

James C. Dahlman, Newly-Elected Democratic Mayor of Omaha

JAMES C. DAHLMAN, the new mayor of Omaha, is a man of the people and of the plains. He is a municipal product of the cow country, the far reaches and the limitless sky. Chapters of his life might have been lifted out of the pages of "The Vagabond" or Alfred Henry Lewis' "Wolfville" stories.

As a frontier sheriff tales are told of Dahlman that leave no doubt of his possession of that first quality that still appeals to men with marvellous force—personal bravery. He is a man's man, strong in the democratic belief extending to individuals the widest range of conduct compatible with social comfort; having nerve, decision, force of character and "square" in his dealings; not lacking in sympathy with the quirks and foibles of the masculine mind; generous, open-handed and of congenial disposition—with a friend to be depended upon and a foe able to protect himself in any emergency.

Since the firing arm has been the symbol of combat, man to man, dwellers of the earth have admired him who knew how to use his hardware dexterously and with dispatch. It used to be the same when the sword and the battle-axe were the weapons of the fray. Doubtless it was likewise in the era of the stone club. The ruler of the civilization the more intense the admiration. Wherever necessity has made it incumbent to safety and the charm of a peaceful existence to be able to point your gun at your adversary first, the gentleman the quickest about it has been a leading citizen. And no one has placed it of record that he got the drop on Jim Dahlman. Thirty years ago in Nebraska the equipment here described was vastly more important than it is now. The fashion of carrying guns is now extinct in the Antelope state.

Long a Resident of the State.
Jim Dahlman came to Nebraska in 1878. It has been a long while since he has had a holster belt strapped around his person as a daily habit. But in the days when it was met and the style Mr. Dahlman carried about the goods. That he was able to take care of himself in a highly satisfactory degree then is no reflection upon him today, when conditions have changed. Rather it is a point attesting to his reliance and ability of hand and brain. If he was able to assure his future in those days he has had a tolerably easy task in the later periods.

"From cowboy to mayor of Omaha" is the way the head writer would put it. The transition has been gradual and according to the laws of evolution. Mr. Dahlman had the reputation of being a very good cow-puncher and when he hung up the rope and moved into town he proved a good citizen of group sociology. So good in fact that he became sheriff of his community and mayor of two of the three Nebraska towns in which he has resided.

Politics as a Side Issue.
Politics for years has been an avocation with Jim Dahlman. He has always been linked up with the democrats. For years he has been a member of the democratic national committee and a warm personal friend of William Jennings Bryan. So good did Mr. Bryan feel about Mr. Dahlman's election that he sent a cablegram of congratulations all the way from Asia to prove it. When Bryan made his whirlwind campaigns by rail throughout the United States Jim Dahlman was along as manager and adviser on the most memorable trips. For more than a decade whenever there was anything going in Nebraska democracy Mr. Dahlman has done a percentage in arranging it and he is fully as well known through the state as he is in Omaha.

Son of a Frontiersman.
Mr. Dahlman is 47 years old. He was born in Texas and his father was a pioneer of the southwest. The vicissitudes of a raw country were to him common routine. His father went to DeWitt county, Texas, when a young man, went into the stock-raising business and became a large ranchman and stockkeeper. Jim Dahlman was the oldest of three boys and four girls. About the first things he did after he learned to walk was to learn to ride a horse and herd cattle. When he was not doing this he attended a little school at Yorktown. For a few years, as a youth, he stayed on the family ranch and then pulled out for himself and roamed about Texas for a while.

He struck Nebraska in March, 1878. He was looking for Fort Sheridan. No one of whom he inquired seemed to know anything about the location of such a place. He had a companion named Bennett Erwin and the two crossed the river on the ice. The two started to canvass Omaha to find directions how to get to Fort Sheridan. They finally encountered Fred Evans, an old freighter, who knew the way. They went as far as Sidney, on the Union Pacific, and then traveled 200 miles by stage to the Red Cloud agency. A blizzard was met between Sidney and Fort Robinson and three or four days lost in picking up the trail. When they got into Fort Sheridan Dahlman and Erwin had \$1 each.

There were four ranches in the vicinity. The Texans got jobs on that of E. S. Newman punching cows at the regulation wage, \$3 a month. Dahlman stuck by this ranch several years and developed into the foreman of the cattle gang. This was the cornerstone of his career and he has not dropped back since. It was not very long before he filled his first semi-public office. This was the position of brand inspector



JAMES C. DAHLMAN.

of the Wyoming Cattle brand inspector meant being referee of all the controversies over stolen, mixed and questionable cattle and executive officer in enforcing the rules and regulations of the business. In the crude state of society then existing the position was one calling for infinite tact and nerve. The territory covered eastern Wyoming and western Nebraska. Headquarters were at Valentine as long as Valentine was the terminus of the Northwestern railway. Later, when the road built to Chadron, Dahlman, as brand inspector, moved along with it. At Chadron he went into the government supply contracting and meat business.

It was along in 1884 that Dahlman became a resident of Chadron and he grew prominent in the affairs of the settlement. He was elected to the council notwithstanding the fact he was a democrat in a republican camp. In 1886 the people of Dawes county elected him sheriff so good an opinion did they have of his character and ability with the shooting iron. His administration could not have had serious flaws, for he was re-elected twice, although the county had a normal republican majority of 700 votes. His own majority at his first election was fifty-five, but later it was about 300 twice.

During these six years as sheriff Dahlman loomed up in the public eye as a sheriff, who came pretty close to being the real thing in that line. He placed his reputation for coolness, nerve, daring and quick gun play above impeachment. He arrested desperate criminals with about the same certitude and calmness as a harvesting machine mows down oats. His career as a peace officer includes such incidents as leading in between men with knives drawn prepared to cut out each other's vitals; of taking desperadoes at the point of their own weapons when he had overpowered bringing his own along; of compelling riotous and murderous "drunks" to surrender simply by the ex-



THE DAHLMAN FAMILY HOME.



MRS. DAHLMAN AND THE GIRLS.

ercise of the eye, voice and will power; of preventing lynchings when it was exceedingly unprofitable to do so, and so on.

Dahlman is not a large man. He is slight in build and delicate of feature. In those days he was wiry and strong, however, and his voice then as now could carry an extremely solemn warning in a normal tone. His eyes, dark and luminous, are usually of friendly and engaging

aspect, but, those who have seen him confronting a stiff proposition say they can blaze like a brace of porpoises at the gates of the inferno.

At the close of his third term as sheriff Dahlman was elected mayor of Chadron. He was nominated for a second term by acclamation by a mass meeting of democrats and republicans after a financial showing had been made of his first administration. It followed that he was re-

chosen. He retired in 1894 and was deputy state oil inspector under the state administration in 1895 and 1896. Later he was a secretary of the State Board of Transportation two years. He went to Lincoln in 1897, but moved to Omaha in 1898 and has since resided here.

High in Party's Councils.
The weight Mr. Dahlman has had in the party councils of his state is shown by the fact that he has been national committeeman from Nebraska from 1896 to 1900 and is now serving in such capacity. From 1900 to 1904 he was a member of the national executive committee of his party. He was a delegate to the democratic national convention of 1892 and was one of the delegation that escorted Bryan to Chicago in 1898. He was chosen chairman of the state committee in 1896, and in 1900 had charge of Bryan's train touring the east.

Mr. Dahlman was married at Union, Ia., in 1884, to Miss Abbott, a native of Maine, with whom he became acquainted while she was visiting at Pine Ridge Agency. Two daughters complete his family, Ruth, aged 20 years, a graduate of Monticello seminary at Godfrey, Ill., and Dorothy, who is 7 years old. Their home is at 2901 Hickory street, where Mr. Dahlman owns an attractive and comfortable cottage.

Mr. Dahlman was one of the delegates to the Transmississippi congress at Omaha in 1898 and assisted in taking the action that culminated in the Omaha exposition. He has been in the live stock commission business in South Omaha for eight years and is now assistant manager of the National Live Stock Commission company, a large concern of its kind. For several years he was president and general manager of the American Live Stock Commission company of South Omaha.

Mayor-elect Dahlman is a warm admirer of President Roosevelt and when the latter was inaugurated formed one of the cowboy detachment in the procession.

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Great Fur Business in British North America

(Copyright, 1906, by Frank G. Carpenter.)
EDMONTON, May 10.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—I had a chat last night with one of the chief fur buyers of the North American continent. The wild lands reaching from here to the Arctic ocean and from Alaska to Hudson bay supply the most and best furs of the world. The Hudson Bay company has been engaged in the business for 200 years, and it has sent out millions upon millions of skins to the markets of London. It had until a generation ago a monopoly of the trade. By its charters from King Charles it controlled the whole country and governed it as it pleased. Then Canada bought its political rights to British North America and now fur trading is free to all.

This town of Edmonton, which lies over 200 miles due north of the United States boundary, is the center of the new fur trade. It has eight firms which buy skins, and their purchases aggregate hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. One of the most important of the traders is the Hudson Bay company, which has recently erected a department store here, and its chief competitor is Revillon Freres,

the great Paris furriers, who have establishments also in New York and London, and who supply skins and furs to every market of the world.

Millions in Furs.
The Revillon are fit competitors of the Hudson Bay company. They have been engaged in wholesale and retail fur trading for 125 years, and they are now carrying on their business with a capital of 70,000,000 francs, or about \$14,000,000. They have already established posts all over the northwest and they are gradually building up a line of stations throughout the lands which the Hudson Bay people have always considered their own. They have a central station here at Edmonton, another at Prince Albert and a third in Labrador, with 300 or 350 branch posts in active operation. They are buying furs all along the Mackenzie river, up and down the shores of the Arctic ocean, along Hudson bay and in different parts of Labrador, and they are, I am told, getting a fair share of the best skins of the continent.

In addition to this they have, with the opening up of the wheat belt, established a great wholesale and retail department store here and are doing business with the new

settlers. They are in fact the Marshall Field company of the northwest and by far the largest wholesale dealers outside of Winnipeg.

Merchandising in the New Canada.
The head of the fur establishment and the department store is a young Frenchman, Mr. Revillon. He is only about 25 years of age, but he has already built up this business and has the sole charge of it. It was while dining with him the other night that we talked about the fur trade and the wonderful growth going on here.

"I came to Edmonton from New York about four years ago. I had had some experience in our fur houses in Germany and England before I went to the United States, and the life in New York suited me. When I was told to go to Edmonton I rather objected, but now I like it and expect to stay here and build up this trade. It seems to me that Edmonton is one of the best business places on the North American continent. We started in here as fur traders, but our wholesale and retail merchandising has so grown that it is eight or nine times as big as our business in furs. We are selling goods as fast as we can get them. We import them by the car load and they go out as rapidly as they come in. We have sold several car loads of American cotton within the past few months and have now on hand car loads of hardware and general supplies. There are altogether about seven hundred retail stores in this immediate territory and nearly all of them have sprung up in the last five years. The settlers who are coming in have plenty of money. They want the best goods and are not backward in buying."

to the distance of the trading post from Edmonton, the rate increasing on account of the freight."

How the Indians Sell Furs.
"But does the savage understand the value of his furs?"
"Yes, indeed, and he understands how to get it. He is not an easy man to deal with, and must be handled in his own peculiar way. Some of our traders visit the Indian camps carrying boxes of goods with them. At such times they never mention trading upon their arrival. The white trader tells his Indian friends that he has come out to make a friendly call. He asks after the health of the tribe and of each man's wife and family. He smokes with them and talks about the weather and other things for hours and hours. Indeed, a night often passes before any business is mentioned. The next day the trader may ask one of the Indians if his luck has been good and if he says yes it is a sign that he has furs and is willing to trade. If he says no the white man goes on smoking. After a time the Indian may thaw out and pull a mink skin from inside his coat and ask the trader what he will give for it. If the price is right he will sell it, but if not he will bring forth no more skins and the

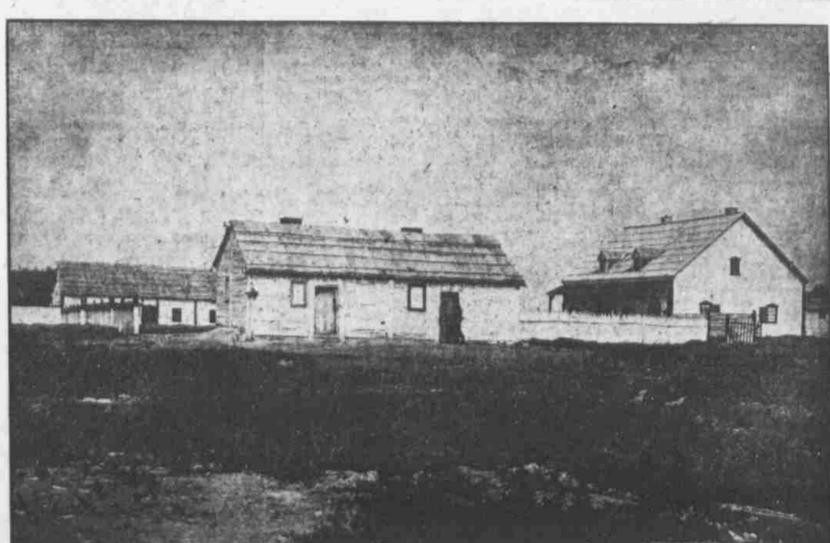
business dealings are ended for that visit. If he is satisfied he may pull out another mink, gradually giving up all he has for sale. He has to be treated diplomatically, is sensitive and suspicious and it takes skill to handle him.

Money in Fur Trading.
"Do the Indians make much money in that way?"
"Yes; I have known braves who made \$2,000 or \$3,000 a year. The average Indian does well, however, if he nets \$300 or \$400. But much or little, it is all the same. These Indians do not know how to keep money. They never consider the future. They barter their furs for goods as soon as they have them, and they eat up their supplies as fast as they can. They buy the most extravagant things. I know an Indian, for instance, who received \$1,500 for some furs. The first thing he did was to send to Quebec for a piano, which cost him, all told, \$1,000 before it was delivered. He did not know how to play it, and after a few days he tore it apart to see how it worked.

"When an Indian receives the value of his furs he always divides with his friends and family. He brings his connections together and they eat until they have con-



A FUR DEPOT ON THE GREAT SLAVE LAKE.



FORT GOOD HOPE, A FUR-TRADING STATION ON THE MACKENZIE RIVER.