THE TRANS-MISSISSIPPI EXPOSITION

BY

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A THESIS

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Preface

International expositions have received relatively little attention from scholars in the past. Nevertheless, expositions are illustrative of man's progress and development. There is hardly a more striking example of this fact than the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition held at Omaha, Nebraska, in 1898.

Since the frontier had been pronounced as closed only a few years before, it was fitting that the trans-Mississippi region display its wealth as well as its capabilities. Omaha was fortunate to be the host city for an exposition that symbolized the progress of the West. The city benefited greatly, being infused with an economic and spiritual uplift at a most opportune time.

The primary objective of this thesis is to present a comprehensive description of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition. In doing so, however, I will also analyze its success and attempt to place it in its historical perspective.

Many people aided me in the realization of this endeavor. Two of them deserve more thanks than my
mere expression of the word can convey. My thesis advisor, Reverend Robert J. Shanahan, S.J., was most enlightening and patient in his direction. My indebtedness to him goes beyond this thesis, for he has been an inspiration during my entire graduate program at Creighton. My wife, Molly, not only helped in the preparation of this study, but also always maintained a spirit of happiness and cooperation that made the completion of it much easier.

At this time I would also like to acknowledge the faculty of the Department of History, especially Dr. Allan M. Schleich, Dr. Ross Horning, and Dr. Orville Zabel. My association with these men has been most pleasant, and I consider it my humble privilege to have been able to draw upon their knowledge and wisdom.
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Expositions have become so common in recent years that they have lost some of the significance or excitement that once was associated with them. From Seattle to New York, Montreal, and San Antonio, they rise across the country and pass into oblivion with the usual complaints of poor attendance, poor weather, or poor show. Such was not always the case. The latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed what was the golden age of world's fairs. The Expositions at London, Paris, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Omaha were all regarded with awe and considered to be notable achievements.

The idea for an exposition goes far beyond the nineteenth century, however. The basis for an exposition is found in man's desire to display and to share with others something he believes to be special or unique. When a number of exhibits are gathered in one place and come from many different countries there develops the World's Fair or International Exposition. But what really can be gained or achieved by them?
What is their excuse for existence? George R. Leighton answered these queries by saying that "a world's fair is its own excuse. It is a brief and transitory paradise, born to delight mankind and die."¹

Expositions are human activities, human enterprises undertaken for definite reasons and specific aims, and "their results can only be told in terms of further human thought and activity."² Indeed, it is in imparting knowledge and stimulating the imagination that the real value of an exposition is found. Expositions appeal to a variety of inner senses. Some arouse a sense of beauty, or power, or even question the possibilities within man himself. The dignity of man or the majesty of national grandeur is manifested as never before.³

There is a sense of mysticism about an exposition. Within the confines of the exposition grounds changes take place. For a brief moment, man escapes


the commonplace. Though difficult to generalize about the reactions and changes an exposition brings forth, it has been stated that:

A world's fair is an art form, a combination of beauty and bombast, and is the expression of a complex idea involving trade, the arts, national, local, and individual prestige, uplift, and the universal hankering for a holiday. There is a mystic [sic] involved with world's fairs that defies analysis; it recalls Isidor Rabi's comment on modern physics: 'We work with known laws in the midst of data unknown and unknowable.'

Experts cite the Crystal Palace Exposition at London in 1851 as the first international exposition in the modern sense. Ancient times had their fairs where merchants came to buy and sell and often carried away with them new ideas as well as the purchased goods. Essentially, the ancient fairs sought to sell products. A distinguishing feature of the modern exposition is that, though things are sold, they are primarily on display.

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4 Leighton, Harpers, CCXXI, 32.

5 Luckhurst, 12.
Such was the success of the Crystal Palace Exposition, promoted by Prince Albert, that it became a model for subsequent expositions. The Crystal Palace itself was a massive building, covering some 700,000 square feet, at a cost of nearly $850,000. Exhibits were sent from all parts of the world to the number of seventeen thousand. Taking into account advance ticket sales and large daily average attendance during its six months of operation, the exposition grossed $2,625,535, which left a clear net profit of $750,000. Thus the feasibility of an exposition to promote national trade became not only an advertisement but a possible financial success.

Improved modern buildings was a further enticement to hold fairs. Within two years, New York had copied the London Exposition on a smaller scale. New York's Palace covered a plot of ground 500 feet square, allowing 250,000 square feet of floor space. Failure to open on time so cut attendance that the effort, despite creditable exhibits, was written off as a financial failure, and no further expositions

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were held in the United States until 1876.

Meanwhile, Paris became the exposition center of Europe. Its 1855 exposition listed nearly 21,000 exhibitors. Although it was a financial success, it was much more expensive than the Crystal Palace Exposition. The total cost of this exposition was $3,373,300. Though England produced another exposition in 1862, its success was hampered by the death of Prince Albert, and Paris remained the center of the world's fair.

Accepting its position as the exposition city of Europe, Paris became an innovator. In 1867 the "Palace d'Industrie," broke the one-building pattern, and each country constructed its own building. The success of the event is seen in an attendance of nearly 12,000,000 people and a net profit of $562,654. In 1878 the "Exposition Universelle" gave the world the "Trocadero." However contemporaries may have rued the construction of the Eiffel Tower, it not only commemorates the 1889 Exposition, but it became a symbol of the city itself. It was viewed in awe by 25,000,000 people during the exposition celebrating the century year of the Bastille.

The Vienna World's Fair of 1873 added a new dimension to these expositions, namely the world's
congress. The exposition thus became an opportunity for experts to exchange ideas which contributed to the advancement of knowledge. Important as the innovation was, it was of little consolation to stockholders, for as a commentator remarked, though artistically a success, the fair was "financially in the red."\(^7\)

In 1876 the United States Centennial Exposition was held in Philadelphia and was "the first adequate expression in a material way of the dignity, wealth, and resources of the nation."\(^8\) A new technique was introduced when separate buildings were constructed for each category of exhibits. A new custom was also begun at Philadelphia. Each participating state had its own building, for the use and comfort of its own citizens. In all there were nearly 200 buildings, 26,986 exhibits, 13,148 prize awards, and 9,910,966 admissions,\(^9\) an array which enhanced national feeling at a time when official Reconstruction of the South was coming to an end.

\(^7\)Ibid., 2.

\(^8\)Rogers, Forum. XXXII, 502.

\(^9\)Rosewater, National Republic, XXI, 21.
Though delayed a year, the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893 ushered in a new era in world's fairs. The location, size, unlimited financial resources, new constructive methods, electric lighting effects, and international cooperation all contributed to the success of the exposition. The buildings were constructed of a new material called "staff," and were arranged around lagoons which reflected their magnificence. The same idea was used at Omaha in 1898. The progress of the nation since the Centennial Exposition could be judged by viewing the extensive display of exhibits. The city itself was an exposition to many. A total of 21,477,212 visitors to the Windy City saw not only a burgeoning new city, but a vast number of exhibits, attesting to an immense material progress.

The usual indictment of world's fairs concerns promoters, who are charged with planning and managing expositions for the pecuniary benefit only. Too late businessmen realize they "were drawn into a private speculation from which only real estate dealers, 

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10 Rogers, Forum, XXXII, 506.
railroad companies, hotels and local tradesmen derived huge profits. Although local shopkeepers do profit during the exposition, very few financial scandals have occurred. "The rule with world's fairs seems to be: Lots of free-loaders but very few thieves." 

As an innovator, it is not surprising that the "Midway Exhibits" were introduced by Paris in 1878. The perceptive Gauls early realized that visitors could not be attracted by splendid displays appealing only to the mind. They had also to be entertained. Though the "Midway Exhibits" became an essential part of subsequent world's fairs, they became a bone of contention in the more puritanical atmosphere of the United States, where they were accused of corrupting more than amusing people.

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12 Leighton, Harpers, CCXI, 33.

13 Kunz, North American Review, CLXXV, 421.
A more balanced judgment would be that "those who look upon them as mere vulgar or grotesque exhibitions for sordid gain have failed to grasp the reason of their popularity," for Midways form a type of microcosm, wherein people are seen as they might live at home.  

Restaurants, bars, ferris wheels, and various rides provided means certain to refresh and amuse visitors. Besides all this there were other shows that appealed to more adult audiences. Such was the "Streets of Cairo," a French invention at the 1889 Exposition. "It gave Little Egypt, the muscle dancer, to the world." Copied successfully at Chicago in 1893, it had somewhat lost its novelty or charm by 1898. Nothing comparable happened until Sally Rand electrified the nation with her fan dance at Chicago's Century of Progress Exposition in 1933.

A prominent ideal of every international exposition is the promotion of peace and prosperity.

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14 Rogers, Forum, XXXII, 505.

15 Leighton, Harper's, CCXXI, 35.
The Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition at Omaha in 1898 was held at a time when both issues were very much before the public. The Spanish-American War broke out shortly before its opening, and the West was only beginning to recover from a long and serious depression. The Trans-Mississippi Exposition provides evidence that international expositions do not prevent wars; they go on despite wars. Likewise they "don't solve the problems of depression. The world's fair idea is tough and durable, and the reason is this: people think they're just wonderful."¹⁶ William McKinley himself, the "Advance Agent of Prosperity," appeared in Omaha, dispelling the gloom of depression.

The federal government has been the greatest benefactor of expositions held in the United States. Federal support assures an imposing federal structure housing numerous exhibits. Official foreign participation depends on the endorsement of the federal government. Added benefits include a commemorative stamp, for publicity, the Marine Band for

¹⁶ Ibid.
entertainment, and often a personal appearance by the President. 17

Educative value is inherent in an exposition. It allows for public patronage at Fine Arts Galleries; the exposition itself inspires experimentation which leads to new trends in art and architecture. From 1851 to 1889 the architectural designs of expositions appealed to ingenuity and novelty. At Chicago in 1893, there was a deliberate and conscious effort to return to classical styles. This trend dominated expositions until 1925, when again the emphasis was placed on imagination and creativity.

Since such disparate individuals as Prince Albert and Sally Rand have played determining roles, no one is certain what makes expositions successful. The enchantment, the mystique of an exposition leads to the conclusion that the "true success of a world's fair lies in some never-never land. But the fact of success is beyond dispute. It is somehow embalmed in the memory of those who were there." 19 An exposition is more than a cooperative venture of promoters and patrons. It is

17 Ibid., 30.
18 Kunz, North American Review. CLXXV, 418.
19 Leighton, Harpers. CCXXI, 37.
an enterprise which consolidates, exposes, and makes dreams, all important elements in unifying a country or the world.
PREPARATION FOR THE TRANS-MISSISSIPPI EXPOSITION

Despite the magnificence of its scope and extravagance of its style, the Columbian Exposition of 1893 was unable to capture fully all aspects of American life. The West for one was slighted, since the exposition emphasized industrial growth. Perceiving this and sensing the possibilities for displaying the commercial and material interests of the area, official representatives were sent from the larger cities in the trans-Mississippi region to St. Louis in 1894 to form the Trans-Mississippi Congress. This first step leading to the Trans-Mississippi Exposition had only one effect, namely, to call for another meeting the following year at Omaha, Nebraska.

The Omaha meeting convened November 25, 1895, and fittingly the congress reached its first climax when William Jennings Bryan rose to address the delegates. Symbolizing all the latent hopes and aspirations fermenting in the agrarian mind, the Great

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Commoner proposed:

WHEREAS, We believe that an Exposition of all the products, industries and civilization of the States west of the Mississippi River, made at some central gateway where the world can behold the wonderful capabilities of these great wealth-producing states would be of great value, not only to the Trans-Mississippi States, but to all the home-seekers in the world; therefore

Resolved, that the United States Congress be requested to take such steps as may be necessary to hold a Trans-Mississippi Exposition at Omaha during the months of August, September and October in the year 1898, and that the representatives of such States and Territories in Congress be requested to favor such an appropriation as is usual in such cases to assist in carrying out this enterprise.  

The resolution outlined the common belief that the East was unaware of the vastness and resources of the West. The time had come to impress on the people of the nation, and especially those of the East, that civilization did indeed extend beyond Chicago. The Bryan proposal, embodying the visions of the West, was enthusiastically supported by every delegate.

Delegates to the Trans-Mississippi Congress represented nineteen states and four territories. It

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2 Trans-Mississippi Commercial Congress, Proceedings of the Eighth Convention (Omaha, Nebraska, 1895), p. 106.
was a region whose enormous wealth was vaguely comprehended by the rest of the country. Its cities had grown rapidly and had become household words, "but the powerful forces at work creating these communities and adding to their prosperity, as well as the states wherein they are located were not appreciably considered."3 To supply the knowledge and to cast the bait to attract further settlement and investment became the central theme of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition.

According to the resolution adopted, Omaha would be the host city for a region comprising over 16,500,000 people and an aggregate wealth in excess of $20,000,000,000.4 It was an outstanding opportunity for Omaha to become in fact as well as in vision the gateway to the wonders of the West.

The citizens of Omaha quickly undertook the preliminary organization of an exposition corporation. Early in December, 1895, an ad hoc committee established an association to promote and finance the exposition. "On January 18, 1896, articles of incorporation

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4Ibid.
of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition Association, signed by 100 leading business and professional men, were presented at a meeting in Omaha. One week later the articles of incorporation were filed with the Secretary of State of Nebraska.

The articles appointed the date of the exposition, "beginning in the month of June and ending in the month of November, in the year 1898." This extended the duration of the exposition two months over the original plan. The credit for this extension was claimed by Edward Rosewater, editor of the Omaha Bee. Capital stock of the exposition was fixed at one million dollars in shares of ten dollars each. The corporation could "commence business when shares of stock aggregating in par value the sum of ten thousand ($10,000) dollars shall have been subscribed." The affairs of the corporation were to be "conducted by a board of eleven (11) directors, to be elected from among the stockholders or stock subscribers of this corporation." The directors were empowered to elect

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5 Prospectus of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition (Omaha, 1897), p. 3.
6 Articles of Incorporation of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition, Article III.
7 Omaha Bee, June 19, 1896.
8 Articles of Incorporation, Article IV.
9 Ibid., Article VII.
a president, a treasurer, a secretary, and twenty-five vice-presidents. One of the vice-presidents was to be a citizen of Omaha and the other twenty-four were to be constituted by the election of a vice-president for each state and territory west of the Mississippi River. In July, 1896, Article VII was amended so that a board of not less than fifty directors was to be elected when the shares of stock aggregating the par value of $300,000 had been subscribed. At that time the board of directors was to elect from its number an executive committee of not less than Five (5) nor more than Nine (9) which said executive committee shall have all the power of the board of directors when said board is not in session, and shall choose a chairman from their own number.10

The initial $10,000 needed to begin business was rapidly collected. The board was elected and officers chosen were Gurdon W. Wattles, Herman Kountze, and John A. Wakefield, president, treasurer, and secretary, respectively. These men remained in those offices for the duration of the exposition, for "it may be said that you cannot succeed with a world's fair unless, in one shape or another, you have these capacities available:

10"Amendments to Articles of Incorporation," July 10th, 1896.
a salesman, a planner who can alter details in stride, and a boss who can bull it through."\textsuperscript{11}

Gurdon W. Wattles was a comparative newcomer to Omaha, having moved to that city from Carroll County, Iowa, in 1892. Upon his arrival in Omaha, Wattles remarked that he "sought every available means to make acquaintances and friends and to serve the people of my new home."\textsuperscript{12} He joined the Commercial Club, the Omaha Club, and other public organizations. As the first vice-president of the Union National Bank of Omaha he was in a position in which he could make important contacts. Thus the energetic Wattles, only forty years old, was entrusted in 1896 with the responsibility of directing the exposition to success. He realized that difficulties lay ahead: "It quickly became evident that we had undertaken a Herculean task at a time when it seemed absolutely impossible to secure the money for its completion."\textsuperscript{13}

The effects of the panic of 1893 had lingered

\textsuperscript{11}Leighton, \textit{Harpers}, CCXXI, 33.


\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Ibid.}, 66.
into 1896, and the promoters of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition intended to pump new life into the western economy and hopefully dissipate the distress of the depression. This proved to be a difficult task, since the raising of money had to be done at a time when money was still scarce. Omaha was in no better financial condition than any other city of the region. Ed Morearty recalled that the "year 1895 found the people of Omaha in anguish and despair. Times were growing harder and men and women were out of employment, with no ray of hope in sight." The following year was little better. "I do not recall a single instance where money was invested in the construction of new buildings."15

A major source for funds for any exposition is the United States Congress. On January 3, 1896, Senator William V. Allen introduced a bill "to authorize and encourage the holding of a Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition at the city of Omaha in the State of Nebraska, in the year 1898, and making an appropriation therefore."16 Allen's bill called for

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15 Ibid., 56.

an appropriation of not more than $50,000 for a
Government Building and for an appropriation of $20,000
before June 30, 1896. The bill was read twice and re­
ferred to a select committee on expositions, of which
Senator John M. Thurston of Nebraska was Chairman.

In the House, Congressman David H. Mercer, of
the Omaha District, introduced a bill on February 17,
1896, calling for an appropriation for the exposition. 17
Mercer asked for $500,000, and the bill was referred
to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

On April 10, 1896, the Omaha Exposition Bill
passed the Senate. It called for an appropriation of
$200,000—$50,000 for an exhibit and $150,000 for a
building and incidental expenses. 18 Meanwhile Mercer
dropped his bill in favor of the Senate bill. On
April 20, 1896, Mr. Dolliver of Iowa reported the
exposition bill from the House Ways and Means Committee.
An amendment requiring Omaha to prove subscriptions
of $250,000 before the government money would be avail­
able had been attached to the Senate bill. The expo­
sition directors sent word to their congressional

17 Ibid., Part 2, 1822.
18 Ibid., Part 4, 3823.
representatives that they would accept such a stipulation and encouraged them to work for final passage.

Passage of the exposition bill by Congress now seemed assured. However, Speaker Thomas B. Reed delayed in calling up the bill for a vote until near the end of the session. Then an unexpected objection jolted the chances of passage before the Congress would adjourn. Omar Kem, representing the Sixth Congressional District of Nebraska, objected to consideration of the exposition bill. Kem had been angered by Reed's failure to recognize him for the introduction of a bill concerning disposal of the Fort Sidney military reservation, which had been abandoned by the government. In retaliation he had determined to block other measures in the House. Of course, Kem's action drew contempt from other Nebraskans. He was reported to be hanged in effigy at Benson and to be the recipient of scorching letters sent by the leading citizens of western Nebraska in disapproval of his actions.

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19 Ibid., Part 7, 6168.
21 Omaha Bee. June 7, 1896.
Finally, on June 9, 1896, Mercer was recognized by the Speaker. Then Mr. Bailey of Texas brought up a "no quorum" point of order and Mercer was forced to withdraw. Bailey was not merely interested in parliamentary formalities; he was convinced that "the government has no right to go into show business."\(^{23}\)

The next day, June 10, supporters of the exposition bill made sure Kem and Bailey were absent from the chamber while they gathered a quorum. With these precautions having been taken, the House passed the Senate bill appropriating $200,000 for the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition. The amendment to the Senate bill included the provisions that no liability against the government could be incurred, and that no government expenditure would be made until the officials of the exposition proved $250,000 had been raised through stock subscriptions.\(^{24}\) The bill was taken immediately to the Senate where it was rushed through. President Cleveland signed the bill

\(^{22}\)U.S., Congressional Record, XXVIII, Part 7, 6362.

\(^{23}\)Omaha Bee, June 10, 1896.

\(^{24}\)U.S., Congressional Record, XXVIII, Part 7, 6411.
on the same day.

Passage of the exposition bill fired the city with new confidence. This money was a practical assurance of success for the exposition. A grand jubilee on Friday evening, June 26, under the auspices of the Commercial Club of Omaha, celebrated the passage of the bill. The jubilee was "the greatest civic demonstration ever held in the city," for the people "realized that the exposition meant bread and butter for themselves and prosperity for Nebraska in the days to come."

A subscription drive was organized in July by the directors of the exposition, since the stipulation in the government grant required the city to raise $250,000 before the federal funds would be made available. The board reasoned that every person employed regularly should subscribe to at least one share of stock at ten dollars a share. Not more than 10% of the subscription value would be assessed during 1896, nor more than 60% during 1897.

The subscription drive went well, for most Omahans were enthusiastic over the prospects of the


27 Omaha Bee, July 12, 1896.
exposition. Workingmen foresaw higher wages and a chance for additional employment, and merchants eagerly looked forward to the crowds that the exposition would attract.28

By September 13, 1896, subscriptions amounted to over $300,000. An assessment of 5% on all stock was levied and made due September 29. Pledges are easy to make but difficult to collect, and laxity in payment necessitated postponing assessments until November 28.

In the meantime President Wattles sent a certificate to the Secretary of Treasury, notifying him that subscriptions of stock had passed the required level of $250,000. By December 28, 1896, Secretary Wakefield was notified that the government's $200,000 appropriation was at the disposal of the board of directors.29 As the year drew to a close the board of directors reported that the subscription lists totaled $404,720. The 5% assessment amounted to $20,236 of which $18,174.50 had been paid.30

Besides the appropriation by the federal government and the stock subscriptions, there were other

28Omaha Bee. June 12, 1896.
29South Omaha Tribune. December 28, 1896.
30Omaha Bee. December 17, 1896.
sources from which significant financial assistance was to come. The governments of eight states and one territory \(^{31}\) made appropriations totaling $238,000. In addition, private citizens in several states not officially making appropriations succeeded in raising funds totalling $175,000. Finally, Douglas County, Nebraska, which included Omaha, raised $100,000 through the sale of bonds and used the money to support the building fund as well as other expenses of the Exposition grounds. \(^{32}\)

The debate concerning the appropriation of the Nebraska Legislature indicates that outstate Nebraskans thought Omaha would reap all the benefits from the exposition. On January 13, 1897, a bill which called for an appropriation of $350,000 to aid in holding the Trans-Mississippi Exposition was introduced in the Nebraska Legislature. The appropriation was soon reduced to $100,000, but Representative Charles Wooster of Merrick had further objections. Maintaining that the exposition was purely a local affair, he accused the Omaha bankers of scheming to make money. He also contended

\(^{31}\) Nebraska, Illinois, Iowa, Montana, Georgia, Utah, Ohio, New York, and the Territory of Arizona. See Appendix A.

\(^{32}\) Wakeley, 271.
that the directors, all Omaha men, had refused to adopt a resolution favoring Nebraska laborers. The exposition, Wooster insisted, would damage the economy, would be bad advertisement for the state, and a waste of money for the State of Nebraska. He believed that economic conditions prevailing in the state would not allow for any appropriation for the exposition. He cited high taxes, depreciating property values, and an empty state treasury to support his case. Finally, categorizing the appropriation bill as a "monstrous robbery of the people," he voted against passage.33 Despite Wooster's opposition the Nebraska Legislature did pass the bill calling for a $100,000 appropriation.

The subscription to and assessment of the capital stock of the exposition corporation continued up to, and in some cases went beyond, opening day. The railroads were the object of much attention by the promoters of the subscription drive. Their efforts proved fruitful, for the railroads responded with generous support. Only one railroad, the Rock Island system, subscribed to exposition stock. Others donated rather than subscribed, fearing that they could be held liable

33Nebraska, House Journal. Twenty-Fifth Regular Session, 1897, 632.
if the exposition proved to be a financial failure. Whether gift or subscription, however, the money collected from the railroads added $130,000 to the exposition treasury.  

Assessments were levied on the stock periodically. During 1897 the assessments were made on 60% of all stock. By July 17, 1897, the amount of cash payments on the exposition stock had exceeded $200,000, the amount stipulated in the bill authorizing the Nebraska appropriation. To insure full payment of the pledges, the board of directors in December, 1897, instructed the chairman of the Department of Ways and Means continually to press for collections. He was also authorized to file suit against those refusing to comply. Finally, the board proposed to publish in the local papers the names of all those who subscribed, the amount, what had been paid and what was owed. Most men, the directors reasoned, would avoid such

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34James B. Haynes (ed.), History of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition of 1898 (Omaha, 1910), pp. 296-297. The breakdown of railroad support went as follows: the Burlington Railway Company donated $30,000, the Northwestern $30,000, the Union Pacific $25,000, the Missouri Pacific $15,000, and the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul $10,000; the Rock Island subscribed to $20,000 of exposition stock.

35Omaha Bee, July 17, 1897.

36Omaha Bee, December 11, 1897.
publicity at any cost.

The final assessment of 35% was levied on January 20, 1898. One month later Secretary Wakefield reported that total collections from the stock subscriptions amounted to $318,573. From then on the cash payments came in more slowly. The directory responded by threatening and then carrying out court proceedings. On May 8, 1898, it was announced in the local papers that all subscriptions of fifty dollars or over which remained unpaid had been turned over to Attorney Matthew A. Hall, "who will at once take all necessary steps to compel the payment of full subscriptions." The final report of the general secretary indicates that a grand total of $625,962.70 was pledged. Of that amount $553,415.20 had been paid.

The reorganization and enlargement of the board of directors in December, 1896, was primarily designed to open the way for more complete representation and to broaden the scope of the management. Despite the worthy goal of broad representation of the city's interests, South Omaha was not satisfied with the

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37 *Omaha Bee*. May 8, 1898.


39 List of directors is given in Appendix B.
In reference to the board elections, "South Omaha was snubbed, insulted and robbed by the Omaha brigands, and nothing less." The paper went on to say that any "South Omaha citizen who contributes any further assistance to the enterprise is a natural-born damn fool." Harmony even in the metropolitan area of the exposition city was not easy to attain.

The directors decided to form an executive committee of seven members, each of whom would head a department. The department heads were chosen on December 16, 1896. They were Zachary T. Lindsey (Ways and Means), Freeman P. Kirkendall (Buildings and Grounds), William A. Babcock (Transportation), Edward E. Bruce (Exhibits), Abraham L. Reed (Concessions), Gilbert M. Hitchcock (Promotion), and Edward Rosewater (Publicity). The executive committee remained intact for the duration of the exposition with the exception of Gilbert M. Hitchcock, who resigned in June, 1897, to devote full time to his work with the Omaha World Herald. The Department of Promotion was then consolidated with

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40 South Omaha Tribune, December 3, 1896.

41 Omaha Bee, December 17, 1896.
the Department of Publicity under the direction of Edward Rosewater. The officers of the exposition were also elected. Results indicated that Gurdon W. Wattles was president, Alvin Saunders, vice-president, John A. Wakefield, secretary, and Herman Kountze, treasurer. The exposition officials made their headquarters in the Paxton block until quarters were prepared for them on the exposition grounds.

The executive committee functioned well as a unit until 1898. Then it became apparent that some type of supervision was needed to coordinate the final preparations. Therefore, the executive committee, at the urging of the exposition directors, appointed A.C. Foster as general superintendent "with the express duty of overseeing and pushing all work to energetic completion." The problem had not been solved, however, for Foster became a mere figurehead and was not able to coordinate the various departments effectively. It was finally decided that a general manager should "be placed in charge of and held responsible for the orderly economical and systematic

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42 *Omaha Bee.* July 10, 1897.

43 *Omaha Bee.* February 20, 1898.
conduct of affairs on the exposition grounds and be in full charge thereof." On May 24, 1898, one week before the opening of the exposition, the executive committee elected Major T.S. Clarkson as General Manager.

The women of Omaha joined the organizational process. In January, 1897, a committee of nine members of the women's club was chosen to formulate a plan for a women's department of the exposition. The executive committee approved a plan for a board of twenty-seven women, which was to have charge of all congresses on philosophical and scientific subjects. Omaha, South Omaha, Council Bluffs, and all the congressional districts in Nebraska were to be represented on the Women's Board. Activities of the board in regard to the educational congresses were subject to the review by the Department of Promotion. One of the main concerns of the Women's Board was the Girls' and Boys' Building, which was to be used to display the work of the children in the Trans-Mississippi region. Problems in raising funds for the building led to the founding of The Hatchet, a monthly paper which contained local articles as well as stories written by children.

\[44^{44}\text{Omaha Bee, May 13, 1898.}\]
Besides, their work with the educational exhibits the Women's Board was also called upon to form a Bureau of Entertainment. This bureau was to have control over social functions designed to entertain distinguished guests and to "assist in making the visit of prominent people in Omaha a memorable event."

Two obstacles loomed large in the eyes of the promoters of the exposition. First of all, when the exposition was formed much of the trans-Mississippi region was in the throes of a serious economic depression. The mood of the people was such that financial support would not be readily forthcoming. Therefore, it was imperative that the people and the state legislatures in the region be convinced that the Trans-Mississippi Exposition was an enterprise worthy of investment. Secondly, it was necessary to impress upon the people of the region that the exposition was not merely a local affair.

During 1896 several promotional trips were made to near-by states to familiarize the people with the exposition and to outline its objectives. One such promotional junket was successful in encouraging the

\[45\] Omaha Bee. April 10, 1898.
Iowa state legislature to adopt a resolution approving the exposition.46 A trip to the West drew this comment from the Cheyenne Daily Sun-Leader: "The delegation of Omaha gentlemen who visited Cheyenne today in the interest of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition made the most favorable impression possible."47

Thus, some groundwork had been laid when the Department of Promotion formally began work on December 26, 1896. The department organized and carried out trips to all states and territories in the trans-Mississippi region during the first few months of 1897. Governor Holcomb of Nebraska issued a proclamation to the citizens of Nebraska and to the governors of the trans-Mississippi states inviting active co-operation toward the success of the exposition.48 One delegation visited President Diaz of Mexico, and, according to the local newspaper accounts, Diaz was persuaded that better understanding of his

46Haynes, 270.

47Cheyenne Daily Sun-Leader, March 21, 1896.

country could be gained through the exposition.\textsuperscript{49} Mexico did respond by sending an exhibit to Omaha. Of course, the eastern states were also included in the promotional itinerary. Special effort was made to have Omaha represented at the Tennessee Centennial that opened in Nashville in 1897, for it was hoped that contacts made there would spread the word about the Trans-Mississippi Exposition.

One promotional as well as formal proceeding was carried out in Omaha itself on Arbor Day, 1897. Inaugural ceremonies on that day marked the official beginning of the work of the exposition. The laying of the cornerstone for the Arch of States solidified the determination of the promoters to see the exposition through to the end.\textsuperscript{50}

Illustrated pamphlets and newsletters were scattered wherever it was thought that they would be read. In January, 1898, the Press Bureau reported that it had sent 60,000 newsletters to newspapers and other publications in 1897. In that year it was estimated by the bureau that 4,861,375 words promoting the exposition appeared in newspapers, magazines,

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{49}The Two Republics (Mexico City), February 27, 1897.\\
\textsuperscript{50}Omaha Bee. April 22, 1897.
\end{flushleft}
and periodicals. It boasted that the amount of free advertising was greater than for any previous exposition. Curiously, however, one of the most frequent complaints heard after the exposition opened was that it was practically unknown in most areas in the East.

No exposition would be complete without its commemorative medal. The Trans-Mississippi medal attempted to demonstrate the advances the white man had made in the area formerly controlled by the Indian. One side of the medal showed an American Indian mounted on a pony and in the act of spearing a buffalo. The other side showed a profile of a woman's head, apparently indicating the refined culture of the region now that the white man dominated it!

Commemorative postage stamps issued by the Post Office Department contributed to the publicity for the Trans-Mississippi Exposition. The stamps were in a series of eight, increasing in value from one cent to two dollars. Designs on the stamps, ranging from the discovery of the Mississippi River

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51 Omaha Bee. April 22, 1897.

52 Omaha Bee. December 21, 1897.
by Marquette on the one cent stamp to the Mississippi River Bridge on the two dollar stamp, illustrated the progress of the West from discovery to 1898. Questions were raised as to the propriety of the postage stamps because they seemed to be more of an advertisement than a commemoration. The loudest cries came from stamp collectors who no doubt believed that the government was merely trying to force them to make special purchases.

The withdrawal of Gilbert Hitchcock from the executive committee and the consolidation of the Departments of Publicity and Promotion under Edward Rosewater heightened the spirit of rivalry between their respective newspapers, the World-Herald and the Bee. Rosewater was frequently the subject of controversy, but his handling of the Department of Publicity and Promotion drew special attention from Hitchcock and the World-Herald. On several occasions Rosewater apparently criticized his fellow managers

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53 Omaha Bee. January 12, 1898. Specific stamps, designs, and number issued were as follows: 1¢, discovery of the Mississippi River by Marquette, 100,000; 2¢, a farming scene, 2,000,000; 4¢, a buffalo hunting scene, 5,000,000; 5¢, the Pathfinder-Fremont raising flag on the Rockies, 10,000,000; 8¢, train of emigrants crossing the Plains, 2,000,000; 10¢, an emigrant on the plains, 5,000,000; 50¢, a mining scene; 500,000, $1, cattle in a storm, 50,000; $2, Mississippi River Bridge at St. Louis, 50,000.
for administering their departments in a manner that he thought harmful to the exposition. The World-Herald finally responded by saying that "the interests of the exposition would be greatly advanced if Rosewater would step down and out and yield his place to a man who would do more work for the exposition and heap less slander upon the exposition management."  

There was a mild financial scandal involving Rosewater during the last few months before the opening of the exposition. As head of the Department of Publicity and Promotion, Rosewater, editor of the Omaha Bee, entered into a contract with that paper to publish in a Sunday edition a supplement to promote the exposition. The contract was for a $3200 fee and Mr. Rosewater hoped to sell 200,000 copies of the supplement.  

The Lincoln Journal was quick to point out the inconsistency involved. An editorial indicated that "he will be the only Nebraska Publisher who has been able to get a finger into the till of the great enterprise and he will at one fell swoop pull out of it

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54 *Omaha World-Herald*, November 5, 1897.

55 *Omaha Bee*, March 8, 1898.
nearly as much as his subscription to the exposition. The World-Herald was not long in following with its comment on the matter. An article entitled "A Contract With Himself," explained how Rosewater first had rented an office from himself (i.e., in the Bee Building) for twenty dollars per month, and then had purchased advertising from himself for thirty-two hundred dollars. Rosewater retorted that the expenses involved in preparing and distributing the supplement totalled nearly $3200, and the money he received from sales was to be used toward a stock subscription of $5000.

However insignificant the amount of money involved may seem, the whole affair received wide publicity because both sides had a propaganda machine at their disposal. Rosewater was not removed, however, and continued to be an influential and controversial figure among the exposition officials. In order to prevent the likelihood of similar disputes

56 Lincoln Journal. March 12, 1898.
57 Omaha World Herald. March 31, 1898.
58 Omaha Bee. April 9, 1898.
in the future, the board of directors passed a resolution saying in part that it was "the sense of the board of directors that the executive committee should not enter into any contract or let any concession in which a member of the committee is directly or indirectly interested."  

Selecting a site for an exposition is a touchy subject, and the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition was no exception to this rule. Five different sites were considered, but in the end the exposition was located in a completely different place.

Council Bluffs men most enthused about the exposition were very much interested in an East Omaha location. The businessmen and citizens of that city were concerned with what they could get out of the exposition. Fearing that they would gain little unless the exposition was near the river, they engaged in a series of threats and promises involving their financial support of the exposition. The Council Bluffs Nonpareil was of the opinion that the Iowa delegation in Washington "should be importuned to withhold their sanction and support of the measure

59 Omaha World Herald, April 13, 1898.
now before Congress asking... $250,000, until the matter of the exposition site is definitely determined."60 City officials indicated they would guarantee $25,000 toward the expenses of the enterprise if it was located in East Omaha. The same conditions were applied to the resolution of the Merchants and Managers Association of Council Bluffs which pledged approval of directors showed no anxiety as to the necessity of taking immediate action on the location of the exposition.

South Omaha countered with its own committee in an attempt to secure the location of the exposition at Riverview Park. They too threw out threats of withholding support if they failed to get a site favorable to them. The Tribune commented that "South Omaha can hardly afford to donate much to the exposition fund if the site is located in East Omaha."62 The Southside Improvement Club was enthusiastic in its endeavor to land the exposition for Riverview Park. They formed

60 Council Bluffs Nonpareil. February 25, 1896.
61 Omaha Bee. Tuesday, February 25, 1896.
a committee to seek out the availability of land adjoining the park and made arrangements for pressing the advantages of the site.

One other group was active in the struggle to obtain the location of the exposition in their area. The Northside Improvement Club, imitating their Southside counterpart, did much to promote Miller Park as a favorable location. They secured an option on 400 acres adjoining the park and indicated that Fort Omaha could probably be used if the exposition was located at the park. Then the people in North Omaha formed a North Side Trans-Mississippi Club to boom the advantages of Miller Park. Both the North and South encouraged stock subscriptions, for it was assumed that the location would be decided by a vote of stockholders. 63

The board of directors took no effective action until December 16, 1896. They decided that the selection of the site for the exposition would be made by the board by a majority vote at a meeting called for that purpose. They also authorized the secretary to receive sealed propositions on the location of the exposition.

63 *Omaha Bee*, August 18, 1896.
exposition until Saturday noon, December 26, 1896. The propositions would be read at a meeting of the board of directors on January 9, 1897. All propositions had to specify (1) the number of acres (nothing less than 160 acres was acceptable) and the boundaries thereof, (2) what streets would be used to get to the site, and (3) all other inducements which the site may offer.\footnote{\textit{Omaha World-Herald}. December 17, 1896.}

The bids for location were duly opened on the date scheduled. A committee of three, consisting of Casper E. Yost, Joseph H. Millard, and Robert S. Wilcox, was appointed to receive and review all bids. They were also empowered to employ a non-resident engineer and architect to review locations.

Five bids were taken under consideration. The East Omaha location, lying between Cut-Off and Florence Lakes, offered about 170 acres. The land was level and readily accessible. Of course, this location was highly favored by the people of Council Bluffs. Elmwood Park was mentioned as the second possibility. It offered about 215 acres, with the fair
grounds to the south available also. Many improvements had already been made on the grounds, and its promoters suggested that little preparation would be needed for the exposition. Backers of the Miller Park site said about 500 acres of level and sightly land could be made available for the exposition. Advocates of Riverview Park praised its location and bountiful water supply. It offered over 300 acres relatively close to the center of the city. Finally, a bid promoting a tract of land lying west and northwest of and including Hanscom Park was brought forward. The area consisted of about 200 acres and had as advantages its closeness to the city and the possibilities its elevation and beauty might offer to an imaginative landscape architect.\(^65\)

Casper Yost and Robert Wilcox thereupon went to Chicago to consult with exposition officials there and also to select the architects who might survey the possible exposition sites. H.C. Alexander and A.C. Shrader were chosen as surveying architects. They went immediately to Omaha and began preparation of a report for the directors. They toured the sites and

\(^{65}\textit{Omaha Bee}, January 10, 1897.
consulted with the city engineer about grades, sewer, and water facilities and other engineering data. In a matter of a few days their report, containing recommendations for one site, was finished. 66

It was not until February 7, 1897, that Alexander and Shrader's report was made public. They indicated that their recommendations were based upon an evaluation of four different factors: (1) the topography and general availability of the ground for building purposes; (2) transportation facilities; (3) sewerage and water supply; (4) distance from the postoffice. Based on those considerations, they recommended the Miller Park site. They maintained that Elmwood, Hanscom, and Riverview Parks were just not topographically suited for the exposition. The East Omaha site was dismissed as being monotonously level and low and having potentially serious water and sewerage problems. 67

No matter what the engineers' recommendation would have been, some group was sure to be disappointed. Rosewater attacked the integrity of the engineers and of the committee that brought them to Omaha. As to the

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66 Omaha Bee, January 20, 1897.

67 Omaha World-Herald, February 7, 1897.
report itself, the Bee commented as follows:

It reads like the plea of a retained lawyer, instead of an uncolored statement of facts and figures by an engineer. It goes without saying that it will be so regarded by all persons familiar with the subject. As a guide to the directors the report can carry no weight. It scarcely affords a plausible excuse for those predetermined to follow its advice.\(^\text{68}\)

The board of directors proceeded to vote on the selection of the exposition site. A majority of the full board was needed for any action on the matter. Voting on the site must have reminded some of a political convention. After seventeen ballots, no site had received a majority, but the struggle had come down to those favoring the Miller or Hanscom Park sites. During an over-night adjournment of the board an agreement was apparently worked out. When the board convened again on February 11, 1897, it selected the Miller Park site by a 28 to 22 vote.\(^\text{69}\)

What seemed like a final decision on the location proved to be only temporary. Many thought that the three miles to the site from downtown Omaha cancelled out the advantages the site had. As complaints grew louder, groups became interested in removing the

\(^{68}\)Omaha Bee. February 7, 1897.

\(^{69}\)Omaha Bee. February 11, 1897.
exposition site to the old Fair Grounds, an area closer to the center of town. Agitation became so widespread that the directors agreed to reconsider the matter. After relatively little discussion, the board voted overwhelmingly to change the site of the exposition from Miller Park to the old Fair Grounds.\textsuperscript{70}

The new and now permanent site actually consisted of much more than the old Fair Grounds, a tract of 37 acres lying south and west of Ames Avenue and Sherman Avenue. Besides the fair grounds, the "north tract", consisted of a tract lying immediately to the west and extending to 24th Street, bounded on the north by Ames and on the south by Sprague Street. Lying to the south of the fair grounds was a tract known as "Kountze's Reserve." It covered 40 acres, extending from Sherman Avenue to 24th Street. The "Bluff Tract" referred to the land lying east of Sherman Avenue along the edge of the bluff overlooking the river valley. It was bounded by the Missouri Pacific Railroad on the north and east and extended south to Locust Street.\textsuperscript{71}

\textsuperscript{70}Lincoln Journal. March 18, 1898.

\textsuperscript{71}Omaha Bee, March 18, 1897. Refer to Appendix C for a map of the grounds.
Once the question of location had been settled, the Department of Buildings and Grounds could begin effective work. Most of the land was ready for use, and work could begin at once. The land owned by Mr. Herman Kountze had to be secured, however. It was agreed upon by both parties that Kountze would allow the exposition to use most of the land he held if it were bought from Kountze for $15,000, with the understanding that the tract would later be used as a public park.72

Thomas R. Kimball and C. Howard Walker were chosen by the executive committee to be the architects-in-chief for the exposition. They supervised the overall planning of the buildings and grounds. The main court of the exposition was roughly one-half mile long, rising slightly from Sherman Avenue on the east to 24th Street on the west. Pinkney Street and Pratt Street formed the southern and northern boundaries, respectively. A lagoon, stretching almost from one end of the main court to the other, became a reflecting mirror for the government building at the west end.

South of the lagoon were located the Fine Arts, Liberal Arts, and Mines and Mining Buildings. Balancing these

72 *Omaha World-Herald*, May 29, 1897.
on the north were the Agriculture, Manufacturers and Machinery, and Electricity Buildings. The east end of the main court was a concourse used on various special occasions when people gathered for a speech. Also at the eastern extremity of the main court were two smaller buildings, the Auditorium and the Girls' and Boys' Building, and a viaduct leading to the bluff tract. The Arch of the States and the Administration Arch flanked the main court at Twentieth Street. 73

The southern part of the bluff tract was used for the Horticulture Building and the various state buildings. The Midway was located on the northern section of the bluff tract and also occupied part of the north tract. On the extreme north of the exposition grounds were located the Transportation Building as well as agricultural and live stock displays.

The main court was the architectural highlight of the exposition grounds. Two factors contributed greatly to its beauty. First, all the buildings on the main court, with the exception of the Fine Arts Building, were designed according to definite dimensions and instructions laid down by the architects-in-chief. The dome on the Government Building was

73 See map of grounds, Appendix C.
the only one permitted by Kimball and Walker.
Thus, each building was in harmony with the others. Secondly, there was a special effort to close off
the main court from the rest of the exposition
grounds. This was accomplished by the use of colon­
nades backed by screens of trees between each build­
ing. The lighting effects, designed by Luther Stieringer,
made the main court more striking at night.\(^74\)

Architects of individual buildings were instruct­
ed to use a simple classic or Renaissance style with­
out excess of ornamentation. Each building was to
have a dominant central pavilion and subordinant cor­
er pavilions of a uniform scale. All buildings would
be ivory white, with the roofs a uniform shade of gray
green.

The result of the careful planning was a mag­
nificently arranged main court.

While there was a great variety in con­cepcion and in minor details, the build­
ings were harmonious, not alone in one
factor, but in all the following factors--
style, color, scale, height, and general mass. In no other exposition have in­
structions been so strenuous, style and
height being the only conditions usually im­posed; and in consequence, all other
expositions have suffered from the ex­
ploitation of the eccentricities of in­
dividual architects.\(^75\)

\(^74\)Haynes, 108.

\(^75\)ibid., 109.
Unfortunately, not all was so harmonious within the administrative circles of the Department of Buildings and Grounds. Dion Geraldine, hired as superintendent of construction, became the center of a heated controversy. The first of a series of problems involving Geraldine concerned the laying of railroad tracks on the exposition grounds by the Missouri Pacific when it had no contract to do so. When questioned about the matter, officials for the Missouri Pacific insisted that the building of the tracks "was done at the earnest solicitation of Mr. Kirkendall and Mr. Geraldine before the contracts were signed." 76

Geraldine next became involved with the Transportation Department. Charges were made on both sides as to who was at fault in the delay of signing the railroad contracts. One report indicated that the Transportation Department had refused one contract with the Illinois Central because Geraldine had said they wanted two dollars a car for switching. Investigation into the matter showed that they only wanted one dollar a car, but that Geraldine had raised the price on his own. 77 The citizens of Omaha were no doubt beginning to look askance at the exposition management.

76 Omaha World-Herald, August 14, 1897.

77 Omaha Bee, August 22, 1897.
Charges against Geraldine increased almost daily. At an executive meeting in September, 1897, he was criticized for allowing a frame building housing a planning mill to be constructed so close to the main buildings so as to pose a fire hazard. Further, he had bought over two hundred dollars worth of lumber for a bridge without putting in any requisition for the material. Finally, he had put a man by the name of Tam on the payroll without authorization.\(^78\) Surprisingly, despite the veracity and number of the charges, the exposition officials did nothing about them.

The lack of concern over the strange deals of Geraldine caused the *Western Laborer* to demand some action. It expressed the opinion that the patience of the people of Omaha "with the management of the exposition stamps them as lambs who willingly stand up to be sheared of their wool by Geraldine and his henchmen."\(^79\) The *Laborer* suggested that the best solution for the problem would be to fire Geraldine.

Mere criticism was not enough to stop Geraldine's questionable activities. He entered into a contract

\(^{78}\) *Omaha Bee*. September 11, 1897.

\(^{79}\) *The Western Laborer*. September 13, 1897.
for the laying of sewer pipes without specifying the most fundamental details. He maneuvered a con-
tract for planking the lagoon to two of his friends. The latter measure was even too much for the ex-
cecutive committee. On October 2, 1897, they asked Geraldine to resign. One of the prime reasons for the request was that the lagoon contract was let for $1495 more than reasonable estimates had figured. He was also charged with overstepping his powers in some cases and with being negligent in others. 80

In a meeting the following day, the executive committee decided to rescind its action calling for Geraldine's resignation. Instead an investigating committee was formed to look into the charges against Geraldine. It seemed obvious by now that Geraldine must have had influence with some members of the ex-
cecutive committee. On October 12, 1897, the investi-
gating committee administered a mild rebuke to Geraldine and suggested that he keep in closer touch with the head of his department. 81

The board of directors supported the executive committee in their actions thus far. Rosewater was

80 Omaha Bee. October 2, 1897.
81 Omaha Bee. October 12, 1897.
obviously opposed to Geraldine, and the struggle soon developed into a bitter personality clash. Rosewater, upon hearing of the directors' support for the decision of the executive committee, resigned as head of the Department of Publicity and Promotion. He indicated that he would sever all connections with the exposition "because he did not propose to continue as a member of the executive committee and be compelled to see the pilfering and stealing which was going on all the time and not be able to put a stop to it." It is clear that Rosewater could be quite vindictive even when his own dealings with the exposition were somewhat questionable.

The controversy served to bring the hostility of the two major papers to the front once more. Hitchcock used the World-Herald to cast doubts on Rosewater's motives for bringing charges against Geraldine. Referring to Rosewater, the paper said that "Omaha will not submit to a dictator and that Omaha will not tolerate a traitor." Rosewater replied with increased attacks on Geraldine. He charged

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82 _Omaha Bee_. October 13, 1897.

83 _Omaha World Herald_. October 15, 1897.
Geraldine with forwarding the salary of one employee of the exposition, of maneuvering contracts to the firm of Smith and Eastman, to which Geraldine was indebted for $5565, and with bringing in outside workers. This final charge of the Bee aroused the laboring classes and seemed to cast doubt on the possibilities of a successful bond election in Douglas County. Under the mounting public pressure and probably at the urging of the executive committee, Dion Geraldine resigned as Superintendent of Construction on October 29, 1897. The resignation was accepted by the executive committee and became effective at once. It was later estimated by the Bee that the mistakes made by Geraldine in letting contracts, supervising construction, and in over-all incompetence cost the exposition some $75,000. That estimate was probably an exaggeration, but it does indicate to some extent the proportions of the financial issue involved.

Despite minor labor problems, the buildings were constructed rapidly. The main buildings were not planned to be permanent, so a building material called "staff" was used to cover the outside of the frame structures. Staff was a mixture of plaster of paris,

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84 Omaha Bee, October 19, 1897.
85 Omaha Bee, May 22, 1898.
some kind of hemp fibre, and, usually, a small quantity of cement. Once the mixture was molded in large slabs it could be handled as boards might be.

Organized labor sought to capitalize on the prospects that the construction of the exposition offered. The years preceding the exposition had been especially lean for construction workers. The first victory for the laborers was election of Fred M. Youngs to the board of directors. It was expected that Youngs would be able to provide additional opportunities for union labor. His first effort to do so was a failure. He introduced for the board's consideration a resolution "that all contracts entered into by this board, its officers or agents, for work pertaining to the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition, shall stipulate therein that only union skilled labor shall be employed." 86

The board of directors turned down the resolution and therefore drew upon itself the denunciation of the laborers' publicity organ. The Western Laborer said in reference to the board that "if the city had been raked over in search of tricksters, sharks, and shysters, no more successful effort could have been

86 The Western Laborer. June 26, 1897.
made.....their every move has been marked with crookedness, nepotism, back-scratching and grabbing." The paper went on to explain that it had learned that the promoters had told the Montana Commission that they would be unable to get sufficient labor in Omaha so they had better bring their own to build their state building.

On October 10, 1897, the carpenters and staff workers went out on strike. The unions charged Geraldine with bringing outside labor into Omaha. They also said he had issued reports in the East that there were not enough carpenters, plasterers, and other workers to fill the needs of the exposition. The union also indicated that they believed Geraldine was behind the refusal of several contractors to deal with organized labor. All workers demanded an eight-hour day, with the carpenters insisting on thirty cents per hour. 88

The threat of work stoppage on the exposition buildings moved the exposition management to action. In late October they agreed that a provision for an eight-hour day and pay according to the union scale

87 Ibid.
88 Omaha Bee, October 10, 1897.
would be written into all construction contracts. Let thereafter. One by one the contractors fell into line. By November 23, 1897, the unions reported that six buildings were under union labor. The Machinery-Electricity Building and the Auditorium were the only buildings under the control of the exposition corporation being built by non-union labor.\textsuperscript{89} Thereafter there were no major labor disputes. Some objections were made concerning the use of outside labor on the Nebraska Building and the below average pay for laborers working on the Government Building. However, the work on the buildings proceeded satisfactorily, and by opening day all the major construction had been completed on schedule.

Before the opening day of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition, there were two events of note. One created an uproar on the national scene while the other only caused excitement on the local level. On April 11, 1898, the United States declared war on Spain. Popular enthusiasm over the war reached such proportions that there was some concern on the part of the exposition officials that it would cut deeply into the crowds expected in Omaha during the summer. Exposition plans had moved so far along that

\textsuperscript{89}Omaha Bee. November 23, 1897.
a postponement was out of the question. Railroad officials reassured exposition officials that most of the people who planned to do so would come to the exposition regardless of the war. In fact, many people who planned overseas travel would conceivably turn inland now. On the other hand, the war would dominate the newspapers to such an extent that much free publicity would be lost. Fortunately, the war ended in time for the exposition to capitalize on a "Peace Jubilee Week," which included a series of celebrations that brought enormous crowds to the exposition.

One of the most unusual events connected with the exposition took place little more than a week before opening day. Two women affiliated with the local Salvation Army post became perturbed over a nude statuary decorating the exposition grounds. Lieutenant Dorothy Maurer and Ensign McCormick decided to take action. On the evening of May 23, 1898, they threw a ladder against the plank wall surrounding the exposition grounds and climbed over. Then apparently Miss Maurer, assisted by Miss McCormick, viciously attacked a nude statue with an ax and disfigured

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90 Omaha Bee, April 22, 1898.
They were in the process of doing the same to a second statue when they were detected and put under arrest. Both were charged with malicious destruction of a statue valued at seventy-five dollars. Miss Maurer replied that her act was definitely not malicious, but merely an attempt to remove from sight what she considered to be a menace to morality. Miss McCormick said that the statues were especially disturbing because they were in plain view of the inmates of the Salvation Army rescue house at 2015 Pinkney Street. She hoped that the action they had taken would incite public feeling against such immoral features of the exposition. The daring escapade of the two Salvation Army officers was no doubt an amusing conversation piece as the crowds assembled for the opening day ceremonies.

The executive committee and the board of directors has resolved a number of problems during the period between the organization of the exposition corporation and opening day. None of the problems had caused serious delay or cancellation of the exposition.

91 Omaha Bee, May 24, 1898.
92 Omaha World-Herald, May 26, 1898.
Thus, on the appointed day, the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition revealed its magnificence to the public.
CHAPTER III

THE EXPOSITION IS REALIZED

A wondrous and splendid edifice to house the Trans-Mississippi Exposition sprang out of the wilderness of "Kountze's tract." Like the first view one gets of the sacred temple Angkor Wat, visitors to the exposition were awestruck by the beauty and size of the fair grounds. This feeling of awe which the vision inspired was as much a part of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition as any other world's fair.

Coming at the time that it did, the opening of the exposition aroused more than ordinary excitement. The 1890's had been hard and difficult times throughout the country, but more especially on the Plains. Within the confines of the exposition, surrounded by beauty and splendor, many trans-Mississippians could forget or at least sublimate the grimness of their situation. The fantasy of the newly constructed fair grounds dimmed the seriousness of the present crisis by pointing to the future and its promise. Indeed, the future new era was already at hand.

Parades, speeches, and music highlighted the opening day ceremonies. Orators were flushed with
pride of the things accomplished and starry-eyed in their predictions of future greatness. Despite the depression, the generation living in the latter half of the nineteenth century had reason to be optimistic. Many of those present on opening day had lived through the tragedy of the Civil War, but were then more aware of the nationalism of the Spanish-American War. Fighting side by side in 1898, former Yankees and Confederates gave a reality to a new national unity far more expressive than the feeble Compromise of 1877. A country that could survive a civil war had the potential to become great. Though the immediate realities to those present were the hard times of the 1890's, signs of prosperity were reassuring.

The Republic had survived civil war and economic depression and was ready to move forward toward higher goals. The Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition was symbolic of the progress achieved in one area of the country. But so vast and so rich was that region, that its success was a triumph for the entire country.

The opening-day address of Gurdon W. Wattles, president of the exposition corporation and in charge of promoting the fair, was filled with pride in the past
and hopeful anticipation of the future. He lauded "the pluck and energy and enterprise of the people of the country it represents" for making the Trans-Mississippi Exposition a reality. He traced that progress which had removed from American folklore the stigmatic epithet, the "Great American Desert." Within that region which some would have left to the wind and sun, he was able to point out a wealth that was equal to "that of Spain and Portugal combined, and an internal commerce greater than the foreign commerce of Germany, France and Britain." But his oratorical thrust carried him over past glories and pointed the exposition toward "the advancement of the commercial interests of the West."

But the exposition, to Wattles, was a once and only thing, for he predicted that "this magnificent exposition, illustrating the products of our soil and mines and factories, made possible by the inventions of the last century, will pale into insignificance at the close of the twentieth century." However, the exposition would speed the realization of this vision, for it was in truth "a messenger of promise" and a "harbinger of hope."¹

¹"Address of President Wattles," Haynes, 337-340.
Following the addresses, a dramatic moment occurred which involved President McKinley. In the capital city the President depressed a key opening a telegraph wire symbolizing the start of the exposition machinery. The exposition was now open, and the first message received was from the President, who congratulated "the management upon its magnificent enterprise," and assured "all who participate in this undertaking...of the deep interest which the Government has in its success."\(^2\)

This solicitude and interest on the part of President McKinley was important for the success of the exposition, but equally important would be the support of the states in the region and the exhibits they would send. Visitors to the fair would be attracted only if they took interest and were induced to make future investments in the area. The exposition management knew this, and had sent from Omaha a number of promotional excursions to various parts of the country.

These efforts were well rewarded. Of the forty-five states in the Union in 1898, twenty-eight took

\(^2\)"Message From the President of the United States," Haynes, 65.
part in the exposition. All nineteen states and the three territories west of the Mississippi River participated. Nine states constructed buildings designed to cater to people from these particular states. Some of these buildings had special and private exhibits.

Participating states placed exhibits in the various buildings of the main court of the exposition. Products that would display the advantages of a particular state were used in the hopes of encouraging further investment or settlement. Thus, there were on display the minerals as well as the fruits, grains, and other agricultural produce. Every state tried to demonstrate that it had wealth and natural resources to an extent that the outsider might not have realized.

The exhibit of California caused a ripple of concern among teetotalers, for that state was rumored to be planning to exhibit a giant wine vat depicting one of its major industries. No one was too concerned until the grapevine learned that not only would the vat be filled, but visitors would be encouraged to taste

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³Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Kansas, Wisconsin, Montana, New York, and Georgia had buildings.

⁴Haynes, 157.
and savor its contents. This was too much. The offices of the exposition management were inundated with protests.

The *Omaha Bee* reported that petitions had been circulated by all of the temperance organizations of the country, protesting against this wholesale destruction of the young men and women of the country and petitioning the exposition management to exclude this awful exhibition before it had wrecked thousands of happy homes.⁵

The incident today is remembered only as an episode in the temperance movement, for the vat had no wine.

Council Bluffs and Pottawattamie County, lying across the Missouri River from Omaha, decided to make an exhibit independent of the state of Iowa. The Council Bluffs Exposition Association was formed in August, 1897, and decided to house the county's exhibits in a large wigwam, symbolic of the derivation of the city's name. Funds for the construction of the wigwam were raised by popular subscriptions and donations. The completed wigwam rose to a height of eighty-three feet and was topped by a thirty-foot flag-staff. It was one hundred and eighty feet in circumference and contained four stories. A stairway at the center

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⁵*Omaha Bee*. February 11, 1898.
enabled the visitor to proceed from the exhibits on the first two floors to the waiting rooms on the third and fourth floors. The realization of this exhibit was a tribute to the drive and energy of the people of Pottawattamie County.

Douglas County, Nebraska, being "host county," was generous in its support of the exposition. As mentioned earlier, $100,000 was raised by the county through the sale of exposition bonds. The county used most of this money to aid the building fund of the exposition. The remainder was used to defray the expenses incurred by the county exhibit, which was a very creditable display of agricultural products.

An exhibit described by one source to be "unquestionably the best on the grounds" was housed in the U.S. Government Building. The structure itself was probably the most impressive on the grounds and its location at the western end of the main court enhanced its magnificence. The exhibit was a carefully selected collection of material illustrating various aspects of governmental operations. Branches of

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6 Haynes, 167.

the government represented were the Departments of State, Treasury, War, Navy, Postoffice, Interior, Justice, and Agriculture. In addition, the Smithsonian Institution and the United States Fish Commission sent exhibits to be displayed in this building.  

The Treasury Department's coin press display attracted much attention. Though used only for stamping out exposition medals, many visitors relished the thought of having their own coin press after observing its practical workings.

The successful completion of the war with Spain enabled many relics of that conflict to be put on display before the exposition ended. There were also practical demonstrations of new military techniques, though the most sensational one, the use of balloons, was called off because of unfavorable weather conditions.

A practical and well-attended demonstration was a life-saving exhibition carried out in the lagoon of the main court. Daily demonstrations were given "of

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the manner in which rescues of drowning men were effected in cases of shipwreck.\(^9\) Other exhibits included the inner working of the post office and the weather bureau. Since people took these services for granted, the demonstrations of how they actually worked was an educative experience for visitors.

The information disseminated by the government exhibit was immense as well as important. Concerning the educational value of the fair, one writer noted that

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\text{it is worth all the money it has cost the United States, for among the daily throng of visitors the most superficial mind must carry away some impressions of the meaning of the term 'The Government' that will make the man a better citizen.}\(^10\)
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Though conceived as an afterthought and opened only after two months had elapsed, the Indian Congress proved to be "the most unusual feature of an exposition interesting for many other reasons."\(^11\) During its last three months, the Indian Congress was truly a unique feature of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition.

\[^9\text{Haynes, 154.}\]

\[^{10}\text{"The Government Exhibit," Scientific American, September 10, 1898, p. 169.}\]

\[^{11}\text{"Glimpses of Indian Life at the Omaha Exposition," Review of Reviews, October, 1898, p. 443.}\]
The object of the Indian Congress was to represent the different Indian tribes and their primitive modes of living; to reproduce their old dances and games; show their manner of dress, illustrate their superstitions, and to recall, as far as possible, their almost forgotten traditions.  

The holding of this congress in Omaha meant that the Indian was no longer considered a mere savage.

Since government support was necessary in order to carry out any such enterprise, on December 3, 1897, Senator Allen introduced a bill asking for $100,000 for an Indian exhibit. With the appropriation cut to $45,000, Senator Allen's bill passed the Senate on January 6, 1898. The House, however, delayed action on the Indian bill.

Meanwhile, there were indications that the realization of the Indian Congress was assured. On April 4, 1898, before any bill had been passed in the House, Indian Commissioner W. A. Jones sent a letter to each Indian agent in the trans-Mississippi region. He instructed the agents to begin selecting representatives for the Indian Congress. The Indians selected had to

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13 Omaha Bee, December 3, 1897.
be full bloods "of good morals and habits.... and most important of all, they must be strictly temperate." Indian agents were also instructed to select older men and chiefs if possible, men "who would typically represent the old-time Indian, subdued, it is true, but otherwise uninfluenced by the government system of civilization." 

It was finally decided in the House of Representatives to insert a provision appropriating funds for the Indian Congress in the regular Indian Appropriation Bill. A House and Senate conference recommended $40,000 for the Indian Congress, with the details to be worked out by the Secretary of the Interior. In late June, 1898, the Indian Appropriation Bill was reported and adopted by both houses of Congress. On June 30, 1898, President McKinley signed the bill appropriating $40,000 for the proposed Indian Congress.

Since the selection of representative Indians had begun before the passage of the Congressional

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14 Omaha Bee, April 4, 1898.

15 "Indian Congress." Scientific American, October 15, 1898, p. 248.

16 U.S., Congressional Record, 55th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1898, XXXI, Part 7, 6550.
appropriation, the process of assembling the Indians in Omaha could be completed rather quickly. The camp grounds for the Indians were to consist of about four acres located west of the Transportation Building on the north tract. A high board fence was hastily erected around the lot where the Indians were to camp. There was no charge for admission to the camp grounds, "the purpose of the fence being to keep the Indians inside and prevent them from leaving the grounds without permission."  

Captain W.A. Mercer, of the Eighth United States Infantry and acting agent of the Omaha and Winnebago agency in Nebraska, and J.R. Wise, a clerk in the office of the commissioner of Indian affairs, were placed in charge of the installation of the Indian encampment at the exposition grounds.  

On August 4, 1898, there were on the grounds about 450 Indians, representing some twenty-three different tribes. On that day the Indian Congress was declared to be officially open.

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17 *Omaha Bee*. July 30, 1898.

18 Wakeley, 278.

19 *Omaha Bee*. August 5, 1898. Tribes gathered at the Indian Congress were: Bad River and Sac du Flambeau Chippewas, Rosebud, Lower Brule, Cheyenne, Sisseton, Flandreau, Standing Rock and Crow Creek Sioux, Sacs, Foxes, Assinicoines, Omahas, Winnebagoes, Blackfeet, Arapahoes, Jicarilla Apaches, Nes Perces, Commanches, Wichitas, Bannocks, Pueblos, Osages, Iroquois, and Poncas.
The encampment was no doubt an educator to the white visitors to the exposition. Some noticed the tremendous change from the former times to the present. One writer described the scene in this manner:

The scene, particularly at night, is intensely picturesque. Small cooking fires scattered around dimly light up the strange picture, throwing a red glow upon the decorated teepees, while across the trails prance the stalwart braves lavishly decked out with blankets. It is a curious and interesting fact that less than half a century ago the same docile Omaha Indians who peacefully doze by the camp fire within the Exposition gates were waging the war of the tomahawk and arrow on these very grounds, which is a gratifying proof of the triumphal march of civilization.  

Although the West had much to be proud of, and justly so, at the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition, the management of Indian policy was hardly a feather in the bonnet of Federal achievement.

The most interesting feature of the Indian Congress was the performance of sham battles. Going through the motions much as is done on present-day television or in the movies, the Indians would lose the battle or be portrayed as savages. The latter was something of a lapse from its idealistic purpose, and

many criticized the Indian Congress for failing to indicate that any Indians were educated or even civil- 
ized. The only possible explanation is that the managers gave in to emotional factors that would not allow the winning side to be shown in a bad light.

The permanent value of the Indian Congress was that it was the last opportunity for many to see the Indian in his primitive glory and to become acquainted with the tribal divisions under correct conditions of dwelling, costume, industry, and ceremonial. In this respect it was more genuine than the diversions of the Midway. Officials of the Indian Bureau and the ethnologists of the Smithsonian Institution succeeded by the high tone of their exhibits to mitigate the opprobrium leveled at the Congress because of the sham battles. At least one of the old warriors gathered at Omaha, the Apache chief Geronimo, demonstrated that he had learned something from the white man. He made it a point to sell his autograph or his picture or both for fifty cents to one dollar each.

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23Omaha Bee. October 27, 1898.
The international aspect of the exposition was less extensive than had been anticipated. Forty-two letters, addressed to the American ministers in foreign countries and asking them to invite the respective countries to the exposition, were sent out by the Department of State. Only Mexico made any official response and placed an exhibit at the exposition. By taking part in the exposition, the Mexican Government hoped "to advance the social, commercial and industrial relations which should exist between two neighboring nations, each the complement of the other." France and Italy were represented by private exhibitors. Other countries represented in some token manner were Russia, Switzerland, Denmark, Austria, England, Germany, Canada and China.

Not all of the exhibits at the exposition were aimed at encouraging investment or improving trade relations. There was a need for some type of cultural activity at the exposition, and the management provided for a series of band concerts as well as a creditable display of art work.

Willard Kimball, then director of the School of Music at the University of Nebraska, was appointed

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24 Mexican Financier, March 13, 1897.
musical director of the exposition. It was his duty to plan concerts and to secure the performers for them. The United States' Marine Band gave a series of concerts, and various other bands performed on other occasions. There are indications that there was a noticeable lack of attendance for the first few concerts given at the exposition. The Musical Critic of Chicago suggested that the lack of attendance may have been due to the incompetent management of the Department of Music. It objected to a Miss Julia Officer being given a monetary commission to sign singers and musicians. The critique concluded by saying that it "seems to me that a great deal more attention is paid to the opportunities offered of making money for Miss Officer, than to the engagement of the first class talent Omaha's people should hear." Despite these limitations, the Bee was probably closer to the truth in its report that "the people have learned more about what an overture is during the last six months than they ever knew before."

The Art Department aimed "to form a collection

25 Omaha Bee. June 3, 1898
26 Musical Critic (Chicago), September, 1898, p. 7.
27 Omaha Bee, November 6, 1898, Vol. 7, 176.
of pictures which might show the various phases of art expression by characteristic and meritorious works of the leading painters of various schools." The art collection was to be interesting, entertaining, and educational. Samples of Realist, Naturalist, and Impressionist styles of paintings were represented through the works of Monet, Renoir, Titian, and other famous artists. Yet crowds did not seem enthused about the art exhibit, no matter how creditable it might have been. One observer noted that "exposition crowds are not seriously disposed. They are out for a good time and they don't want education."29

Those seeking pleasure rather than education headed for the Midway. The amusement section of any exposition offers a diversion from the regular run of exhibits. Exposition managers have always realized that the Midway is a steady source of income. At the Trans-Mississippi Exposition nearly 20% of the revenue taken in by the concessions went into the exposition fund.

The Midway at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition


29 Omaha Bee. September 25, 1898.
was divided into two sections. One section was located on the Bluff Tract and extended northward from the Grand Plaza to the northernmost viaduct spanning Sherman Avenue. West of this viaduct lay the section of the Midway north of and parallel to the main court.

The concessions on the Midway were numerous and varied. There were Wild West shows, animal shows and several representations of foreign cultures. There were the rides which are always associated with a carnival atmosphere. Much use was made of optical illusions and mirrors, and there were attempts to depict scenes from the wars fought by the United States. The other Midway, provided people with ample opportunities to spend their money for seemingly refreshing pleasure.

The official rule for the Midway states that "it was not permitted to descend to the low plane of questionable attractions, and because of this rule it maintained unusual popularity to the end." However, advance publicity did speak of "questionable attractions" in order to arouse enthusiasm. More than three months before the exposition opened the Omaha Bee reported

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30See Appendix C.

31Haynes, 261.
that a group of dancing girls in the "Streets of Cairo," including "Little Egypt" of the Chicago World's Fair fame, "will doubtless possess attractions for people of an investigating turn of mind."\textsuperscript{32} The dancing girls attracted so much attention that Abraham L. Reed, head of the Concessions Department eventually took action to cancel the concession of the "Streets of Cairo." The manager of the "Streets of Cairo" replied by obtaining a restraining order to insure the execution of the contract he had signed. Resolution of the problem enabled the dancing girls to perform, but forbade them to demonstrate the "muscle dance" that had caused much of the controversy.\textsuperscript{33}

A Chinese Village on the Midway became a problem for the exposition management. Shortly after the exposition opened, Wah Lee, a laundryman from Lincoln, brought habeas corpus proceedings against the proprietors of the Chinese Village. He charged that some forty or fifty Chinese maidens, who had supposedly been brought to Omaha to portray Chinese life, were in fact secured for immoral purposes. Wah Lee maintained that the women had been confined in a building at 13th and

\textsuperscript{32}Omaha Bee. February 21, 1898.

\textsuperscript{33}Omaha World-Herald. June 11, 1898.
Chicago Streets and were being sold for $1500 each. Three women, Lun Kim, Lun Yak, and Lun Ten, were detained by court order pending further investigation into the matter.  

Vigorous denials of any wrongdoing were made by government officials and by proprietors of the Chinese Village. Wah Lee was unable to prove the allegations he had made, and the Lun sisters were released from custody. It was decided by the United States District Court that the state court had no jurisdiction in the case anyway, since it involved persons under the control and jurisdiction of United States Government officials. The national government's immigration policy barring the Chinese stipulated that any Chinese workers coming into the country could only come for a specific reason and for a specified time. The question why the Chinese women were brought to Omaha was never really decided. It is difficult to determine what Wah Lee hoped to gain by bringing charges resting on flimsy evidence. As it eventuated the opposition was too formidable, and the defense collapsed completely when

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34 *Omaha Bee.* June 12, 1898.
35 *Omaha Bee.* June 18, 1898.
the Lun sisters themselves denied everything that Wah Lee charged.

The charge that some people were using the exposition for purposes of evading United States immigration laws cropped up again as the exposition neared its close. On October 25, 1898, the *Omaha Bee* reported that Chinese brought to Omaha by the Wong Ching Foo Company had disappeared and had no intention of returning to China at the close of the exposition. The paper cited the testimony of one Wan Loy, a former employee of the company, to the effect that a conspiracy had been carried out. Of the 238 Chinamen who had been allowed to come into the country for the exposition, all disappeared when it was time to return to China. Wan Loy said that the escapees had paid for the right to come to the United States and had also paid for their escape. One result from these deals was a large profit for the Wong Ching Foo Company.  

Two of the concessions on the Midway, the "Streets of All Nations" and the "Streets of Cairo," became involved with the exposition management in a series of confusing court procedures. The issue under discussion concerned the right to use camels and donkeys in
a display of Egyptian life. Both concessionaires claimed they had exclusive rights. Matters became more complicated when Judge Scott implied that certain exposition officials were interested in removing the "Streets of Cairo" because they owned stock in the "Streets of All Nations." Scott was never able to prove his statement and other district court judges disagreed with him. The injunctions and counter-injunctions involving the exposition management was not good publicity and proved embarrassing to the exposition officials involved. Final action on this controversy occurred when the "Streets of Cairo" sued the exposition for $50,000. The claim said that the exposition had violated their contract by giving the "Streets of All Nations" similar rights on an oriental show.

Observations on the dispute between the "Streets of Cairo" and the "Streets of All Nations" indicate that exposition officials, and especially Abraham L. Reed, were careless in allowing two concessions so similar to appear on the same Midway. It also seems clear that Judge Scott went out of his way to allege

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37*Omaha Bee*, June 22, 1898.
that there was some conspiracy involved. Fortunately for the exposition officials, the matter was settled without any great financial loss. These court proceedings had little effect on attendance. Most of the visitors were undoubtedly more interested with what was on display than with the legal tie-up over the right to make the display.

It was imperative that the exposition draw as many people as possible. Since the avowed aims of the exposition were to publicize the West and to encourage investment, the more people in attendance the greater the chance to succeed. The exhibits and the Midway were the main drawing cards for the exposition, but to secure maximum possible attendance, a vigorous promotional campaign was carried on during the exposition. The exposition management sought to obtain special transportation rates and to offer a reasonably low admission price.

The Department of Publicity and Promotion, under the direction of Edward Rosewater, was much criticized before the exposition opened. But in truth the department had been successful in achieving its first

goal, namely, to present a broad representation of exhibits from the trans-Mississippi states. With the exposition under way, the department concentrated its efforts on encouraging people to attend. Once more there was criticism, but Rosewater must again be commended for attaining his objective.

Shortly after the opening of the exposition complaints were registered about the lack of advertising the exposition was receiving. At a board of directors' meeting in early June, 1898, Herman Kountze stated that he had been informed by people in other states that the exposition was not well publicized. John L. Webster remarked that he had been told by at least twenty people that there was a noticeable lack of publicity outside the immediate area. Webster also noted that many visitors to the exposition were amazed at its size, since they had been uninformed as to its extent. Rosewater defended his activities by saying that he had difficulty in obtaining cooperation from the country editors in regard to publicity. He also pointed out that the war had monopolized the news in most papers throughout the country.39

39Omaha World-Herald, June 11, 1898.
As the exposition moved into its second month there seemed to be more evidence that people in the East were not informed about the fair. The *World-Herald* expressed the opinion that the material sent out by the publicity department was stereotyped, heavy, uninteresting, and "filled with stuff about other things than the Exposition."\(^{40}\) An example was an article in *Leslie's Weekly* which gave more information on Rosewater than on the exposition.\(^{41}\) The *World-Herald* then suggested that perhaps Rosewater was using the Department of Publicity and Promotion to boom himself for Postmaster General in 1900.\(^{42}\)

By August the situation was serious, and directors Kountze, Webster, and Murphy called an executive meeting to explore the question of inadequate advertising. This committee sent two men to the East to take up the matter personally with the newspapers and to seek advertising space in them.\(^{43}\) Rosewater's only defense was to insist that the department was doing its best and unless costs of traveling were reduced,

\(^{40}\) *Omaha World-Herald*. July 12, 1898.


\(^{42}\) *Omaha World-Herald*. August 20, 1898.

\(^{43}\) *Omaha World-Herald*. August 14, 1898.
easterners could hardly be expected to come in large numbers.

The end of the war proved a boon to the exposition, for some front-page stories could now tell of the fair, a form of free advertising impossible during the conflict. As though to confirm Rosewater's thesis, weekly attendance began to increase. Nor did he have any compunction in claiming credit for this, since the criticism had dimmed his prestige. Happily, attendance was so high the last two months that complaints practically ceased.

Criticism of the Department of Transportation for its failure to obtain special rates was only slightly less vociferous than that aimed at the Department of Publicity and Promotion. The Department of Transportation, headed by William N. Babcock, had been fairly successful in securing favorable rates for the transporting of exhibits to the exposition. Many railroad and steamship lines agreed to charge the full rate on goods shipped to the exposition, but return transportation would be provided free if no change in ownership had occurred in the meantime.

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44 Omaha Bee. September 9, 1898.

45 Omaha Bee. October 2, 1898.
Reduction in passenger rates was not as easily achieved. The department could not get the railroads to make any significant reduction in their fares. There was some doubt cast upon the sincerity of the Department of Transportation in its pursuit of lower rates, but most of the criticism was directed at the railroads themselves. The World-Herald took up the struggle in earnest. It reported that delegates to the National League of Local Building and Loan Associations were "unanimous" in their opinion that railroad rates to the exposition from the East were prohibitory. The paper called the rates outrageous and gave an example of how a small fishing resort in Missouri was getting better rates than the exposition. The Bee also charged the railroads with frustrating the objectives of the exposition by not providing low enough rates to encourage visitors to come to Omaha.

Attacking the railroads could be hazardous in Omaha. Railroad interests dominated Omaha in the early years of the city's growth. George R. Leighton suggests that the Union Pacific and other railroads set the pattern for almost all economic and social thought

48Omaha Bee. August 2, 1898.
in the city. This power put them above ordinary pressure and had led them to believe that they could carry out business regardless of the needs of the community.

No matter what was motivating the railroads, by August, 1898, Gilbert Hitchcock decided to test their power. He demanded action because Omaha was "big enough to make trouble for the railroads that refuse to be decent in their treatment of this city." One way was to demand their compliance with all safety regulations. For example, Hitchcock noted, by a strict interpretation of regulations the railroads could be forced to construct steel viaducts where needed, supply a flagman at every grade crossing, and to put in an electric light at every street crossing. He then indicated that such pressure and the expense involved would not be forthcoming in lieu of special passenger rates to and from the Omaha Exposition.

Whether due to such a power play or not, the railroads did make some concessions to accommodate the exposition. During the last two months of the fair


50 Omaha World-Herald, August 17, 1898.

51 Ibid.
various railroads granted low excursion rates, sometimes less than half the former fare, which enabled numerous people who otherwise could not have done so to see the fair.\textsuperscript{52} As a somewhat ironic twist, the last week of the exposition was designated Railroad Week.

Regular admission charges at the exposition grounds were fifty cents for adults and twenty-five cents for children five to twelve years old. These rates remained fairly consistent with the exception of experiments with the twenty-five cent rate for adults on Sundays and evenings. When the admission charges were lowered attendance increased, but the total revenue usually declined. Thus, there was no attempt to lower the rates permanently.\textsuperscript{53} When it is realized that the laborer was fighting for $1.50 per day wages, the charge for admission to the grounds caused many to wait for a special rate or at least to attend not more than once.

Sunday opening presented a problem because, while it was the only day on which many would be able to attend, it is.

\textsuperscript{52}Baynes, 277. An example of what could be done shows that the rate between Omaha and St. Joseph, Missouri, was cut from $3.95 one-way to $1.75 round-trip.

\textsuperscript{53}Omaha Bee. July 24, 1898.
it was also necessary not to interfere with regular religious services. The board of directors foresaw difficulties and moved to head them off. Before the exposition opened they passed a resolution that

the exposition grounds and buildings be kept open on Sundays from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. and conducted in the same manner as on week days, except that the sale of liquors be not permitted; that concerts be given and that religious services be held in the Auditorium on Sunday afternoons. 54

The hassles surrounding the publicity and the transportation departments would lead one to conclude that attendance was minimal. On the contrary, more people came than had been anticipated. A pre-exposition analysis indicated that an attendance of 2,000,000 people would be needed for a successful operation. The final report tallied 2,613,508 people, who paid $801,515.47 just to be admitted to the fair grounds. 55

Free passes were as much a problem at Omaha as they had been at every world's fair. As director of publicity and promotion, Mr. Rosewater controlled the issuance of free passes. He had adopted the policy of not issuing passes to editors of rural papers. These

54 Omaha Bee. May 26, 1898.

editors and other critics of the publicity department brought pressure on the board to give more consideration to the rural press as a means of carrying publicity. The board responded on June 25, 1898, by ordering the Bureau of Admissions to give season passes to each editor of a weekly newspaper in Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, South Dakota, Colorado, and Wyoming.56

Attendance reports for July indicated that the pass gates were admitting nearly as many people to the exposition grounds as were the pay gates.57 Free passes were customarily given to officers and employees of the exposition, exhibitors, concessionaires, and all people who have worked on the grounds. Information from the Bureau of Admissions disclosed that there were over 7000 passes in effect during July.58 However, many more were probably in circulation, since one exposition officer seemed willing to provide a bountiful supply. Correspondence from Freeman P. Kirkendall to W.H. Dearing, an official of the Nebraska Exposition Commission, read as follows:

56Omaha World-Herald. June 25, 1898.

57Report of the General Secretary. 9. July admissions were 331,684; 144,030 of these were listed as free, while 187,654 were paid.

58Omaha World-Herald. August 2, 1898.
In accordance with your request, I enclose you here with a number of passes which I am pleased to furnish. When these run out, call again. In filling these passes out, if there are more than one in the party, you can make it read 'Mr. ....... and one' or two as the case may be, thus making the passes go farther.  

The whole controversy came to a head with the creation of the position of Pass Inspector and the formation of a committee to inspect the possibilities of a fraud. The investigation concluded that there had been no wholesale frauds, but the issuance of passes to workmen and press had been abused. The action of the committee made passes harder to obtain and probably made officials less generous in dispensing them.

Professional gimmicks helped increase attendance as well as to flatter various individuals and groups. A special day, for example, would be designated for one state. On that day representatives from the state would gather on the exposition grounds and hear a speaker extol the contributions these people had made in the progress of the trans-Mississippi West. Larger

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59 Letter from Freeman P. Kirkendall to W. H. Dearing, January 21, 1898.

60 Omaha World-Herald. August 10, 1898.
cities in the region also had their "day," and special programs were set up to bring as many representatives as possible to the fair. Such special days added a great variety to the routine of the exposition. People from all parts of the land felt a personal interest in the exposition through the recognition accorded their state or city. 61

One of the most interesting of these experiments was the celebration of New York Day, October 8, 1898. It was a vivid expression of the connection of the trans-Mississippi region with the whole country. Speeches celebrating New York day stressed sectional harmony, following the lead of Gurdon W. Wattles, who, in his welcoming address, stated

> with none are the interests and destiny of the West more closely allied than with the representatives of the great State of New York here today....That our relations, both business and social, may be increased by this friendly visit, is my earnest wish. 62

Chauncey M. Depew, Chairman of the Executive Board of the New York Central Railroad, represented the state of New York on the speakers' platform. He

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61 Haynes, 333.
62 Ibid., 449.
underscored the theme of the day by citing the exposition as bringing "together in better understanding of each other the different sections of our own country." Thus united, he saw the nation moving toward "the development of the whole country and the prosperity and happiness of the whole people." With due regard for rhetorical excess, the exposition had in fact brought together scattered peoples and sections in a spirit of harmony. Though intangible, it was one of the real results of the effort.

The Spanish-American War was officially ended on August 12, 1898. It was an auspicious time as far as the Omaha Exposition was concerned, and many programs were planned to celebrate the end of the war. The highlight was "Peace Jubilee Week," October 10 to 15, 1898. Monday of that week was to be Mayors' Day, followed by Governors' Day, President's Day, Army and Navy Day, Civil Government Day, and finally, on Saturday, a children's jubilee capped the program.

But the real highlight of Jubilee Week and, indeed, of the entire exposition was the visit of the

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63 Ibid., 452.
64 Ibid.
65 Omaha World-Herald. October 3, 1898.
President of the United States. With the war ended, a committee, consisting of Senator John M. Thurston, Congressman David H. Mercer, General John C. Cowin, John L. Webster, and John C. Wharton was named by Wattles to invite President McKinley to the exposition during the Jubilee Week. To everyone's delight in early September McKinley consented to come to Omaha October 12. 66

The President arrived in Omaha on the evening of October 11, 1898, accompanied by several members of his cabinet, including Lyman G. Gage, Secretary of Treasury, Cornelius N. Bliss, Secretary of Interior, and James Wilson, Secretary of Agriculture. The presidential party was greeted by crowds so massive that the Bee estimated some 10,000 people had to walk the streets that night, unable to find sleeping accommodations. The use of the Court House, police headquarters, and the various depots as makeshift rooming houses was insufficient for the needs of the crowd. 67

The next day added thousands of people, crushed into the city to visit the fair and see the President.

66 *Omaha Bee*. September 6, 1898.

67 *Omaha Bee*. October 12, 1898.
"Street cars, railway trains, carriages and every other means of conveyance were taxed to the utmost to carry the crowds to the exposition grounds. The total admissions for the day were 98,845."

In his address, McKinley extolled the prosperity, progress, and patriotism of the country. He congratulated the people of the trans-Mississippi region on the evidences of their prosperity furnished by this great Exposition. If testimony were needed to establish the fact that their pluck has not deserted them and that prosperity is again with them it is found here. The picture dispells all doubt.

He pointed out that the exposition gave an illustration of the progress the country had made. After praising the patriotism displayed in defeating Spain, he called upon the people to seek after and achieve high ideals:

Right action follows right purpose. We may not at all times be able to divine the future, the way may not always seem clear; but if our aims are high and unselfish, somehow and in some way the right end will be reached. The genius of the nation, its freedom, its wisdom, its humanity, its courage, its justice, favored by Divine Providence, will make it

68 Haynes, 89.

69 "Address of President William McKinley," Haynes, 464.
equal to every task, and the master of every emergency. 70

After his address, McKinley toured the exposition grounds. His visit to the Indian Congress was the first opportunity a President of the United States had to meet so many Indians representing so many tribes. After the tour, McKinley was honored at dinner. He then returned to the Omaha Club, where he stayed during his visit, and departed the city the following day, October 13.

Final reports indicate the week was a tremendous success and drew 313,307 people to the exposition. Indeed, the week was so successful that some feared that the remaining two weeks of the exposition would be anticlimactic. But such was not the case.

Before the exposition closed there was some pressure for a continuation of the fair in 1899. On September 25, 1898, the World-Herald declared the Exposition of 1898 a great success and expressed the opinion "that the exposition management should begin to seriously consider the advisability of opening the exposition in 1899." 71 The paper reported that states

70 Ibid., 467-468.
71 Omaha World-Herald. September 25, 1898.
which failed to participate would be anxious to take part the following year; thus making the exposition greater than ever.

As usual, the Bee stood in opposition to the World-Herald on the question of extending the Trans-Mississippi Exposition into 1899. The Bee, in a simple way, refuted the arguments of those advocating an extension. The editorial merely pointed out what would be necessary to continue the exposition.

Legislation would be needed to retain the government exhibits and buildings. State aid would have to come from all those represented in 1898 as well as from those who might want to participate for the first time in 1899. Subsidies from the city and county would be necessary for the maintenance and reconstruction of grounds and buildings. In addition, new ground leases, insurance, and concession contracts would have to be procured. Realistically, it was not worthwhile even to consider the proposition.

The management apparently agreed with the Bee, or at least with its editor, Edward Rosewater, for it definitely decided to close the gates on the exposition at the appointed time, midnight October 31, 1898.

\[\text{Omaha Bee. September 30, 1898.}\]
It was also decided that the last day would be known as Omaha Day in honor of the host city. Mayor Frank E. Moores declared October 31 to be a holiday. He asked all railroad offices, shops, factories, banks, wholesale and retail stores, city and county offices, and schools to close for the day.

The effort to secure a large crowd on the last day of the exposition had gratifying results. Some 61,102 people gathered to witness the closing ceremonies. Addresses were given by Mayor Moores, Zachary Lindsey, Edward Rosewater, and Gurdon W. Wattles. Moores outlined the benefits the city received from the exposition. Lindsey and Rosewater seemed to be bragging about themselves by emphasizing the brilliance of the exposition management. Wattles traced the background of the exposition and thanked all who had helped in making it a success. He remarked that through the cooperation of the private citizens of the community, those who participated from other states, the board of directors, "and by the efficient services of the managers of the departments a grand result has been achieved, which will stand out in the history of the

73 Omaha Bee. October 23, 1898.
West as the crowning feature in its fifty years of growth and development. Within a few hours after the final speech the lights went out, the gates were closed, and the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition became history.

74 "Address by President Wattles," Haynes, 487.
CHAPTER IV

THE GENERAL REPORT: A MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Evaluating the success of an exposition merely in terms of financial returns would be injudicious. The immediate goal of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition was to exhibit the products, industries, and capabilities of the states and territories west of the Mississippi River and ultimately encourage the commercial interests of that region. Ideally, any profit realized became an added benefit. The exposition, too, it was hoped, would be a respite and hope for the people of the area still in the throes of depression. Human thought, aspirations, and activity had to be encouraged, and the exposition seemed an excellent means.

But one cannot ignore financial reports, which afford a quantitative measure of success. Financial success is a compound of many variables and uncertainties. The weather, for example, is a vital factor affecting attendance. Poor weather means poor attendance, which, in turn, spells financial disaster. Fortunately, the elements of weather graciously
conspired to produce excellent conditions for holding the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition.

Expositions are made, not born. Management is an important factor for success. In this respect the stockholders of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition were fortunate. Activities of the various departments of the exposition are summarized in a report made by the General Secretary on June 16, 1899. Statistical tables are used to indicate the extent of the exposition. An analysis of these statistics provides another measure of the success of the fair.¹

As previously seen, the management had marked success in securing financial support for the exposition. The stock subscriptions, government appropriations, and donations practically assured sufficient economic backing. However, a month before opening day a mild panic ensued when some departments clamored for more funds to carry on their operations. The directors responded on May 13, 1898, and voted authority for the issue of $200,000 negotiable bonds, secured be a mortgage upon 50 per cent of the gate receipts after June 1st, and it was believed that the clearing

¹Certain statistical reports are in Appendix D.
house banks of the city would subscribe for this issue of bonds.\(^2\)

Negotiations on the bonds began, but in the end no bonds were issued or sold, since the amount of money needed was not as great as originally thought. As a matter of fact, the president, secretary, and executive committee were able to supply the needed capital without recourse to a new bond issue. The exact amount is not known, but the fact is mentioned in the secretary's report.\(^3\) Consequently, the exposition opened as planned.

The General Secretary notes a significant fact about the opening of the exposition.

In this connection it is pertinent to state that this exposition is the only one in America to promptly open its gates to the public on a completed show on the day and hour originally designated—the first to open free from mortgage or pledge of all or some portion of its gate receipts, the first to make money each and every month of the exposition, and the first to repay to its stockholders any considerable portion of the funds advanced by them, upon which to base and build the enterprise. In these respects the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition stands without rival.\(^4\)

\(^2\)Report of the General Secretary.

\(^3\)Ibid.

\(^4\)Ibid.
It was an auspicious beginning and set the standard for subsequent months. In July, 1898, a report states that the exposition paid daily running expenses through attendance and concession receipts. It was another historic first for the Omaha Fair.\(^5\)

Even more gratifying to the management was the fact that by September, 1898, sufficient cash had been accumulated to pay off all existing debts.

The only suggestions of foul play concerning the exposition funds came from the *Omaha Bee*, which charged that the Department of Ways and Means had failed to keep an accurate record of expenses. The accusation was substantiated by the startling disclosure that sums of $15.19, $3.50, and $175.00 were returned to the exposition but nowhere recorded. The money was embezzled.\(^6\) Whether the amounts were so insignificant or the charges untrue, no indictment of embezzlement was ever made. Furthermore, with stockholders about to receive refunds, no one cared to bother about the charges.

Investing money to back an exposition can hardly be termed a sound investment. Those who subscribe do

\(^5\)*Omaha Bee*. July 15, 1898.

\(^6\)*Omaha Bee*. October 8, 1898.
so more from civic pride than from any hope of regaining the amount subscribed. But again the Omaha Exposition was different, and a profit was forthcoming. Interestingly enough, a number of proposals were brought forth concerning the use of these profits. Some proposed to build a city auditorium, while others suggested that the funds be used to attract new industries to Omaha. These proposals were duly considered by the board of directors, who finally decided that the assets remaining should be distributed among the stockholders.

On November 4, 1898, the management announced to stockholders that a 75% refund would be made on all paid-up stock subscriptions. Though anyone derelict in the payment of his subscription was declared ineligible, the management did grant a period of grace to those who would pay up their stock before December 1, 1898. The offer was appealing, and subscribers to 2,125 shares immediately paid off their pledges. These shares represented $21,250 on which the 75% refund had to be paid. The exposition realized about $13,000 during the grace period, but had to pay $15,937.50

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Omaha Bee. October 18, 1898.
in refunds. Obviously, this cost the exposition nearly $3000, but, in turn, it benefited those who paid up on their stock. A further refund of 12 1/2% was announced on April 1, 1899. Then on June 26, 1899, a final refund of 2 1/2% was declared. This brought the total refund to paid-up stockholders to 90%, amounting to $293,884.50.

Beautiful and splendid as they are, "exposition cities" are inherently ephemeral. To destroy something beautiful, no matter how transient, seems tragic. It is no wonder then that the romantic and sentimental element desired either to have the exposition extended or, if that were not possible, at least to preserve the site. The first alternative had already been decided, and the management also rejected keeping the grounds as they were. On October 18, 1898, the following resolution was adopted:

Resolved, That the Executive Committee are hereby directed to invite proposals, to be opened November 15th next, for the purchase of buildings and materials belonging to the Exposition, as a whole or in such proportions as they may require, subject to the conditions of contracts

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8Omaha World-Herald. December 3, 1898.

9Report of the General Secretary, 22.
for lands used by the Exposition, and it is ordered that the Exposition close its doors November 1st and proceed to the liquidation and settlement of its affairs.\footnote{Ibid., 6-7.}

On November 22, 1898, the Exposition sold and transferred to the Greater America Exposition all its buildings, appurtenances, engines, apparatus, materials and furniture for the sum of $17,500.00 and the assumption by the purchasers of all obligations to the owners of lands leased for the purposes of the Exposition.\footnote{Ibid., 7.}

The Greater America Exposition corporation was an outgrowth of enthusiasm that had been aroused by the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition. The promoters of the new corporation used the old exposition buildings to house their exhibits.\footnote{The exposition was designed to acquaint Americans with those territorial possessions which had been acquired by the United States since the Civil War. It was neither an artistic nor a financial success.}

Dismantling the exposition site was an operation that took various forms. Those buildings made of staff were simply razed. Other more permanent structures such as the state buildings were sold to the highest bidders. Two state buildings were partially dismantled.\footnote{Ibid., 6-7.}
reconstructed and used in the Omaha vicinity. Reportedly, the Minnesota Building became a shelter in Riverview Park. The Iowa Building was sold to St. Bernard's Hospital in Council Bluffs. Today there is no trace of any of these buildings.

Before closing its books, the management had to settle a number of law suits. Twenty-nine suits were begun to which the exposition was a party, either as plaintiff, sole defendant, or as one of the parties defendant. The total amount in claims against the exposition aggregated $236,678.58. All but one suit had been settled by June 26, 1899, at a total cost to the exposition of $25,960.00. Five of the suits were for damages arising from personal injuries on the exposition grounds and amounted to $105,100.00. These particular suits were settled by payment of $6850.00 to the parties involved. It cost the exposition $1915.00 to pay for attorneys in all the litigation. Considering the number of contracts involved and the number of

13 Omaha World-Herald. October 31, 1898.

14 Report of the General Secretary. 20. The suit not yet decided in June, 1899, involved Mattox & Root (Wild West Show) vs. Exposition. Damages claimed were $15,054.00. Settlement was apparently made out of court with no loss to the exposition.
people attending the exposition, the loss in the court litigation was surprisingly small. The final settlements could hardly be regarded as anything but complimentary to the exposition management.

A statement taken from the general ledger on October 1, 1902, indicates that all funds were disbursed by that date. Total receipts of the exposition came to $1,977,338.69. All of that money had been disbursed by departments and by requisitions.\(^{15}\)

The financial report of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition reveals that the enterprise had been carried out with exceptional success. Much of this success is attributable to the management of the exposition, especially the executive committee. They had conceived and produced a viable exposition which accomplished its original purpose. Millions of visitors had passed through the exposition gates viewing the wonders produced in the great region of the West which it represented. Measured by the tangible yardsticks of attendance, beauty of presentation, and financial return, the exposition must be pronounced a resounding success.

\(^{15}\) Haynes, 248.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Beyond those aspects of an exposition measurable by financial and general reports, it is difficult to assay those results which by their nature are intangible. In part this is due to the very nature of a world's fair. If it is true, as was discussed in the first chapter, that "a world's fair is its own excuse . . . a brief and transitory paradise, born to delight mankind and die,"\(^1\) then merely to be is to succeed. Secondly, the stimulation that is given to human thought is an imaginative imparting of knowledge, which is a real value. By arousing in man a sense of the beautiful, an awareness of human potential, a feeling of personal dignity, and a glimpse of national grandeur, a fair fulfills a great human need. Finally, there is much merit in the description of a world's fair as an art form combining beauty and bombast and expressing the complexities of human existence.

It is proper, however, to ask more specific questions about those results which go beyond immediate

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\(^1\)Leighton, *Harpers*. CCXXI, 27.
success. In stating the objectives of the Trans-Mis­sissippi and International Exposition, the management expressed hope for further development of the region west of the Mississippi River. But there is very little conclusive proof that the exposition directly influenced new investment or settlement. The exposition did indeed provide a show case for the West, publicizing the region's resources. The 2,613,508 people visiting the fair certainly carried away glowing reports about the West. However, there is no proof that most people settling in the area during the twentieth century either visited or heard of the exposition.

On the other hand, it was quite clear that the nation was aware of the events taking place in Omaha. Henry Wysham Lanier, after visiting the exposition grounds, observed that

certainly the rest of the United States and the rest of the world will henceforth feel entirely differently toward this trans-Mississippi country, and the effect upon these twenty-four States and Territories themselves must be incalculable. ²

Another writer noted that the "people of the Trans-Mississippi States have cause to be proud of this

exposition of their success in developing the agricultural and mineral resources of the Western plains and mountains. Still another commented that "it would not be easy to estimate the value of such an exposition as this in illustrating to the nation at large the immense resources of the region which lies in the great Mississippi basin and contiguous to it."

Indeed, the exposition was symbolic of the achievements of the past and a point of departure for the prosperous days ahead. But ironically, within forty years the Middle West was described as "a network of bankrupt railroads, a region with dwindling manufactures, a declining population, and with agriculture in the toils."

Any explanation of the discrepancy between what seemed to be promised and what actually occurred must include the closing of the frontier. Undoubtedly the Trans-Mississippi Exposition was correct in drawing attention to the achievements of the agriculture, mining, and cattle industries. But along with these impressive

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3 W.A. Rogers, "The Exposition At Omaha," Harper's Weekly, XLII (October 8, 1898), 987.


5 Leighton, Five Cities, 189.
accomplishments, other forces were at work. The small farmer could no longer prosper on the Great Plains. Likewise, individual miners and small ranchers were seriously questioning their future in the region. Cities like Omaha, a distribution center of people and supplies for the settlement of the last frontier, were soon witnessing a minor exodus from the region. The exposition stood as a living expression that man had conquered the elements of nature on the Plains. But the conquest now seemed to many little more than a Pyrrhic victory. Though once properly exorcised, there was danger that the American vocabulary would once more include the phrase "Great American Desert."

Nebraska could be used as an example of the developments in the trans-Mississippi region during the 1890's. The promoters of the exposition expected or at least hoped that Nebraska, as the host state for the Trans-Mississippi Exposition, would gain much from it in the way of settlement and investment.

The settlement period in the state was practically over, however, and census reports disclose that the state's population increased only from 1,062,656 in 1890 to 1,192,214 in 1910. The trend in Nebraska was

similar to that in other agricultural states; cities grew faster and often at the expense of the rural population.

Despite the proportional decline in farm population, the value of agricultural produce in Nebraska increased sharply. Improvements in seed and labor-saving machinery enabled farmers to be much more efficient. Figures on manufactured products indicate that, while the value of the products increased, manufacturing did not play a major role in the state's economy. Thus, settlement and investment in Nebraska after the Trans-Mississippi Exposition followed a pattern typical of an agricultural state in the twentieth century.

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8 The following is taken from Olson's History of Nebraska, p. 257.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manufactures, 1890-1910</th>
<th>1899</th>
<th>1904</th>
<th>1909</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishments</td>
<td>1,695</td>
<td>1,819</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage earners</td>
<td>18,669</td>
<td>20,260</td>
<td>24,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of Products</td>
<td>$130,302,000</td>
<td>$154,918,000</td>
<td>$199,019,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value Added</td>
<td>$34,377,000</td>
<td>$30,866,000</td>
<td>$47,938,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Employed</td>
<td>$65,906,000</td>
<td>$80,235,000</td>
<td>$99,901,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Material</td>
<td>$95,925,000</td>
<td>$124,052,000</td>
<td>$151,081,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horsepower</td>
<td>41,825</td>
<td>46,372</td>
<td>64,466</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These agricultural and manufacturing statistics indicate the exposition was not a major factor in mining future growth of population and produce in the state.

But the turn of the future was, as always, unknown. Nor is it surprising that the backers of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition were led to misread the circumstances of their time, which were used to predict with such hope and confidence a continuous growing development. Fifty years had passed remarkable progress: that by 1898 there seemed to be no limit to what the West, in harmony with the rest of the country, could accomplish. The clamorous din of the Populists had been muted by domestic prosperity. At the same time that "splendid little war" with Spain had raised national unity to new heights, With new prestige abroad and prosperity at home, it became quite impossible to foresee obstacles that would change the hope for an even better future.

The exposition capped and symbolized the progress made in one region of a country which had so recently crossed the threshold into the family of great powers. The fair brought to public attention how vast was the
wealth yielded by a section of the country that had formerly been written off as barren. For these reasons there seemed only one possible conclusion, namely, the future would be even more productive. But the signs they chose to read did not include those social and economic forces already in foment and which would drastically change the picture the exposition drew.

Of all the cities in the trans-Mississippi region, Omaha did benefit the most from the exposition. As the host city, Omaha was in position to take advantage of the material and psychological uplift that the exposition was expected to offer.

Merchants, restaurants, saloons, and hotels all profited from the crowds which came to the exposition and to the conventions and meetings held in the city. For example, after the exposition closed the fifteen principal downtown hotels reported that they had accommodated as estimated 153,400 people, most of whom came to Omaha to go to the exposition or activities related to it. Undoubtedly, a like number took rooms at smaller hotels or in private homes. Figuring the rate at three dollars per day and the average stay at two days, the total amount of money left with hotels
and boarding houses was estimated at $1,800,000. Not all of this income was due to the exposition, but it was obvious that there was a substantial increase in revenue. Other businesses profited from the crowds in much the same manner.

Many Omaha businessmen credited the exposition with ushering in a period of prosperity. It was a major reason for increases in population and capital investment. Census reports reveal that the 1890's were years of population decline in Omaha. The 1890 population is listed as 140,452; in 1900 the population was 102,555. By 1910 some of the loss had been recovered, for Omaha's population was 123,096 in that year. This is hardly a precipitous rush to Omaha. It is also dubious that the exposition was a major factor in restoring prosperity to Omaha. Recovery had been under way before the summer of 1898. Henry W. Yates expressed a more judicious assessment.

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9Omaha World-Herald, November 10, 1898. The fifteen principal downtown hotels were given as: Paxton, Mercer, Arcade, Dellone, Colonade, Klondike, Midland, Henshaw, Schlitz, Victoria, and Union Depot.

10Haynes, 315-321.

Doubtless Omaha business would have shared in this recovery—Exposition or no Exposition—but its successful conclusion conduced in no small degree to the alacrity with which our business men took advantage of the situation.\(^\text{12}\)

What did happen to Omaha was something that statistics cannot measure. Constant references were made to the new spirit that took hold of the city. Gurdon W. Wattles reflected that it "lifted our business men out of the 'slough of despond' by giving them new vision and hope and courage, to say nothing of the hours of entertainment."\(^\text{13}\) John W. Ryckman, writing for the \textit{Omaha World-Herald}, also put his finger on this aspect.

To this city the results will be worth incalculable millions, if only the same intrepid spirit, the same indomitable energy, the same pride, intelligence and keen foresight which molded this event are maintained and strengthened.\(^\text{14}\)

The energy and spirit of cooperation needed to carry out an enterprise the size of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition was a powerful force. Redirected to everyday civic problems, this spirit

\(^{12}\) Haynes, 318.

\(^{13}\) Wattles, \textit{Autobiography}. 72.

\(^{14}\) \textit{Omaha World-Herald}, October 8, 1898.
enhanced the opportunity for solid development of
Omaha.

Little remains in the Omaha of 1968 that recalls
the magnificent exposition the city hosted seventy
years earlier. Joslyn Art Museum maintains a small
window exhibit of some of the souvenirs and paintings
of the great fair. Besides these memorabilia there is
no physical trace remaining, except perhaps, as one
elderly citizen remarked, a small dip in north Twen­
tieth Street where it passes over the site where the
lagoon was situated in 1898.

There are a few people in Omaha able to remember
the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition.
All fondly recall its splendor and beauty. Seventy
years has not dimmed their memory of the main court.
In such memories the higher purpose of an exposition
is crystallized. For a few moments life is stripped
of the dull and drab, and a man can get outside of
himself and catch a glimpse of a vision that tells him
this is how life could be. It is intangible, not sub­
ject to statistical analysis, but, for all that, a
reality. If this does not happen the exposition fails,
regardless of any material benefits it might have
attained. Because it created a new spirit and released
cooperative forces that created a huge enterprise, because it created a vision that elated millions of visitors, the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition was, indeed, a success.

There is a tinge of irony that the former location of the exposition is now part of Omaha's much publicized Near North Side. The classical design of the exposition buildings had offered an escape from the rigors of life in the West and a hope for better things in the future. Today the ghetto restricts such freedoms and dims such hopes. But a city that could create a fairyland out of a wilderness hopefully still possesses such a spirit that will recreate a new way of life for all its citizens.
## STATE APPROPRIATIONS AND PRIVATE SUBSCRIPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Region</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State of Nebraska</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas County, Nebraska</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Illinois</td>
<td>45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Iowa</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Montana*</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Georgia</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Utah</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Ohio</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of New York</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Territory of Arizona</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$338,000</strong></td>
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Funds raised privately:

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<th>State/Region</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>$22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles County, California</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$175,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State appropriations: $338,000

Private subscriptions: $175,000

Grand total: $513,000

*One-half of this amount was given by Marcus Daly, of Butte, Montana*
Appendix B

TRANS-MISSISSIPPI AND INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION

Officers

Gurdon W. Wattles...President    Alvin Saunders...Vice President
Herman Kountze......Treasurer    John Wakefield........Secretary
Carroll Montgomery.........General Counsel

Executive Committee

Ways and Means
Edward Rosewater .............. Publicity and Promotion
Freeman P. Kirkendall ....... Buildings and Grounds
Edward E. Bruce .............. Exhibits
Abraham L. Reed .............. Concessions and Privileges
William N. Babcock .......... Transportation

Board of Directors: December, 1896

J. E. Markel    Walter Jardine
Dan Farrell, Jr. C. F. Manderson
Dudley Smith    John A. Creighton
W. R. Bennett    J. J. Brown
I. W. Carpenter  J. H. Millard
G. H. Payne      C. W. Lyman
H. A. Thompson   A. M. Noyes
Charles Metz     E. C. Price
John H. Evans    C. M. Wilhelm
G. W. Holdrege   J. H. Hussia
L. H. Korty      C. F. Weller
Thomas Kilpatrick F. B. Hubbard
George F. Bidwell  Lucien Wells
Frank Murphy     Arthur C. Smith
C. E. Yost       J. L. Webster
John A. Johnson  J. L. Brandeis
W. A. Paxton, Sr. Dr. E. W. Lee
R. S. Wilcox    Thomas Kimball
Edward Dickenson       J. C. Warton
Appendix D

BUREAU OF ADMISSIONS

Abstract of record of admissions:

Paid admissions--
Adult ................................1,385,733
Special Adult ........................ 2,146
Children ............................. 113,556
Special child's ..................... 43,741
Special night ........................ 163,819
Commutation coupons ................. 49,975--1,778,250

Free admissions--
Free (bands, processions, etc.)........ 28,516
Full term photo passes .............. 132,514
Monthly photo passes ............... 497,578
Card passes .......................... 106,340
Trip passes .......................... 12,518
Workmen's passes ................... 57,792--835,258

Total attendance ........................ 2,613,508

.687 per cent paid plus .313 per cent free equals 100 per cent

Record of admissions by months:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>June</th>
<th>July</th>
<th>August</th>
<th>Sept.</th>
<th>October</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid</td>
<td>166,882</td>
<td>187,654</td>
<td>311,943</td>
<td>413,571</td>
<td>698,200</td>
<td>1,778,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free</td>
<td>122,469</td>
<td>144,030</td>
<td>162,234</td>
<td>179,597</td>
<td>226,928</td>
<td>835,258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>289,351</td>
<td>331,684</td>
<td>474,177</td>
<td>593,168</td>
<td>925,128</td>
<td>2,613,508</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendance on some of the principal days, as follows:

October 12th, President's Day .......... 98,845
October 31st, Omaha Day ............... 61,236
September 22nd, Modern Woodmen's Day .. 52,725
October 13th, Army and Navy Day ....... 49,710
October 11th, Governor's Day .......... 48,051
June 1st, Opening Day ................ 27,998
July 4th, Nation's Day ................. 44,452
Smallest day's total attendance, June 3 4,756
Smallest day's paid attendance, June 6 1,752

The week of October 9-15 showed a total attendance of 314,151
Abstract of record of receipts from admissions

Pre-exposition period ...................... $ 4,199.82
Commutation tickets ......................... 14,850.00
Ticket sales ................................ 763,425.10
Workmen's passes ........................... 1,043,25
Exhibitors' and concessionaires full-term
  photo books ................................ 4,304.75
Employees' monthly photo books ............ 12,514.00
Wagon books ................................ 154.00
Post Exposition period ..................... 1,024.55

  Total admission receipts ................... 801,515.47

  Week of largest gate receipts was week of October 9-15; receipts totaled $116,320.10.

  Day of largest gate receipts was October 12th; gate receipts, $42,822.00.
**DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS**

List of buildings, showing size and cost of each, exclusive of architects' fees, office expenses and salaries, superintendence, and miscellaneous, which was about seven per cent. of cost of buildings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building Type</th>
<th>Size &amp; Height</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration building</td>
<td>(50x50 feet, 55 feet 4 inches high)</td>
<td>$11,621.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mines &amp; Mining building</td>
<td>(400x140 feet, 48 feet 6 inches high)</td>
<td>42,250.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufactures' building</td>
<td>(300x125 feet, 40 feet high)</td>
<td>56,256.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditorium building</td>
<td>(150x115 feet, 37 feet high)</td>
<td>12,358.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture building</td>
<td>(400x140 feet, 40 feet high)</td>
<td>60,987.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery &amp; Electricity building</td>
<td>(300x140 feet, 31 feet 8 inches high)</td>
<td>50,019.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Arts building</td>
<td>(280x125 feet, 36 feet 4 inches high)</td>
<td>31,183.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts building</td>
<td>(240x125 feet, 39 feet high)</td>
<td>46,163.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Plant building</td>
<td>(150x120 feet, 18 feet high)</td>
<td>10,063.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horticulture building</td>
<td>(300 feet long, wings 70 feet, dome 110 feet, height 29 feet)</td>
<td>35,130.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North viaduct</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,679.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Colonnades</td>
<td></td>
<td>11,842.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirror Colonnades</td>
<td></td>
<td>15,979.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration Colonnades</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,094.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitary Kiosks</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,968.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehouse building</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,022.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(115x145 feet, 14 feet high)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South viaduct restaurants</td>
<td>(each 100x50 feet, 29 feet high)</td>
<td>24,832.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South viaduct</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,531.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band stand</td>
<td>(80x30 feet, 52 feet high)</td>
<td>3,861.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North and South Colonnades</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,652.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital building</td>
<td>(50x25 feet, 22 feet high)</td>
<td>1,821.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Press building</td>
<td>(50x50 feet)</td>
<td>3,548.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dairy building</td>
<td>(160x75 feet, 14 feet high)</td>
<td>7,858.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service building (100x60 feet, 22 feet high)</td>
<td>$7,022.65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apiary building (130x75 feet, 14 feet high)</td>
<td>$6,341.48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International building (130x100 feet, 20 feet high)</td>
<td>$7,846.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire and Police building (150x115 feet, 18 feet high)</td>
<td>$6,248.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation building (430x300 feet, 17 feet high)</td>
<td>$40,804.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arch of States (50x20 feet, 67 feet high)</td>
<td>$7,353.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket booths, exits and gates</td>
<td>$6,671.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refreshment Kiosks</td>
<td>$3,292.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls' and Boys' building</td>
<td>$9,154.42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live Stock buildings</td>
<td>$19,157.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$564,441.59</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Architect's department (exclusive of superintendence)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taxes paid</td>
<td>$4,292.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General expenses</td>
<td>$26,372.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing grounds</td>
<td>$6,483.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water system, permanent</td>
<td>$22,224.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water system, temporary</td>
<td>$6,160.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid Omaha Water Co. for water</td>
<td>$7,515.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fire Protection</strong></td>
<td>$35,901.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apparatus</td>
<td>$5,341.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages and expenses</td>
<td>$5,081.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
<td>$13,508.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation of Grounds</strong></td>
<td>$23,930.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape department</td>
<td>$57,840.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grading</td>
<td>$19,404.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macadamized roadways</td>
<td>$32,587.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lagoon</td>
<td>$25,507.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fountains, Kountze tract</td>
<td>$746.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick paving</td>
<td>$11,620.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sewerage and drainage</strong></td>
<td>$127,707.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer's department</td>
<td>$9,481.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maintainence and Care of Grounds</strong></td>
<td>$10,202.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janitor service</td>
<td>$14,708.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road cleaning</td>
<td>$4,624.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road sprinkling</td>
<td>$1,320.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitary service</td>
<td>$824.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garbage</td>
<td>$1,216.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice account</td>
<td>$1,051.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorations, exterior of buildings</td>
<td>$4,495.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settees, benches and charis</td>
<td>$4,774.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General repairs</td>
<td>$8,054.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$41,071.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power and Light—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical department</td>
<td>$63,282.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery department</td>
<td>53,945.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power plant, Transportation building</td>
<td>2,045.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>119,273.81</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Protection—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guards</td>
<td>53,667.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secret Service</td>
<td>3,115.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital Department</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office expenses (Buildings &amp; Grounds Department)</td>
<td>6,964.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firemen's tournament, buildings north of M.P. Ry. tracks</td>
<td>4,286.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artesian well</td>
<td>4,844.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal injuries, payments and expenses</td>
<td>8,200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundry claims</td>
<td>-1,792.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous and sundry expenses not classified</td>
<td>19,143.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,103,675.64</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LOSSES BY FIRE**

There were 25 alarms for fires. Losses by fire were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buildings</td>
<td>$4,225.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents</td>
<td>1,865.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,090.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Losses covered by insurance</td>
<td>3,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Losses uninsured</td>
<td>3,090.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Losses were mainly in fires at California Gold Mining Tunnel on June 3rd, and later when the "Mt. Nebo Chapel" at Old Plantation concession was completely destroyed.
DEPARTMENT OF CONCESSIONS AND PRIVILEGES

Abraham L. Reed, Manager  S. E. Wadley, Superintendent

The story of the operation and results in this department is perhaps best told in the following:

Number of concessions and privileges ......................... 247
Number of employees in the department ......................... 91
Number of employees of concession and privilege holders ..................... 2,762

BALANCE SHEET

Receipts--
Total rent charged to concessionaires .................. $ 65,851.25
Paid up privilege concessionaires .................. 50,802.35
Percentage concessionaires .................. 177,294.58 -- $293,948.18
Cashiers' salaries concessionaires .................. 12,139.88
Cash register rent concessionaires .................. 1,494.00
Tickets .................. 989.45 -- 14,623.32
Total charges to concessionaires .................. $308,571.51

Disbursements--
Voucher Crs. for rebates and errors .................. $ 4,208.02
Cashiers, registers and tickets charged concessionaires ........ 14,370.52
Office expense, salaries, etc. ........ 12,415.25
Claims, attorneys' fees and cost ........ 17,390.65
Miscellaneous expenses .................. 5,931.41
Transferred to Exhibits and Educational Departments ........ 16,181.94

Total disbursements .................. $ 70,497.79
Amount uncollected .................. 2,033.16
Net cash earnings .................. $236,040.56

$308,571.51
## SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gross Receipts</th>
<th>Exposition Revenue</th>
<th>Collections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amusements</td>
<td>$479,696.78</td>
<td>$117,502.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants, beer and cigars</td>
<td>451,963.18</td>
<td>105,327.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ice cream and soft drinks</td>
<td>55,553.70</td>
<td>17,557.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popcorn, fruits and candy</td>
<td>35,091.39</td>
<td>10,877.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Souvenirs and novelties</td>
<td>29,535.10</td>
<td>7,560.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchandise</td>
<td>172,404.11</td>
<td>49,745.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$1,224,224.26</td>
<td>$308,571.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voucher Crs. for rebates and errors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balances uncollected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DEPARTMENT OF EXHIBITS

Edward E. Bruce, Manager       H.B. Hardt, Assistant

The Exposition management made a charge for exhibit space as follows: In buildings, $1.00 per square foot; in grounds, 50 cents per square foot. To each state and territory of the Trans-Mississippi country 1,000 square feet of exhibit space was granted free of charge. There follows the results in figures: Number of separate exhibits, 5119; number of exhibitors, 1,252. Receipts from sales of exhibit space, round numbers, $200,000.00. Number of square feet of exhibit space—in buildings, floor space, 425,000 square feet; galleries, 75,000 square feet; total, 500,000 square feet.

Expenses of Exhibits Department:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>$16,984.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live stock, dairy and poultry premiums</td>
<td>21,182.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live stock, dairy and poultry premium lists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>catalogues, expenses and claims</td>
<td>6,565.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apiary exhibits</td>
<td>2,582.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry and Irrigation</td>
<td>7,487.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Education, general expenses</td>
<td>700.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mines and Mining</td>
<td>8,165.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufactures</td>
<td>5,166.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Hall</td>
<td>1,695.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and agricultural implements</td>
<td>5,560.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards Bureau, diplomas, medals, judges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jurors etc.</td>
<td>9,016.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decorations, flags, bunting, pictures for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interior of buildings</td>
<td>8,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous expenses not, classified</td>
<td>157.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$99,920.20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STATEMENT OF BALANCES FROM GENERAL LEDGER

October 1, 1902

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Debits</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of assets (90 per cent)</td>
<td>$292,482.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscriptions unpaid</td>
<td>$77,547.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bills Receivable, scrip of State of Washington</td>
<td>$851.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expense prior to December 1, 1896</td>
<td>$3,898.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Expense</td>
<td>$56,694.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways and Means Department</td>
<td>$138,691.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicity and Promotion Department</td>
<td>$97,784.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibits Department</td>
<td>$100,126.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concessions and Privileges Department</td>
<td>$52,745.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Department</td>
<td>$6,575.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings and Grounds Department</td>
<td>$1,104,265.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest and Discount</td>
<td>$3,634.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War Balloons</td>
<td>$2,537.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Congress</td>
<td>$4,597.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Debits</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,942,443.58</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credits</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital Stock (stock subscriptions)</td>
<td>$411,745.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations (donation subscriptions)</td>
<td>$141,670.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibits (receipts)</td>
<td>$200,110.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concessions and Privileges</td>
<td>$286,146.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings and Grounds (receipts)</td>
<td>$38,128.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions (receipts)</td>
<td>$801,515.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music (receipts)</td>
<td>$3,520.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicity and Promotion (receipts)</td>
<td>$525.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water (receipts)</td>
<td>$2,879.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Souvenir Coin Medals (receipts)</td>
<td>$5,963.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power and Light (receipts)</td>
<td>$28,550.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Congress</td>
<td>$159.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvage (sales of buildings and appurtenances)</td>
<td>$21,519.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Credits</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,942,443.58</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STATEMENT OF TOTAL RECEIPTS

Total receipts reported to June 26, 1899 ...$1,972,194.49
Received from Bond Guarantee
Account, Collected in .........$3,800.00
Received from Frank Murphy,
trustee .................... 1,265.00
Received on account
Exhibits Department ............... 79.20
Total receipts since June 26, 1899 ... 5,144.20
Total receipts to the conclusion ...... $1,977,338.69

DISBURSEMENTS BY DEPARTMENTS

Distribution of assets, 90 per cent .... $ 293,884.50
Ways and Means Department ................ 138,949.57
Publicity and Promotion Department .... 97,784.92
Exhibits Department ..................... 100,161.14
Concessions and Privileges Department ... 52,846.96
Buildings and Grounds Department ....... 1,103,542.01
Transportation Department .............. 6,575.94
Interest and discount .................... 3,634.26
General expenses ....................... 56,610.06
Girls' and Boys' building ................ 9,438.35
Refunds ................................ 4,671.04
Indian exhibit (cash advanced) ........... 4,597.62
Union Stock Yards (special premiums) .... 875.00
War balloons (freight charges paid) ..... 3,125.46
Bond Guarantee account .................. 36,800.00
$1,913,498.09

DISBURSEMENTS BY REQUISITION

Capital stock (90 per cent) ................ $ 293,884.50
Salaries and wages ........................ 356,831.75
Freight and express ...................... 19,634.19
Advertising ............................... 16,303.16
Printing and stationery .................. 37,623.88
Photographing ............................. 4,844.60
Commissions paid ......................... 11,816.80
Souvenir medals ........................... 3,027.63
Furniture and miscellaneous ............. 4,031.83
Telegraph and telephone .................. 4,213.60
Interest and discount .................... 3,637.56
Amusements ................................ 65,444.27
Insurance ................................. 16,104.43
Traveling, messenger and livery ......... 30,134.66
Pictures and painting .................... 22,957.03
Postage and revenue stamps .............. 11,593.68
Taxes and license ......................... 17,273.69
Steam and electricity .................... 76,842.34
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>125,357.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utensils</td>
<td>10,599.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounds</td>
<td>111,994.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings</td>
<td>598,450.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewers</td>
<td>3,690.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>40,220.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awards</td>
<td>26,985.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,913,498.09</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expenses prior to December 1, 1896 ........................................... 3,898.36
General fund warrants redeemed ....................................... 35,488.17
Bills payable redeemed ............................................... 23,602.22
Bills receivable on hand ............................................. 851.85

**Total disbursements since June 26, 1899** ........... 6,975.71

**TREASURER'S STATEMENT**

Mr. Herman Kountze, Treasurer

From the detailed report of the treasurer, the following summary is taken:

June 26, 1899, balance on hand .................................. $1,831.51
Deposits since June 26, 1899 ................................. 5,144.20

Vouchers paid since June 26, 1899 ....................... 6,975.71

Balance on hand, October 1, 1902, none.
The main entrance to the Trans-Mississippi Exposition was through the Arch-of States, located at the intersection of Twentieth and Pinkney Streets. It was fifty feet in width, twenty-five feet in depth, and sixty feet in height to the top of the parapet. Decoration of the arch included a frieze composed of coats-of-arms of the Trans-Mississippi States.
Having passed through the arch, the visitor to the exposition was struck by the magnificence of the main court. The lagoon enhanced the beauty of the buildings. The east end of the lagoon was a point of embarkation for passengers of the Venetian gondolas which were guided around the lagoon by typical gondoliers. The west end of the lagoon formed a reflecting mirror for the Government Building.
The United States Government Building was the most impressive on the main court. The building was surmounted by a dome capped by an heroic figure representing "Liberty Enlightening the World," the torch of the figure being one hundred seventy-eight feet above the ground. Housed in the building were the government exhibits, the most educative at the exposition.
The Fine Arts Building was located on the south side of the main court and immediately east of the Government Building. It took the form of two separate symmetrical domed buildings, connected by an open court. Inside the building were samples of various styles of painting.
East of the Arch of States on the south side of the main court was the Liberal Arts Building. The exhibit of Liberal Arts measured the progress and development of taste in the useful and ornamental articles of everyday use. Distinguishing features on display were a graphophone, artificial limbs, typewriters, and countless articles for house decoration.
The Mines and Mining Building was distinguished by a circular dome over its main entrance. The mining exhibit was a complete exposition of the mineral resources of the trans-Mississippi region. Features of the exhibit were two bars of solid silver weighing two hundred pounds each and a twenty-one pound nugget containing ten pounds pure gold.
Directly across the lagoon from the Mines and Mining Building stood the Machinery and Electricity Building. The growing electrical supply companies placed interesting exhibits, and the latest developments in electrical appliances were represented. The machinery exhibit was limited for the most part to machinery and engines for the transmission of power, together with tools used by the artisan, mechanic, and farmer.
The Manufacturers Building was located immediately to the west of the Machinery and Electricity Building. Products on exhibit included silks from the Orient, lace from France, and linens from Belfast. In addition, practically every major industry in the trans-Mississippi region was represented in some manner.
Directly opposite the Arch of States and on the north side of the main court was the Administration Arch. Being fifty feet square and one hundred fifty in height, it formed a central figure for those buildings north of the lagoon.
The Agricultural Building was immediately east of the Government Building and on the north side of the main court. Agricultural exhibits illustrated the immense progress of the farming industry in the West. Unique exhibits featured grains used in decorative ways. For example, one exhibit displayed a table spread with Nebraska food products surrounded by a family dressed in the latest style clothing made of corn husks and seeds.
An architectural highlight of the Bluff Tract was the Horticultural Building. In many places throughout the building there were urns filled with rare flowers and huge hanging baskets of ferns and other decorations intended to produce the appearance of a semi-tropical atmosphere.
Bibliographical Note

A surprising amount of material on the Trans-Mississippi Exposition has been preserved in the Omaha Public Library and the archives of the Nebraska State Historical Society. Collections which proved to be invaluable for understanding the extent of the exposition have been maintained and were made available to the author.

The best single collection of research material is composed of a series of scrapbooks deposited in the Omaha Public Library. Compiled by John A. Wakefield, Secretary of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition, these eight volumes contain newspaper clippings, souvenir programs, financial records, and correspondence. The information contained therein gives a day by day account of exposition affairs, including material not complimentary to the management. Microfilm copies of the *Omaha World-Herald* and *Omaha Bee* supplemented the newspaper clippings contained in the scrapbooks.

Correspondence and unpublished material found in the archives of the Nebraska State Historical Society
at Lincoln revealed other facts about the exposition. Although most of the letters contained in this collection involved the Nebraska Commission to the exposition, some of them directly concerned exposition officials. Incomplete financial records are also available in this collection.

Insights to the meaning of the exposition to the individual were gained through personal interviews. The remarkable memories of several people in the Omaha vicinity made the fair more real and personal.

Another source which proved helpful was Haynes' History of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition. Although obviously censored for the most part, this work does present the proceedings of special occasions.

With the exception of two personal interviews which were found to be most helpful, all entries in the bibliography were cited in the text. Of course, many other sources were perused in the preparation of this thesis, but most of them were not considered relevant to its scope.
Primary Sources

Books

- One of Omaha's life-long citizens tells the story of the city's development as he remembered it. It aided in determining economic conditions at the time of the exposition.

- Wattles devotes part of this work to a reflection about the exposition and his important role in its affairs.

Contemporary Newspaper Accounts

Council Bluffs Nonpareil. 1896-1898.
Lincoln Journal. 1896-1898.
Mexican Financier. March 13, 1897.
Omaha World-Herald. 1895-1899.
Omaha Bee. 1895-1899.
South Omaha Tribune. 1896-1899.
The Musical Critic (Chicago), September, 1898.
The Two Republics (Mexico City), February 27, 1897.
The Western Laborer. 1896-1898.
Official Publications

*Articles of Incorporation of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition.* Omaha, 1896.

*Prospectus of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition.* Omaha, 1897.


Personal Interviews


Private Papers

*General Correspondence and Financial Records Pertaining to the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition.* Nebraska State Historical Society Archives, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Most of these papers pertain to the Nebraska Commission to the exposition. Some, however, involve the exposition management.

Wakefield, John A. *Personal Scrapbooks of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition.* 8 vols., Omaha Public Library, Omaha, Nebraska.

These scrapbooks were invaluable in writing the thesis. They contain newspaper accounts, souvenirs, and private and official correspondence.
Proceedings and Reports

**Official Proceedings of the Eighth Convention of the Trans-Mississippi Commercial Congress.**
Omaha: Omaha Printing Company, 1895.

**Report of the General Secretary of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition.**
June 26, 1899.
This is a complete and concise summary of the exposition affairs.

Public Documents

**Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Nebraska, 1854-1941.** Vol. II. Lincoln:
Nebraska State Historical Society, Works Progress Administration, 1942.


________. **Statistical Abstract of the United States:** 1958.

U.S. **Congressional Record.** Vols. XXVIII, XXXI.
Secondary Sources

Books

Haynes, James B. (ed.). *History of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition of 1898.* Omaha: Published Under Direction of the Committee on History as Authorized by the Board of Directors, 1910.

Since this book was censored by the board of directors, it does not present the full story of the exposition. Its main value is its preservation of the addresses and programs of the special days.


A brief survey of the development of Omaha, it was helpful in evaluating the effect of the exposition on the city.


An explanation of exhibition techniques and purposes, this book gave an insight to the value of expositions.

Olson, James C. *History of Nebraska.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1966.

This book was used in evaluating the effect of the exposition on the state of Nebraska.


Wakeley devotes a chapter to a description of the exposition. This book was also helpful in obtaining information about Omaha.
Periodicals

"Glimpses of Indian Life at the Omaha Exposition," Review of Reviews. XVIII (October, 1898), 436-443.

This sketch gives an outside view of one of the most interesting features of the exposition.


A brief description of events leading up to the fair, this article is quite complimentary to the exposition management.


Lanier sees the exposition as being of incalculable value to the trans-Mississippi region. It is another outside view that is favorable.


This article gives a clear and concise summary of world's fairs. It is a valuable contribution to scholarly information on expositions.


The author is lavish in his praise of expositions at a time when they enjoyed extreme popularity.

Rogers, Joseph M. "Lessons From International Exhibitions," Forum, XXXII (December, 1901), 500-510.

The author believed that expositions were the best possible means of displaying the progress of civilization. Information on various world's fairs was provided also.
Rogers praises the architectural beauty of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition. He compares it favorably with the Columbian Exposition.

Another concise survey of world's fairs, this article aided in placing the Omaha Exposition in perspective.

The government exhibits are summarized and explained, thereby adding to the understanding of those displays.

"The Omaha Exposition and the Indian Congress," Scientific American, LXXIX (October 15, 1898), 248-249.
This article stresses the personalities present at the Indian Congress and gives a general description of its purpose and objective.