. Louis to its new Omaha headquarters. The move qualified the company for tax incentives under the Invest Nebraska Act and LB 775. Annual payroll for the 1,038 jobs was estimated at \$62 million, excluding benefits. The additional jobs brought UP's employment in Nebraska to about 8,000 with 4,500 in Omaha.

In May, the first of 4,100 Union Pacific employees moved to the new Union Pacific Center headquarters at 14th and Douglas Streets. About 50 employees moved in each day through the end of August. The 20-story building contains a 19-story atrium, has 1.1 million square feet and accommodates all 4,100 workers. Cost of construction was \$260 million.

The Hilton Omaha, 1001 Cass Street, opened. The Hilton Omaha is a 450-room full service, convention center hotel joined to the Qwest Center by a skywalk over 10th Street. It cost \$71 million to construct and is Nebraska's only AAA Motor Club's Four Diamond Award winner. Its conference rooms are named for Omaha's earliest hotels.

The Carl T. Curtis National Park Service Midwest Headquarters opened at 601 Riverfront Drive. Designed by Leo A. Daly Co., it was constructed at a cost of \$12.7 million. It is home to the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and serves a 13-state region. The headquarters won an environmental “gold” rating for incorporating environmentally friendly features into its design and construction. It is the first building in the state to be rated under LEED—the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design system.

Renovation of the Livestock Exchange Building was completed. As a mixed-use complex, the facility now offers affordable housing, meeting and reception space, and later became the site of One-World Community Health Center.

Omaha-based Werner Enterprises became the nation’s first trucking company to receive a federal exemption that allowed it to track drivers’ work hours using a paperless system based on global positioning technology. The exemption ended a six-year pilot program during which Werner was the first company that had federal approval to use the satellite-based Qualcomm system in its trucks for tracking and messaging to implement paperless log books.

Hubbard Gorilla Valley opened and features gorillas that roam free. The new facility allows the Omaha Zoo to be a major player in gorilla conservation. Located on a three-acre site, it has two acres of gorilla and visitor space several times larger than the previous area.

The Nebraska Medical Center set a new one-month record of 33 for the number of organ transplants performed there. This record stood until a new record of 37 organ transplants was performed in September, 2006. Each year, the majority of all organ transplants in the state are performed at UNMC. They include heart, liver, kidney, pancreas and small bowel transplants.

The grandstand at Ak-Sar-Ben was razed.

The letters of Joseph Barker Jr. to his family in England were published in edited format in [Their Man in Omaha, Volume I, 1860 to 1868](#). A second volume of his correspondence from 1869 to 1871 was published in 2006. His nearly 200 letters provide a unique eyewitness account of life in frontier Omaha as the town grew and prospered.

The Metropolitan Entertainment and Convention Authority (MECA) took over management of the Civic Auditorium under terms of a contract with the City of Omaha.

Village Pointe, the city's newest open-air shopping center, opened at 168th Street and West Dodge Road.

Walgreen Drug Store closed its downtown location at 201 South 16th Street.

InfoUSA announced plans to purchase and remodel a Carter Lake building adjacent to its fulfillment center at 200 Owen Parkway. The 30,000-square-foot structure at One Owen Parkway was to be used as a data center for a California company recently acquired by InfoUSA. InfoUSA had operations in Omaha and Papillion that employed 1,200 persons in Nebraska; 130 in Iowa; and 2,400 companywide when the announcement was made. It sold data on 14 million businesses and 220 million consumers in the U.S. and Canada to four million customers worldwide.

2005

Central High School's new 5,500-seat Seemann Stadium was dedicated amid fanfare in late August. The stadium's opening came at a time when most of a multi-million renovation at Central was nearing completion. Classroom and office space was updated, and for the first time, the high school had central air conditioning.

The Holland Performing Arts Center, 1314 Douglas-on-the-Mall, opened amid fanfare in October. The \$92 million, 175,000 square-foot structure quickly won acclaim among artists and audience members alike for its excellent acoustics. The center includes a concert hall, chamber music hall and courtyard. It is the new home of the Omaha Symphony and is named for Richard and Mary Holland who generously contributed to the project.

During the first six months of 2005, Qwest Center Omaha ranked #8 internationally among arenas for the number of concert tickets sold, and placed 5th for ticket sales among U.S. indoor venues.

The Tip Top Loft Apartments opened at 1524 Cuming Street. The building was former home to the Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant, the Tip Top Company and a tire warehouse before being remodeled into market-rent loft apartments. The apartments represent the first major redevelopment project north of downtown in an emerging residential/entertainment district referred to unofficially as "NoDo".

NP Dodge Co. celebrated 150 years in business as one of the largest full service real estate companies in Nebraska and Iowa. It is Omaha's oldest continuously-operated family business. Its seven entities are comprised of 500 employees and 500 sales associates. An original 1899 photo of General Grenville M. Dodge, a company founder, was placed on permanent display at the General Dodge House in Council Bluffs as part of the celebration.

The Weitz Co. construction firm celebrated its 150th anniversary by moving into a new 12,500-square-foot office space in the former Westmark Plaza Office Building at 10707 Pacific Street. Renamed Weitz Plaza, the new office is the Omaha headquarters for the Des Moines-based company. The Weitz Co. has been in Omaha for fifteen years and employs about 165 people in the Omaha area. Completed projects include the Douglas County Correctional Center, the New Cassel Retirement Center, the Ak-Sar-Ben Village retail shops and the Gallup University Riverfront Campus.

The Hubbard Orangutan Forest opened at the Henry Doorly Zoo. Named for primary donor, Claire Hubbard, the forest provides a one-of-a-kind, man-made habitat designed specifically for orangutans. The outdoor forest habitat extends for 3,763 square feet, is 65 feet tall, and is covered by 21,211 square feet of stainless steel net. Cost of construction was \$8.5 million.

Construction began on a \$6 million expansion of the Grewcock Center for Conservation and Research that was completed in 2006. The Henry Doorly Zoo continues to be the state's "Number 1" tourist attraction. The most popular exhibits are the Lied Jungle, Scott Aquarium, Hubbard Gorilla Valley and the Cat Complex.

The Board of Education of the Omaha Public Schools passed a resolution to absorb the schools, land and tax base in the Millard, Ralston and Elkhorn school districts that are within the Omaha city limits on June 6th. Referred to as "one city, one school district", the resolution drew fierce opposition from school superintendents and community members within the metro area. Governor Dave Heineman announced his support for suburban districts, and the Unicameral responded to the controversy with passage of LB 1024 the following spring.

District Court Judge Gerald Moran ruled in favor of Omaha in its effort to annex Elkhorn. Elkhorn city officials appealed Judge Moran's ruling to the

Nebraska Supreme Court. In January, 2007, the Supreme Court upheld the ruling of the lower court allowing the annexation to proceed. In response, the Elkhorn City Council voted unanimously to request that the Nebraska Supreme Court rehear the city's case against annexation by Omaha. The state Supreme Court rejected Elkhorn's request to rehear the case in February, 2007. A subsequent appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court for a stay of the annexation also failed. Omaha's annexation of Elkhorn and five neighboring subdivisions went forward on March 1, 2007. The annexed areas added more than 10,000 residents to Omaha's total population estimated at 427,872 citizens in 2007.

The Shoppes at Ak-Sar-Ben opened on the southeast corner of 72nd and Pacific Streets.

Members of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral looked forward to celebrating the congregation's sesquicentennial anniversary in 2006. Founded in 1856, the present church was completed in 1883. Located at 18th Street and Capitol Avenue, the classic Gothic structure is Omaha's oldest church building still in use. It is the headquarters for the bishop of the Nebraska Episcopal Diocese.

Carl S. Baum Drug Store at 5001 Underwood Avenue, the Harte Building, closed. The business was acquired by Wohlner's Pharmacy, 52nd and Leavenworth Streets. The Harte Building was converted into mixed-use as a residential and retail property.

Omaha remains home to five Fortune 500 companies: Berkshire Hathaway, ConAgra Foods, Union Pacific Corp., Peter Kiewit Sons' Inc. and Mutual of Omaha Companies. It is home also for three billionaires, the only three from Nebraska included on the Forbes Magazine of the world's 793 billionaires in 2006. Warren Buffett of Berkshire Hathaway ranked No. 2 with \$42 billion behind No. 1 Bill Gates, Microsoft founder, with \$50 billion. J. Joe Ricketts of TD Ameritrade ranked No. 292 with \$2.5 billion. J. Walter Scott of Peter Kiewit Sons' Inc., with \$1.7 billion, ranked 451 on the list. No Iowans were listed as billionaires.

The Iowa Grocer's Association named Omaha-based Roberts Dairy the 2005 Vendor of the Year. In 2006, the company observed its centennial anniversary of continuous operation.

Kenefick Park at Lauritzen Gardens opened west of the Missouri River bridge along I-80. The park's two massive locomotives located on a

hillside north of the interstate provide an impressive front door for residents, visitors and those just passing through Omaha.

Ameritrade announced its purchase of TD Waterhouse USA, the U.S. online brokerage of Canada's Toronto Dominion Bank. The \$2.9 billion merger was completed in January, 2006 when Ameritrade became TD Ameritrade. Projected average number of trades per day for TD Ameritrade was 239,000, a figure larger than that of Charles Schwab and E-Trade, Ameritrade's largest rivals. Corporate headquarters for TD Ameritrade remain in Omaha.

Rajive Johri, a native of India, came aboard at First National Bank to head the bank's credit card operation. In 2006, Chairman Bruce Lauritzen named Johri bank president. First National Bank noted its 150th anniversary in 2007, the same year it launched FBNO Direct, the institution's new online banking service.

Johnson Hardware celebrated its 150th anniversary at its location at 1201 Pacific Street.

Omaha/Douglas County *History at a Glance* Guide and Timeline

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