

**THE FOLLOWING HISTORY, ARTICLES,
PICTURES, NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS, ETC. ARE ABOUT THE
BEEBE & RUNYAN FURNITURE COMPANY.**

**FOR THIRTY-SEVEN YEARS (1954-1990)
BEEBE & RUNYAN FURNITURE COMPANY
WAS PART OF MY LIFE.**

**FOR MY LOVE OF HISTORY I ASSEMBLED
THIS INFORMATION FOR
MY CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN.**

**DARRELL R. ECKARDT
2006**

Beebe & Runyan Furniture Company

1864-----1990

By Darrell R. Eckardt

About 1864 Calvin A. Beebe started a small trading company known as C. A. Beebe & Company in Council Bluffs, Iowa. The company specialized mostly in used furniture, miscellaneous items and some new furniture. *(You will note in reading farther that various articles state that he started his company in 1867 or 1868. The 1864 date was what the company used in various promotion articles and press releases in the latter years.)*

Selling and trading furniture in those early pioneer days was most difficult, but Calvin was a frugal man and with the assistance of his son, Walter, the firm of C. A. Beebe & Company prospered.

A "story" has it that a man from the railroad contacted Mr. Beebe and told him that they had a train car full of new metal beds that a customer had refused to accept and the shipper wanted to sell rather than having it returned to them. They struck a deal and Mr. Beebe bought the shipment and started peddling the beds by team and wagon to surrounding hardware and furniture stores. He was so successful selling them that he ordered another carload of beds and thus the Beebe wholesaling firm was started.

This is an excerpt from Calvin's biography that appeared in **History of Pottawattamie County, Iowa** published in 1883: *"He began business here in 1867; built his present business house in 1880, and is doing a good trade, carrying a stock of about \$15,000, employing two assistants, and doing an annual business of from \$35,000 to \$40,000. He keeps a fine stock of furniture, crockery and glassware; he also does an extensive jobbing business."*

In the 1880's Calvin admitted his brother-in-law, Washington Runyan, into the business.

The following appeared in the **Bee News**, morning edition, on November 30, 1888;

"C. A. Beebe & Co., 205 and 207 Broadway" *"This prominent firm, in the furniture interest of Council Bluffs, was originally established in 1868 by Mr. C. A. Beebe, in a modest way. In 1887 the present firm was formed, consisting of C. A. Beebe, W. Runyan and H. Beebe, and to-day the firm occupy a leading position, being one of the largest in this line in the west. They are wholesale and retail dealers in a general line of furniture, and carry a full and complete assortment of parlors, bedroom, library, dining room and office furniture in all grades. The building occupied by the firm as office and salesroom is situated at 205 and 207 Broadway, and is a handsome brick building four stories in height. 40x160 feet in dimensions, thoroughly equipped with all the requirements for the transaction of their extensive business.*

Their warerooms are located on the Northwestern and Union Pacific railroad tracks, giving them superior facilities for the receiving and shipments of goods. Their trade extends throughout the states of Iowa, Nebraska, northern Kansas, Wyoming and Colorado, which is visited by their traveling salesman."

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Another "story" has it that Calvin was out of the store peddling or delivering some furniture. A man came into the store and was buying some furniture for his home, but didn't have enough money to pay the total bill. The man stated that he was a sign painter and would paint a sign on the front window as part of his payment, Washington accepted his offer and had Beebe & Runyan painted on the window. This may be where the name of Beebe & Runyan Furniture Co. originated. *(The name, Beebe & Runyan was never used until they moved to Omaha and were incorporated January 30, 1891.)*

In 1887 C. A. Beebe & Co. had their offices and salesroom at 205-207 Broadway and 204-206 Pierce Street in Council Bluffs, Iowa. The warehouse was located at 11th Street and First Avenue in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

In the late 1880's Walter Beebe had the foresight to prevail upon his father and uncle that the "new town" across the river would be the best for enlargement and expansion of their furniture company.

On the 30th day of January, 1891, BEEBE & RUNYAN FURNITURE COMPANY incorporated under the Laws of Nebraska in Omaha. Calvin A. Beebe was President, Washington Runyan was Treasurer and Calvin's daughter, Emily D. Beebe was Secretary.

Beebe & Runyan Furniture Co. purchased the firm of C. A. Beebe & Co., an unincorporated company, for \$50,000 and the parties agreed to accept Capital Stock in the Beebe & Runyan Furniture Co. for the respective amounts as follows: C. A. Beebe \$17,600, Walter Beebe \$16,600, Washington Runyan \$15,700 and Emily Beebe \$100. Shares of fully paid up stock of the new corporation were given, totaling 500 shares.

In 1891 their office and warerooms (warehouse) were located at the northwest corner of 13th and Grace Streets in Omaha. This three story building with a basement had trackage in the rear.

Beebe & Runyan continued to prosper and enlarge and now was entirely a wholesale furniture supplier to the retail furniture dealers throughout the Midwest and far-west.

The following is from the book, **History of the City of Omaha** (Pen and Sunlight Sketches) published in 1894.

"The leading Company handling furniture of all kinds in large lots in Omaha, is known as the BEEBE & RUNYAN FURNITURE COMPANY of Omaha, Nebraska. This business was established twenty seven years ago by Mr. C. A. Beebe, and was continued so until twelve years ago, when the style of C. A. Beebe & Co. was adopted, Mr. W. Runyan being admitted to the business. In 1891 the present company was formed and incorporated under the laws of Nebraska, with \$50,000 capital. This company draws its patronage from all sections of the

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West, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Iowa and Nebraska. They do a jobbing business in bedroom furniture, wire mattresses, chairs, tables, book cases, center and office tables, wardrobes, etc. They manufacture springs for beds and couches, and handle many car-loads of goods each year. On the corner of Thirteenth and Grace Streets, a three-story and basement building, 113x130 feet in dimensions, is occupied for the business. Railroad tracks are in the rear, and every convenience is enjoyed for handling this large and representative business. Mr. Beebe is a native of Missouri, and has resided in Council Bluffs, Iowa for many years. Mr. Runyan was born in Iowa, and has also resided in Council Bluffs for a number of years."

In the late 1890's their sample room was located at 1537-49 Sherman Avenue. (*Sherman Ave. is now 16th Street*) The offices, warehouse and manufacturing were still at 13th and Grace. (*Northwest corner of Grace*)

Around the turn of the century they moved their offices and sales room to the corner of 10th and Farnam Streets (918-924 Farnam) where they occupied the top two floors of this five story building.

Beebe & Runyan's wholesaling was complimented by a mattress and upholstery manufacturing factory at the 13th and Grace Street location until it was destroyed by fire on December 13, 1903. (*Some have also claimed that they had a factory at 13th & Nicholas Streets, but I could not verify them having a factory there, only at the Grace Street location. They did sell merchandise for Omaha Upholstering Company of 1302-06 Nicholas and The E. M. Hulse Company of 1307-11 Nicholas. Each were manufacturers at that corner. These two companies also advertised in Beebe & Runyan's catalog of 1891.*)

In January 1902 they leased a five story warehouse and a three story building for manufacturing at 32nd and Spaulding Streets from the Murphy Chair Co. The original lease was for two years at a cost of \$2,000.00 per year. They were still leasing this building in 1912 and the new rent would be \$4,300.00 per year effective July 1, 1912. This was a five story building with trackage on the "Belt Line" (Missouri Pacific) railroad. Apparently they had two warehouses for a short time until the building at 13th and Grace was destroyed by fire in December 1903. Their 1906 catalog lists two warehouse locations, 32nd and Spaulding Streets and 1542-49 Sherman Avenue.

To stock this new warehouse a large purchase was made from the Mattoon Manufacturing Company of Sheboygan, Wisconsin and the headlines on the January 25, 1902 front page of the **Sheboygan Telegram** in Wisconsin read:

January 25, 1902 front page of the **Sheboygan Telegram**

"HIS HAND IS ON THE THROTTLE-----Big Furniture Train Leaves Tomorrow-----A DAY LIGHT SPECIAL" *"The train, with two mogul freight engines of the latest pattern will pull on it's journey, consists of sixty fifty-foot cars. In them will be packed 15,360 single pieces*

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of furniture in whose manufacture 1,077,000 feet of lumber were used, enough to extend a board one foot wide from Chicago to this city and from here to Fond du Lac. Six hundred men were employed 20 days each to fashion the crude lumber into the brilliant furniture that will please hundreds of homes of the far west. Carefully packed so as to guard against any damage this train carries 2240 three piece chamber suits, 346 assorted beds, 1460 dressers, 280 sideboards, 1640 chiffoniers, 1714 extension tables and 3200 kitchen tables. The value of this shipment totals up to \$70000. The freight charges on this train pots up to \$3700." The article went on to say that the largest train of furniture ever consigned by one firm to another, was that of the Mattoon Manufacturing Company of Sheboygan to the Beebe & Runyan Furniture Company of Omaha, Nebraska. The shipment will be the talk in railroad and shipping circles for months to come.

In the January 27, 1902 **Sheboygan Telegram** the headlines read:

**"REACH OMAHA TOMORROW 10 P. M.--More Than one Half of Route Carried--
---THREE DAYS JOURNEY"** The article went on to say that newspapers along the route devoted columns of description to the train and factory. The shipment would take three days on the Northwestern line. The train for convenience sake had been made in two sections, but on several occasions they were combined into one to give a still better effect, thus it will travel as one through Chicago and two or three other of the larger cities en route. The train traveled only in daylight so that the newspapers in every town through which it passed would make mention of it's coming and going. Locomotive 754 pulled one division and 984 and 974 the other. Each individual car had flags at the ends and in the center and a banner covering about three fourths on the sides of each car proclaiming to all that this furniture shipment was consigned by the Mattoon Furniture Mfg. Co. to Beebe & Runyan of Omaha, Nebraska. *(These sixty carloads of furniture were shipped to the new warehouse that they had just leased at 32nd and Spaulding location.)*

The offices and sample room (*sample floor*), although moved several times, were always on the edge of the downtown business district. The various locations were at 1547-1549 Sherman Avenue in 1899, northeast corner of 10th and Farnam (914 Farnam) in 1902, moving to southwest corner of 11th and Douglas Streets (1101-1105 Douglas) in 1907 and to the southeast corner of 9th & Dodge Streets (105 South 9th St.) in 1913. The monthly rent for the five story building at 11th and Douglas Streets was \$375.00 a month.

On August 23, 1903 Calvin A. Beebe, the founder, passed away after a short illness. Washington Runyan was elected to the Presidency. In March 1907 Mr. Runyan resigned due to ill health and Walter Beebe, son of Calvin, was elected President and served in that position until 1946.

On Thursday, December 17, 1903, a fire destroyed the company's building at Thirteenth and Grace Streets. It was also the second fire that day at this location. The following excerpt appeared in the **Omaha Daily Bee** of December 18, 1903;

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“FIRE DESTROYS THE PLANT”---”FLAMES WIPE OUT BEEBE & RUNYAN at LOSS of FIFTY THOUSAND---TASK of FIREMEN A MOST DIFFICULT ONE”

“Fire which is supposed to have originated in the electrical cotton picking machines of the Beebe & Runyan furniture warehouse and factory, at Thirteenth and Grace streets, at 4 a.m. yesterday, (December 17th) caused the destruction of the big plant. The loss is estimated in round numbers, at \$52,500, and insurance aggregates \$38,750.

The building was a frame structure 32x113 feet in dimensions and three and a half stories high. It had been used as a warehouse and factory by the Beebe & Runyan company for a number of years. At this place the more expensive, or parlor, furniture was made and housed. In addition to a fine plant of machinery a large stock of hardwood, expensive upholstering cloth and tons of wool and cotton filling were burned.

Washington Runyan, treasurer (He actually was the new President) of the company, when seen at the down town office, Tenth and Farnam streets, said: It was the second fire which broke out in our place. In the afternoon, about 3 o'clock, there was a small blaze near the center of the building, in one of the cotton picking machines. This was easily managed and the rooms were thoroughly saturated with water and then cleaned out. The origin of the fire this morning is something of a mystery to us. We employ about fifty people at the this plant and made only better class of goods here. We had intended closing this plant in the near future, from the fact that we have bought a site for a more pretentious building and one which shall be modernly equipped on Dodge street, between Eighth and Ninth.

“I cannot say, when this new plant will be built. It is quite an undertaking. We own a half block of ground and we want to build the full length of the ground. We will not be stopped for a minute in doing our regular business as heretofore because of this fire” (No mention of this fire or the purchase of the new property appeared in their any of the companies minutes.)

Beebe & Runyan purchased property at 9th & Dodge prior to 1903. When they purchased the property the area was called the Red Light District or Tenderloin District. The book, **The Gate City, A History of Omaha**, stated that in 1910 Omaha had twenty-six hundred professional “ladies of the night,” plus many more irregular free-lancers in the “army of vice.”

March 13, 1906, Annual Stockholders Meeting: “The matter of a new building was brought up and discussed and it was decided that this be postponed for at least two years as it was the opinion that the business would be in much better shape to carry it through success fully at that time.” Nothing was ever again mentioned about building a new building until the January 8, 1914 at the Directors Meeting, which only stated that the meeting was being held at their office at 9th and Dodge St.

A 1907 Condensed Report of Business showed sales of \$736,748.78 and a net profit of \$41,128.95. They paid a 15% dividend that year totaling \$34,080.00.

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In late 1913 they moved into their new building which was located on the southeast corner of 9th and Dodge Streets (105 South 9th St.). The new building consisted of eight floors, containing some 209,616 square feet of space to house their offices, display floor and warehouse.

The new building had three freight elevators. You could spot four fifty-foot box cars inside the building on the south side, four box cars on the north side of the building and three box cars on the west side if needed. The west side had a loading dock the length of the building for outgoing truck shipments. The east side also had a large dock for loading and unloading trucks. On the northeast corner of the building there was attached a one story room that housed the boiler and coal room. The back of the building (east side) was enclosed with a brick wall and two gates forming a court yard where they could leave their horses at night. At the time it was built it was reported to be one of the largest warehouse west of the Mississippi river.

The railroad tracks in the front (west side) were owned and serviced by the U P railroad. The tracks on the north south and east were owned and used jointly by the C B & Q and C & N W Ry. These two railroad's operated on these tracks for only six months at a time, rotating every six months.

A old "story" has it that the original boiler for the building was used and had come for an old steam ship and that the boiler room was built around it. True or false I do not know.

In the early years till about the late 1950's or early 1960's the boiler was coal fired. In those early years four men would unload two railroad coal cars full of coal by shovel into the small opening in the coal room on the northeast corner of the building for the winter supply. Two men were in the coal car and two in the coal room This would take them about two weeks in the fall of each year. Latter in the 1960's the boiler was converted to natural gas with a fuel oil back up.

The back cover of the August 1, 1914, "**JOURNAL**" of the Commercial Club of Omaha had "**Some of Omaha's New Buildings---Specimens of the 1914 Crop**" It had pictures of five new buildings:

Beebe & Runyan Furniture Co., Southeast corner of 9th & Dodge Streets. (*Now, 2005, being converted into condos and owned by Boco Development.*)

Hotel Fontenelle, Northwest corner of 18th & Douglas Streets. (*No longer standing, now the property is part of the Roman Hurska Federal Building complex.*)

Omaha Printing Co., 1301 Farnam St., Southwest corner of 13th & Farnam Streets. (*No longer standing, now the Nebraska State Office Building is located on this property.*)

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Skinner's Macaroni Factory, 1323 Jackson St., Southeast corner of 14th & Jackson Streets. (*Now it contains apartments.*)

Studebaker Building, 2558 Farnam St., Northwest corner of 25th Ave. & Farnam St. (*Now occupied by All Makes Office Equipment Co.*)

Beebe & Runyan's competitors in 1913 and 1914 were the Hartman Furniture & Carpet Company at 1414-18 Douglas Street and Dewey & Stone Furniture Company at 1115-17 Farnam Street.

At the March 12, 1918 meeting of the Directors, a Resolution was made as follows:

"Whereas--The last two years have been extremely prosperous for this Company and: Whereas--The Directors of the Company have participated in this prosperity to a very meager extent therefore be it Resolved--that the able management and conduct of the business by the Officers and Directors be now acknowledged and commended and in consideration of same and advance of salaries be allowed them on the condition stated herewith below for the year 1918 as follows:

<i>Directors</i>	<i>1917 Salary</i>	<i>1918 Salary</i>
<i>W. Beebe.....Pres. & Gen. Mgr.</i>	<i>5,000.00</i>	<i>10,000.00</i>
<i>A. L. Fitch....Vice Pres.</i>	<i>5,000.00</i>	<i>6,000.00</i>
<i>J. R. Pilling...Treasurer</i>	<i>2,700.00</i>	<i>6,000.00</i>
<i>F. R. Hoagland....Secretary</i>	<i>2,700.00</i>	<i>6,000.00</i>
<i>D. L. Lee.....Sales Mgr.</i>	<i>3,300.00</i>	<i>6,000.00</i>

These salaries to be paid on the condition that the above Directors shall be credited monthly during the year 1918 at the rate paid them in 1917, the balances to be credited and paid through Dec. 31, 1918."

All monthly and weekly employees also were given raises ranging from 5% to 45% with most being in the 10% to 25% range.

The sales for 1916 were \$906,976.93, with a net profit of \$124,537.07. In 1917 their sales went over the one million mark for the first time with sales of \$1,042,266.76 but the profit dropped to \$95,220.51 due to a large jump in expenses.

In 1919 their sales were \$1,602,242.28 and in 1920 sales were \$1,417,007.81, however, in 1921 sales dropped to \$785,606.59 and they showed their first loss of profits. In 1922 they bounced back with sales over a million and increases in sales each of the next two years.

On the Profit & Loss Statements from 1915 through 1924 a large profit was made every year, except in 1921 were they showed a loss of \$1,087.94 and withdrew \$48,292.90 from the

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Surplus account so that they could pay the stockholders a 15% dividend. In 1922 the profits were low, \$37,557.83, but they again withdrew from the Surplus account and paid a 15% dividend.

In the old Minute Book of 1891-1953 they paid a dividend of 29% in 1899, 23% in 1901 and 15% almost every year from 1902 through 1939. Starting in 1946 a 30% dividend was paid every year and raised to 40% in 1950. As you can see Beebe & Runyan was a very profitable company in the 1940's and 1950's, especially for the stockholders.

In the minutes of May 22, 1922 they signed a petition to the Mayor and City Council of Omaha, Nebraska asking that Dodge Street from 8th Street to 9th Street. S.I.D. 1937 be improved by paving the same with Asphaltic Concrete, Class 'B'. Prior to this petition they had requested this from the city in February 1920, requesting that it be paved with VETRIFIED BRICK BLOCK. *(Apparently they were successful with their second petition, as the street had a hard surface (brick) until it was removed in the 1960's for the interstate off ramp. Dodge Street ended at 8th Street due to the many railroad tracks.)*

During World War II, from 1943 to 1946, all salesmen were given a leave of absence and most warehouse personnel became employed in the handling bomber parts. During that time Beebe & Runyan occupied two floors, the third and eighth floors, while the government occupied the remaining six.

On August 21, 1946 Walter Beebe died and his brother-in-law, Frank R. Hoagland, who had been employed since 1904 became President. Due to ill health Mr. Hoagland's term as President lasted only five years. On June 25, 1951 J. D. Clarkson was elected President.

Mr. Clarkson had been an employee since 1912. In the early years he represented the company in sales, traveling Utah, Idaho, Nevada and Wyoming by train and stagecoach. In 1926 he had been appointed General Manager and buyer.

In the late 1950's or early 1960's the water tower that stood on the elevator room on the southeast corner was removed. This water tower was used in the early years to add water pressure for the building, especially for the sprinkler system.

In the early years of the building and through the 1950's the company had a black and white sign painted on the east side of the elevator room on southeast corner of the building. This sign was very noticeable as people came to Omaha from Iowa via the old AK SAR BEN bridge. Latter called the Douglas Street bridge. It was very simple and read:

**BEEBE & RUNYAN
FURNITURE
CO.**

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On Memorial Day weekend, May 31, 1955 the vault on the fourth floor was broken into and a large sum of money was taken.

Not knowing what the interstate would do to their building the Directors in the early 1960's started setting aside extra money in the Undivided Profits in case they would have to relocate.

Mr. Clarkson retired on March 8, 1966, after fifty-four years of service. Harrison Peddie who had been employed since 1934 was elected President.

In July of 1960 on the second floor, south side, over the inside railroad tracks the company put a floor over the trackage on the first floor. When the building was built in 1913 they had to leave a large space over the trackage as all box cars in those days had a walkway on top of each rail car. The trainmen would walk along the top of the boxcars when spotting (placing) them for loading and unloading. In the late 1950's or early 1960's OSHA made the railroads remove this walkway for safety reasons. Beebe & Runyan need additional warehouse space and received permission from the railroad to put a floor above the trackage. The railroad stipulated that it had to have so many feet of clearance over the boxcars. That is the reason that the new floor is three or so feet higher than the main floor on the second level.

July 17, 1966 the Company chartered a plane (an old DC-3) and took their road salesmen and some management personnel for a week long trip to visit some of the factories that they were doing business with in the south. They visited the Murphy-Miller, Coleman, Pulaski, and Burris factories. They also visited the Market buildings at High Point and Hickory, NC.

In October 1966 a new Contract Division for office, institutional and motel furnishings was opened on the north half of the third floor.

In August 1967 a new 50,000 square feet showroom and office was opened in North Kansas City, MO to encompass and better serve the Retail Furniture Dealer in the Missouri and Kansas area. Display space was also rented 1967, in the Northwest Home Furnishings Mart in Seattle, WA due to increasing sales in the Northwest.

In September 1968 Swanson Enterprises of Omaha, NE purchased controlling interest of the Company. John A. Sandstedt was elected President and General Manager. This was the first time in the one hundred and five years of the Company that it was not family and employee owned.

Late in the 1960's signs were painted on the south side of the building above the second and third floor windows, above the eighth floor windows on the east side and on the west and east side of the elevator room on the southeast corner of the building. These signs were added as the building now sat in-between the on and off ramps of the 480 Interstate and the old building to the

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south had been removed for the on ramp. Early in 1980 after the Sandstedt's had acquired ownership of the company they started using the name Sandstedt's Beebe & Runyan Furniture Co. and change the signs to that effect however the corporation name was never changed. In the early years of the building there was a black and white sign on the east side of the elevator room that was noticeable to the people crossing the old Douglas Street bridge when coming from Iowa to downtown Omaha.

In October 1970 the Company opened a new showroom, offices and warehouse at 1863 Wazee Street in Denver, CO in a six story building with 125,000 square feet of space. The building was erected in 1923 for a furniture distributor of that era. It was considered one of the finest distribution points in the Denver area. The company had its grand opening of this location, April 3, 1971.

In 1972 Beebe & Runyan Northwest was created by the acquisition of J. Pincus Furniture Wholesale Company and Furniture Finance Corporation at 2014 Ninth Ave., Seattle, WA.

Now with the new interstate highway system it was faster to ship goods by truck, rather than by rail. In the mid 1970's Beebe's acquired a truck and several trailers to make deliveries to their dealers. The manufacturers were doing the same thing and slowly the shipments by rail car stopped.

In 1977 a new 165,000 square foot warehouse and showroom was constructed in Tukwilla (Seattle), Washington at 5950 South 180th Street. The building was built by the Boeing Company especially for Beebe & Runyan and leased to them.

In spring of 1980 Beebe & Runyan closed the doors of the Kansas City facility which they had started in 1967.

In the Spring of 1984 the operation at Seattle was closed down after only seven years in the new building. The building was then subleased to other individuals.

In 1985 Beebe's closed down their operation in Denver which had started in October 1970

On September 1, 1990 Beebe & Runyan Furniture Co. was placed under assignment for the benefit of creditors. The Company's inventory was scheduled for sale during the week of September 21-30, 1990 and the employees were notified that the Company was going out of business.

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A creditor, received from the Company a credit equal to the sum of \$900,000.00 on the secured debt the following Omaha real estate:

1. 110 North 9th Street
2. 902 Dodge Street
3. 105 South 9th Street

On July 23, 1998 the Beebe & Runyan building was put on the National Register of Historic Places

From 1990 until 2004 various companies leased space in the building

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SOME OF BEEBE'S OLD NEIGHBORS & HISTORY

on

South 9th Street, Dodge to Douglas Blocks "E" & "100"

The area in and around South 9th Street, Dodge to Douglas, in the late 1800's and into the early 1900's was called the "Sporting District" and some also called it the "Tenderloin District" as this area had many gambling dens, saloons and brothels. This area was located in the Third Ward which had the reputation as being the center of vice, prostitution flourished and many immoral women inhabited the district. The old hotels and flophouses provided a place for the prostitutes, gamblers, swindlers and criminals.

One of the most imposing structures at this time on South 9th Street was the building at 116 South 9th Street. This three story building was called the "The Castle". It was one of the city's finest bordellos, and a chief rival of Anna Wilson's establishment around the corner at 912 Douglas Street. This building looked like a small castle, three and a half stories high with its turreted gray stone front. Its turrets extended high above the roof. This building stood out among the other buildings in the block.

Beebe & Runyan Furniture Co. purchased the property on the southeast corner of 9th & Dodge Streets in the late fall of 1903, from Barker Co. etal, to build a new facility in the future. This property was the north half of Block "E", lots 1, 2, 3 & 4, in the Original City of Omaha. The building was built by Jobst Brothers construction in 1913 at a cost of \$190,000. The architect was J. McDonald, who was also the architect for the Joslyn Castle, Benson High School, Interim City Hall at 108 South 18th Street and many more significant properties in Omaha. He was known as one of Omaha's "Big Four" architects. The building was officially opened in January 1914. The building has had four different owners since Beebe & Runyan and now is being converted into condominiums.

On the south side of Beebe & Runyan there was an alley with railroad tracks. This alley and trackage ran from 8th Street to 13th Street to serve the many businesses and warehouses in this area. This railroad track was jointly owned by the C & N W Railway. and C B & Q RR.

When Beebe & Runyan moved into their new building in late 1913, their neighbor to the south in Block "E" was the Geo A. Hoagland Lumber Company. The lumber company terminated about 1917 and a new five story building was built on lots 5 and 6 on the southwest corner of Block "E". (*northwest corner of 9th & Douglas*) The new building was known as the Gateway Building and was first occupied by United States Rubber Co.. In the 1950's and early 1960's the building was occupied by the Salvation Army and some other tenants until it was torn down in 1966 to make room for the Douglas Street on-ramp to the interstate.

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Directly to the west (*across the street*) of the Beebe & Runyan building, on the southwest corner of 9th & Dodge Streets, Block 100 (*108 South 9th Street*), the old buildings were torn down and a new building was built in 1917 for the Kirschbraun & Sons Creamery, one of Nebraska's largest creameries. This was a five story building and cost \$140,000 to build. About 1932 Borden's Produce occupied the building until Frank Pilley & Sons had their produce business there in the late 1930's and early 1940's. C. A. Swanson Company then occupied the building from the mid 1940's until the late 1950's. In the late 1950's or early 1960's Shedd-Bartush Foods. took over the building and made oleo (margarine) there until they moved to another city with their operation in the late 1980's. The building was vacant for a few years until its renovation in 1999. The building is now part of Courtyard by Marriott.

Next to the Kirschbraun building on the south side was "The Castle" (*116 South 9th Street*) which was one of the original buildings from the 1800's. This building was one of the finest bordellos west of the Mississippi in the late 1800's. For a few years in the early 1900's it was a rooming house. About 1922 H. Beselin & Son (*a wholesaler of tobacco products*) moved their wholesale tobacco business to this location. They occupied this building until they merged with another company and moved in 1963. The building was torn down and made into a parking lot for the Briggs Pump Company in 1965.

About 1950 a new small one story yellow brick building was built on the lot directly south of the Castle (*120 South 9th Street*). This building housed several different cafes, one being named, Eastgate Grill, in 1956 until it closed in 1963. This building was also torn down and made into a parking lot for the Briggs Pump Company in 1965 when the Castle building was removed for a parking lot.

Directly south of the above building, on the northwest corner of 9th and Douglas Streets, there was a one story building (*902 Douglas Street*) that housed a saloon from the early 1900's. This was one of the original buildings from the 1800's. In 1955 until its closing in 1965 it was called the F & P Bar. (*The employees at Beebe & Runyan called it "Sam's".*) This building was torn down in 1966 and also made part of Briggs Pump Co. parking lot.

The three locations, 116 South 9th, 120 South 9th and 902 Douglas are now the parking lot for the Courtyard by Marriott.

Beebe & Runyan Furniture Company 1864-----1990

By Darrell R. Eckardt

THE NEW BUILDING at 105 SOUTH 9TH STREET Lots 1,2,3 and 4 in Block "E", Original Townsite

On December 27, 1902 Beebe & Runyan took an option to purchase the property for \$20,000.00 from Joseph Barker and George E. Barker (Barker Company) and said option to be exercised by March 31, 1903

On March 28, 1903 they exercised their option and purchased the property. No buildings were standing on lots 2, 3 and 4

Beebe & Runyan hired the well known architect, John McDonald, to design and draw the plans and specifications for the new building. His fee was \$9,400.00. Some of his buildings were the, George Joslyn House, Joslyn Art Museum, Hill Hotel and Beth El Synagogue plus many more homes and churches.

Some of the "Specifications" for erection of the building were as follows.

Provide a privy for the use of workmen.

The contractor will be required to furnish a bond for \$40,000.00.

Other contractors will do the heating, plumbing, electric wiring, elevators, vault doors, trim hardware, railway tracks and tank for sprinkling system.

The owner, Beebe & Runyan, will do all the excavating.

Excavation of the dirt started in March 1913. The company hired the C.B.&Q. RR. Co. to haul away dirt at the price of \$5.00 per carload. The first carload was taken March 27, 1913 and the last was load was taken June 4, 1913. A total of 483 carloads of dirt were removed. The Partridge Thomson Co. did the excavation and grading at a cost of 20 cents per cubic yard.

On April 8, 1913 B. J. Jobst , General Contractor & Builder, was awarded the contract to build the new building for \$134, 016.00, not including the above mentioned to be awarded to other companies. The building was to be completed by October 1, 1913 or he would be required to pay \$40.00 per day for each day thereafter.

The brick used was made by Hydraulic-Press Brick Company. The facing brick cost was \$18.00 per M., F.O.B. cars at building site. The Hard Burned Common Builders cost \$9.70 per M., F.O.B. cars at building site.

Beebe & Runyan Furniture Company

1864-----1990

By Darrell R. Eckardt

Extra steel had to be put in the south wall upon the insistence of the railroad companies to enable them to use the alley for railroad traffic at a cost of \$5,000.00. Later the railroads reimbursed the company \$1,500.00 for extra cost after several years of negotiations.

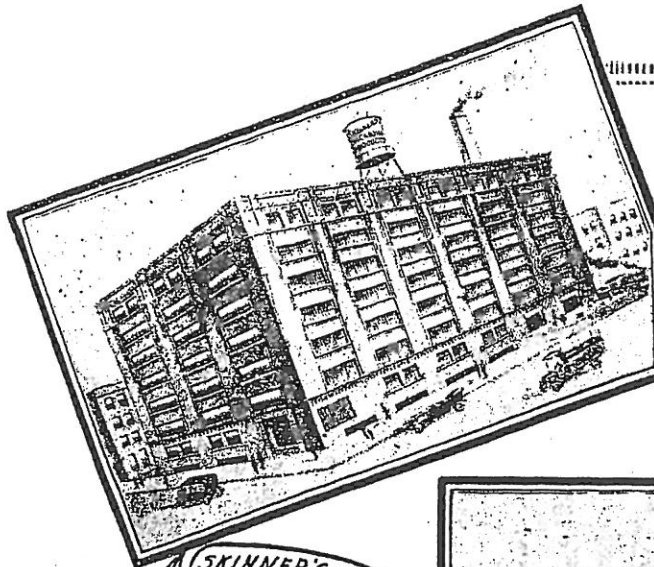
The spur trackage serving the building on Eighth Street and along Dodge Street was not done until 1915. They also had to build a concrete retaining wall on Dodge Street between the railroad tracks and street as required by the railroads at a cost of \$5,000.00. The company paid the railroads \$3,000.00 for installing and providing these tracks to the building,

Many changes and extras were made during construction and the cost changed from \$134,016.00 to \$140,325.65 and the completion date was extended.

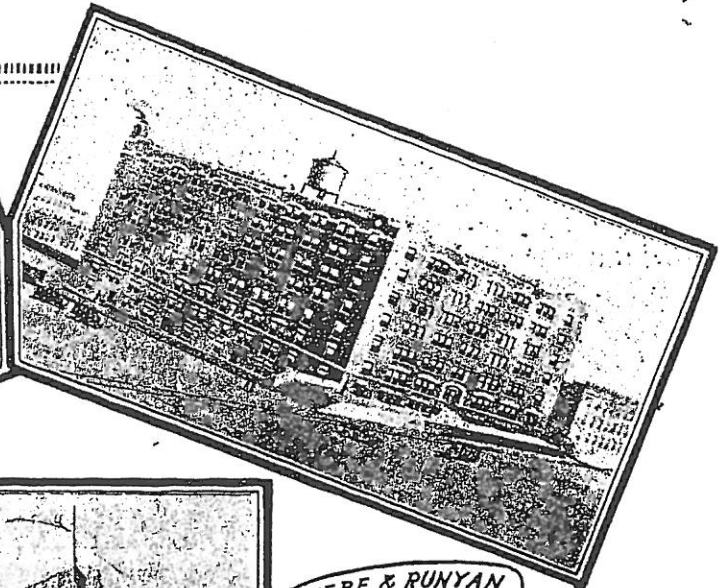
The entire cost of the building was listed as \$189,000.00, not including the land. Nine months from the start of the excavation in March 1913 the building was basically completed in late November 1913 and Beebe & Runyan were moving in and starting to service dealers from their new building. The trackage serving the building on 8th Street was not completed until 1915.

SOME OF OMAHA'S NEW BUILDINGS

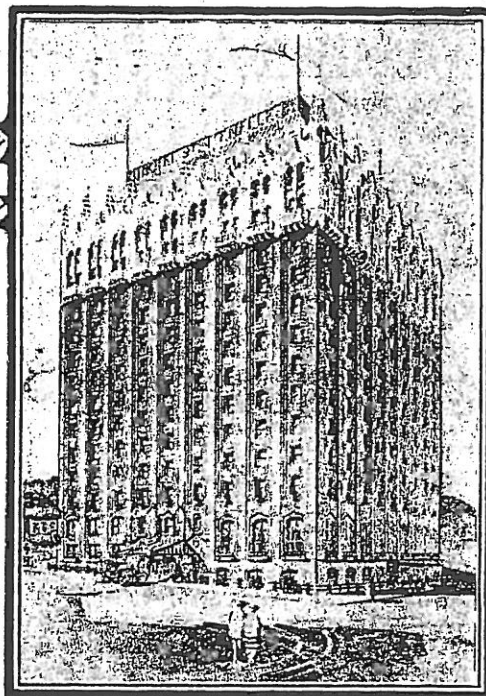
SPECIMENS OF THE 1914 CROP



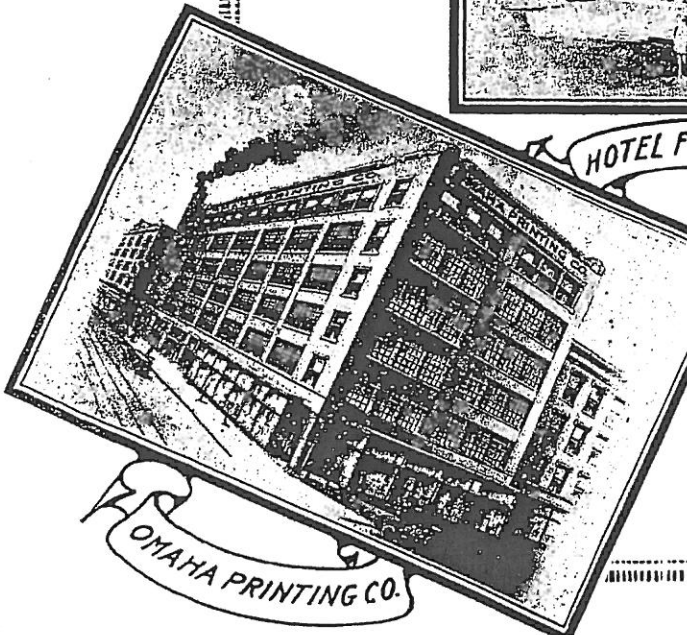
SKINNER'S MACARONI FACTORY



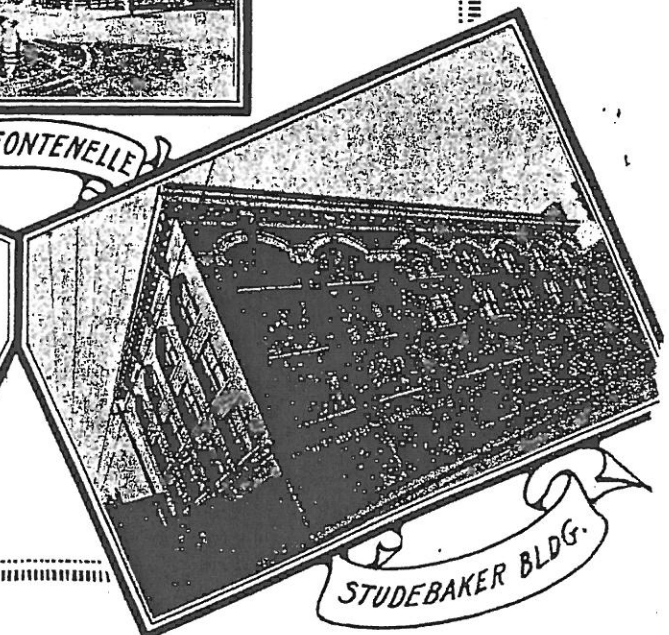
BEEBE & RUNYAN FURNITURE CO.



HOTEL FONTENELLE



OMAHA PRINTING CO.



STUDEBAKER BLDG.

(From the Commercial Club of Omaha, Journal, August 1, 1914)