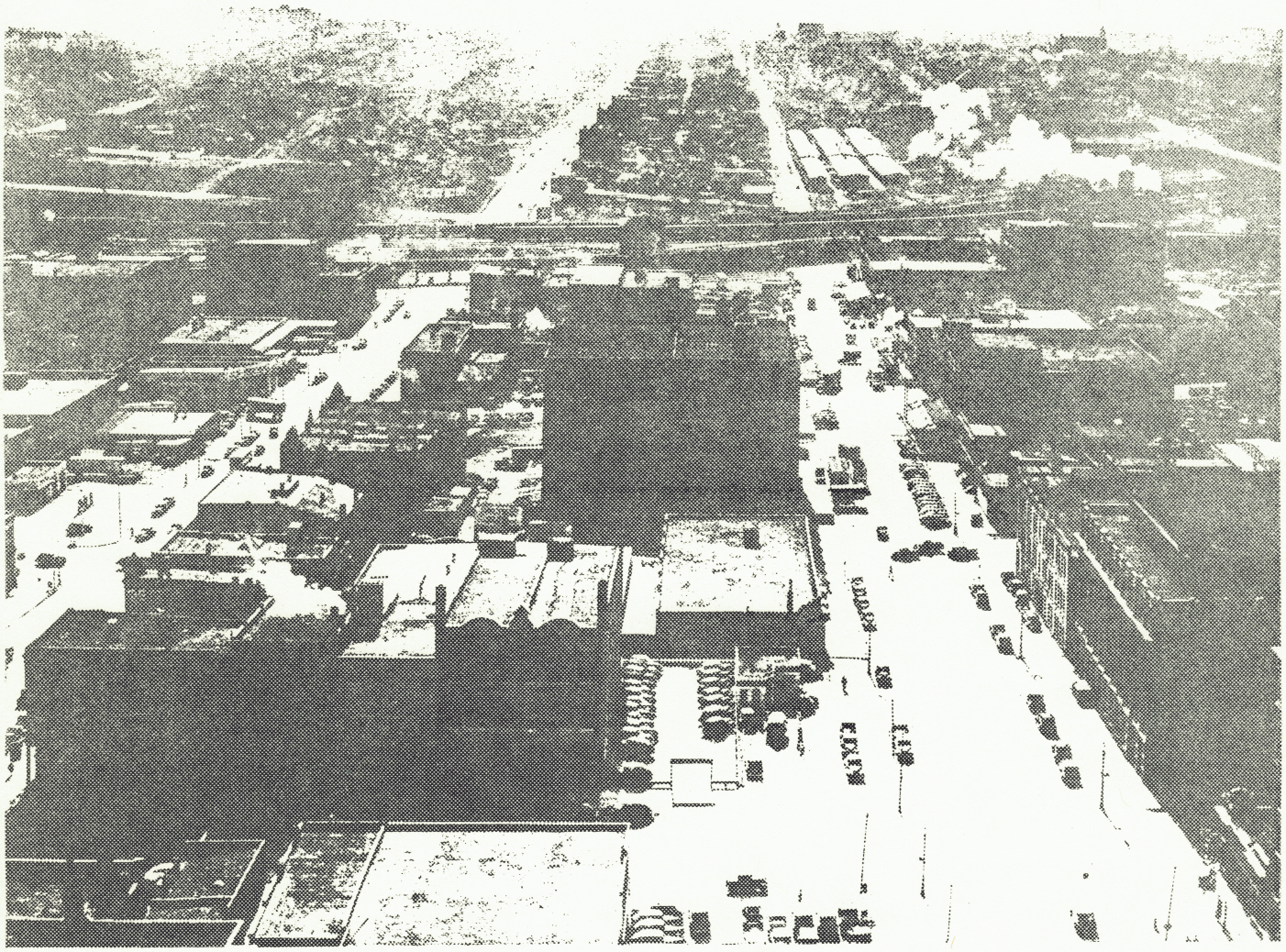
1940 —1949





1940 - 1949: War And Peace

The decade of the 1940s marked America's entry into World War II, and the eventual victory of the Allied Forces over the armies of Germany and Japan. The first atomic bombs were tested and dropped. At home, women entered the work force in greater numbers than ever before. The nation's economy, lukewarm at best during the 1930's, rebounded in a big way in the '40s. After the war, more people could afford to buy houses than ever before. The end of the war also brought the beginning of what would later be called ''The Baby Boom''.

City Concerns

The mayor of Omaha approached the Omaha Real Estate Board in 1940 to appoint a Committee to discuss a bond issue for a new auditorium. The Board decided to oppose the plan. However, the Board strongly supported enlargement and improvement of the Municipal Air Field, cautioning that necessary funds be raised by the city with occupation taxes versus real estate taxes so as to continue the ''Pay as You Go'' philosophy of Council members.

In 1941, Board members were strongly in favor of halting projects by the Housing Authority of the City of Omaha; they led Nebraska in a Call to Action in support of pending legislation to accomplish that end. Realtors argued that the Housing Authority did not accept as tenants those families in the lower income brackets. The Board also argued that these housing projects should not be tax exempt — because the tenants were ''only those regularly employed with standard or average wages and are therefore not entitled to subsidy by other tax payers.'' (Language taken from the original resolution.)

During World War II, the federal government enacted rent control measures. In 1947, Realtor G.E. Shukert remembers, ''World War II was over and the men in the armed forces were mostly back on American soil.Families were being formed at such a fast rate there wasn't enough housing. (There had been very little building during the war, and industry which had been geared to war production was just beginning to be retooled for peace time production.)'' To aid the fight for decontrol, the Washington Realtors Committee asked for a contribution of $5 from each Realtor. The Omaha Real Estate Board had no trouble in raising $100 for the effort (see newspaper story at right).

22 Sunday World-Herald,
A *Omaha, March 23, 1947.*

Realtors Aid 'Lobby' Fund

They Contribute $100 to Fight Rent Curbs

One hundred dollars rolled in at last week's meeting of the Omaha Real Estate Board to support the Washington real estate "lobby's" fight against rent control and public housing.

The Washington Realtors' Committee had called on every realtor in the nation to give $5 to finance the committee's activities.

Landlords Kick In

Board President G. E. Shukert read a letter from a large firm enclosing $25 from four of its members. The extra $5 was for some other realtor who might fail to contribute.

A. A. Allwine said he had $75 raised by the Omaha Building Owners and Managers' Association which Association President A. J. Covert had authorized him to turn over to the board.

Officials of the national realtors' group say money is not enough. Members must contribute one day's time in inducing landlords who have suffered handships to contact their Congressmen. Each realtor is asked to get in touch with 30 property owners. A million messages to Congressmen is the goal.

Maenner to Washington

The Washington real estate committee, called a lobby by President Truman, is credited with having had a big part last year in defeating housing legislation which it termed "socialistic."

T. H. (Ted) Maenner, 1946 chairman of the committee, now just a member, is going to Washington to enter the fight he led a year ago.

In 1949, Omaha Realtors pushed for rent decontrol in Nebraska. Aided by the Nebraska Real Estate Association, they convinced enough state senators that federal rent control was no longer necessary. The law gained passage in May 1949, with the provision (requested by Realtors) that it not be made effective until November, 1949. This was to give tenants and owners a chance to get together on rental adjustment, avoiding hardship on anyone.

The Board formed Omaha Rental Homes, Inc., in 1948 to relieve an acute rental housing shortage. Forty-eight members of the Board subscribed with stock shares of $300 to $500. Twenty units were built at 46th and Cuming Streets with a mortgage debt of $146,000 ground cost of $4500 and $25,000 equity capital. Omaha led the nation with innovation and participation. These units, originally occupied by G.I. families, were followed by further construction.



Above: These apartments at 46th and Cuming Streets were built by Omaha Realtors to offer families a low-cost alternative to public housing, which was in very short supply just after World War II.

The Veteran's Hospital at 42nd and Center Streets stands today because of some quick action by Omaha Realtors in 1945. On December 21, 1945, it became evident to members of the Board that Omaha might lose the hospital project unless $60,000 was raised to purchase the site free and clear for the Veteran's Administration. Led by Realtor G.E. Shukert, a vigorous group of Omaha Real Estate Board members raised all the money in just over 48 hours. The site was secured, the hospital was built, and the Board won the praise of the major civic groups of Omaha.

Financing

G.I. loans were available at 4% interest. First National Bank paid a ½ point finders fee to real estate agents who brought customers to the bank for loans. Appraisals were made by the bank... or the agent would simply state that the property was worth the money. During this period of time, a loan closing consisted of the lender preparing the note and mortgage; the agent would then present it to the buyer for execution.

Cost Of Living

Properties Sold In Omaha And Vicinity During The First Three Months of 1947

Up to $7,500	36	$227,375
$7,500 to $10,000	90	792,380
$10.000 to $15,000	97	1,166,250
Above $15,000	86	810,662
	307	$2,996,667
Average price per property	$ 9,761	
1946 Average Price per property was	$12,300	

HISTORY OF REAL ESTATE SALES OF PROPERTIES SINCE JANUARY 1, 1947

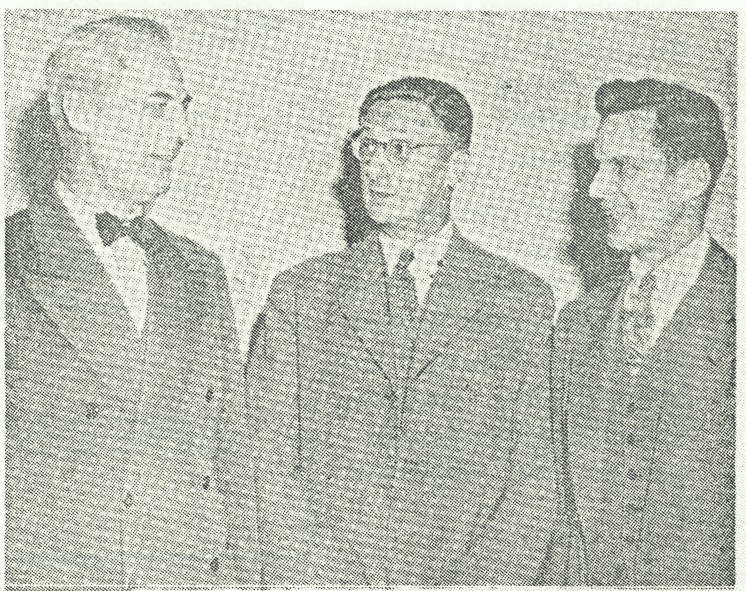
Number	Agent	Listed Price	SalesPrice
306 South 51st Street	Payne & Sons	13,500.00	10,500.00
4819 Cass Street	McFarland-Kennedy	$12,000.00	$10,000.00
5147 Davenport Street	National Co.	16,950.00	14,750.00
5019 Webster Street	Fitzgerald Co.	17,950.00	15,000.00
1110 South 91st Avenue	Stuht-Bedford Co.	27,000.00	19,000.00
552 South 58th Street	Western Securities Co.	26,000.00	20,000.00
515 .7 Jones Street	Byron Reed Co.	15,950.00	12,850.00
407 South 49th Street	McCampbell & Co.	17,500.00	15,000.00
5608 Leavenworth Street	J. F. Johnson	22,850.00	19,500.00
105 Rockbrook Road	Christian-Barrett	28,500.00	17,500.00
531 South 55th Street	Stuht-Bedford Co.	22,000.00	18,000.00
824 North 50th Avenue	R. N. Booth Co.	13,500.00	11,40.000
3555 Woolworth Avenue	Byron Reed Co.	17,850.00	13,500.00
2704 Country Club Blvd.	J. F. Johnson	22,500.00	19,000.00
2043 North 53rd Street	Grove & Company	27,500.00	18,000.00
3314 North 49th Street	Savidge	14,750.00	12,500.00
902 South 35th Street	McFarland-Kennedy	11,000.00	8,000.00
1321 North 53rd Street	Stuht-Bedford Co.	16,950.00	13,000.00
4501 Pine Street	J. F. Johnson	18,950.00	16,000.00
123 South 52nd Street	Western Securities	15,000.00	11,500.00
3502 Burt Street	Savidge	13,250.00	10,500.00
1516 South 32nd Avenue	J. F. Johnson	19,750.00	16,000.00
432 South 39th Street	Western Securities	25,000.00	21,000.00
4833 Dodge Street	Grove & Company	16,500.00	13,000.00
2521 North 16th Street	Byron Reed Co.	21,500.00	15,000.00
1022 North 52nd Street	Schroeder	27,500.00	23,500.00
5312 Izard Street	Quinlan	35,000.00	26,000.00
5202 California Street	Stuht-Bedford Co.	25,000.00	20,000.00
		$561,700.00	$439,000.00
Total of 28 properties were listed at		$561,700.00	$439,000.00 sold
Average price at which properties were listed		$20,800.00	$15,680.00 sold

Typical apartment rents were $50—$60 per month. In 1941, the Board paid $28.93 in rent each month. A new automobile could be purchased for $2,000 or less. A five-room bungalow in the Holy Name area was advertised for $4,950 in 1944. A list of properties sold in the first quarter of 1947 shows a sale price of $8,000 for a home at 902 South 35th Street on the low end of the scale; at the high end is a property at 53rd and Izard Street, sold for $26,000.

News Highlights

World War II occupied a great deal of space in the newspapers — and on the radio airwaves — in the early '40s. In 1948, Harry S. Truman surprised many with a victory over Thomas Dewey; in fact, the Chicago Tribune bannered its early edition, "Dewey Defeats Truman", a real piece of political memoribilia.

The Omaha World-Herald featured a number of articles on the Omaha Real Estate Board and its members. Reporters were regularly sent to OREB Membership Luncheons, occasionally accompanied by photographers. The photo at right is just one example.



New Real Estate Board Officers

Pictured here are three of the four new officers of the Omaha Real Estate Board. Left to right: H. J. Grove, vice-president; G. E. Shukert, president, and Walter G. Savidge, secretary. G. B. Robertson is treasurer.—World-Herald Photo.

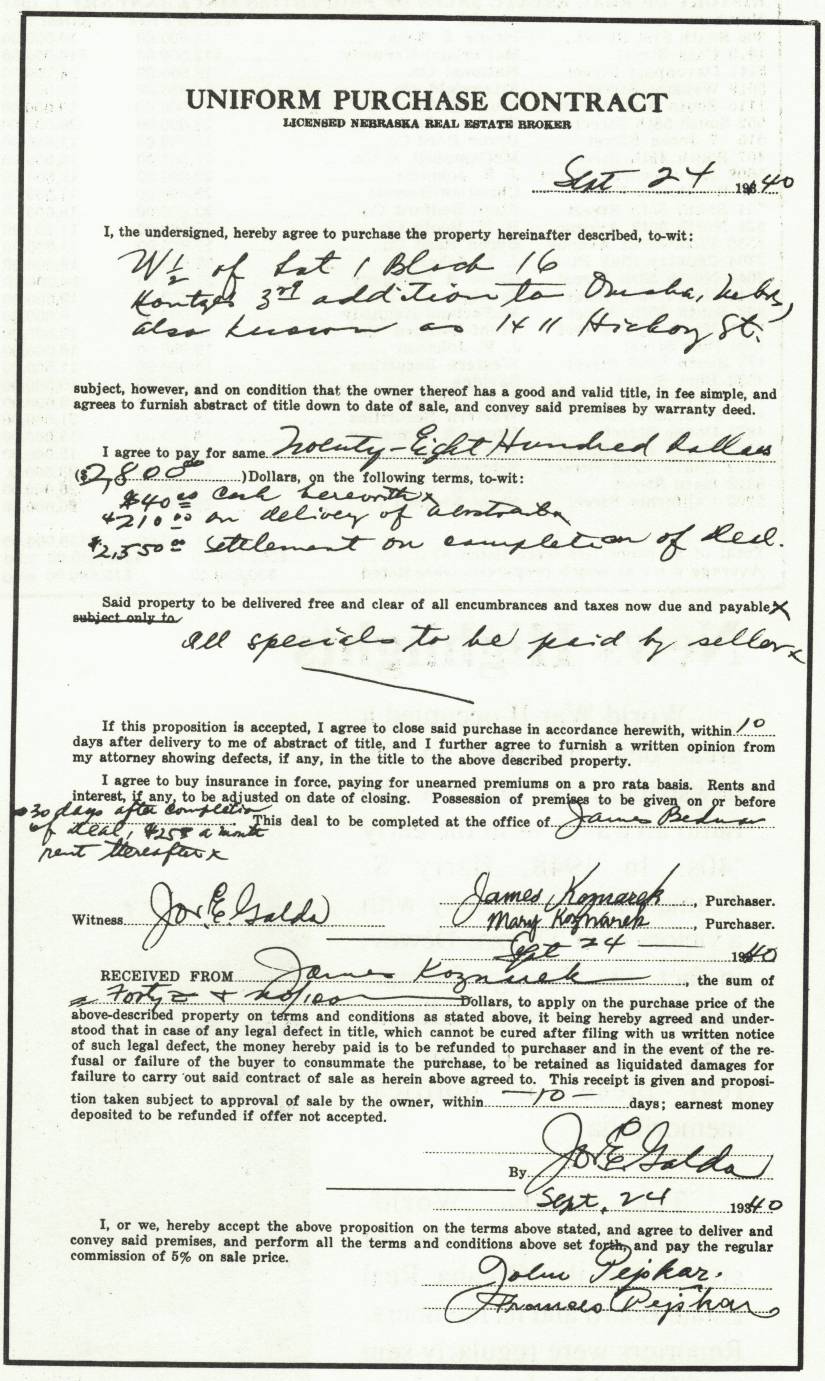
Membership Figures

There were 62 Realtor Members and 138 Affiliate Members in the OREB in 1941, according to Membership Committee Chairman Harold J. Grove, in his end of the year report.

A joint picnic with the Lincoln Real Estate Board was held at Linoma Beach in 1941. The picnic lasted from Noon until Midnight, and featured the annual softball game between the Lincoln "Cyclones" and Omaha "Wildcats". The Wildcats won, 9 to 3.

In his end of the year address, 1943 President R. W. York reported to members, "Having now been operating for two years under War conditions with many restrictions, rules and regulations, we have become somewhat accustomed to the change from the normal course. While the present conditions affecting our business are not all to our liking, we are doing business — and a good business."

Many Omaha Realtors served in the armed forces during World War II, including several who served in bomb squadrons based in England. Other members performed government service or other vital war work.



UNIFORM PURCHASE CONTRACT

LICENSED NEBRASKA REAL ESTATE BROKER

Sept 24 1940

I, the undersigned, hereby agree to purchase the property hereinafter described, to-wit:

W½ of Lot 1 Block 16
Kontzes 3rd addition to Omaha, Nebr.,
also known as 1411 Hickory St.

subject, however, and on condition that the owner thereof has a good and valid title, in fee simple, and agrees to furnish abstract of title down to date of sale, and convey said premises by warranty deed.

I agree to pay for same Twenty-Eight Hundred Dollars ($2,800.00) Dollars, on the following terms, to-wit:
$40.00 Cash herewith x
$210.00 on delivery of abstract x
$2,550.00 settlement on completion of deal.

Said property to be delivered free and clear of all encumbrances and taxes now due and payable x ~~subject only to~~
All specials to be paid by seller x

If this proposition is accepted, I agree to close said purchase in accordance herewith, within 10 days after delivery to me of abstract of title, and I further agree to furnish a written opinion from my attorney showing defects, if any, in the title to the above described property.

I agree to buy insurance in force, paying for unearned premiums on a pro rata basis. Rents and interest, if any, to be adjusted on date of closing. Possession of premises to be given on or before 30 days after completion of deal, $25.00 a month rent thereafter x This deal to be completed at the office of James Bednar

Witness Jos E. Galda

James Koznarek, Purchaser.
Mary Koznarek, Purchaser.

Sept 24 1940

RECEIVED FROM James Koznarek, the sum of Forty & no/100 Dollars, to apply on the purchase price of the above-described property on terms and conditions as stated above, it being hereby agreed and understood that in case of any legal defect in title, which cannot be cured after filing with us written notice of such legal defect, the money hereby paid is to be refunded to purchaser and in the event of the refusal or failure of the buyer to consummate the purchase, to be retained as liquidated damages for failure to carry out said contract of sale as herein above agreed to. This receipt is given and proposition taken subject to approval of sale by the owner, within 10 days; earnest money deposited to be refunded if offer not accepted.

By Jos E. Galda

Sept. 24 1940

I, or we, hereby accept the above proposition on the terms above stated, and agree to deliver and convey said premises, and perform all the terms and conditions above set forth, and pay the regular commission of 5% on sale price.

John Pejkar.
Frances Pejkar

Above: By the 1940s, Purchase Contracts and other forms had become much more uniform. The back of this contract contained a section for a notary public's witness. This particular transaction involved the sale of a single-family home at 1411 Hickory Street at the price of $2,800.00; the earnest deposit was $40.00.

In 1943, the Board considered a policy on dual agency. A committee of the Board made the following proposal: "In the event a sale of realty is made, involving a Realtor representing the Seller and a Realtor representing the Buyer, and in which sale the obtaining of an F.H.A. loan is a necessary part of the deal, and a loan commission is paid, then and in that event the Realtor representing the Buyer shall have the right to make application for and secure the necessary F.H.A. loan. In this event the Realtor securing the loan shall be entitled to the full loan commission. The only exception to this rule shall be in the event the Realtor representing the Seller has made application to F.H.A. for the loan and has secured a commitment from F.H.A. covering the loan, prior to the beginning of negotiations in connection with that sale, between the Buyers Agent and the Sellers agent. In which event the Sellers Agent shall be entitled to the entire loan commission."

There were two women among the ranks of the sales agents in the 1940s — Betty Donahue and Betty Brewer. "I predicted it (the home sales market) would become a women's field," said Realtor Robert Hastings (1949 OREB President), "and I was laughed down."



Above: Women became a much more familiar sight in the workplace during the war years, entering fields which had not previously been open to them. "Rosie the Riveter" became a famous symbol of American women helping the war effort through their labor. The real estate industry and business also began to open some doors to women. Some women (albeit a rather small number) even began to think of jobs in terms of careers.

Population of the Area

The official U. S. Census Report listed 223,844 people living in Omaha in 1940.

For many years, the Board conducted a yearly count of pedestrian traffic in the downtown area. The count was done each May. In 1949, the 25th year of the survey, foot traffic in the business district dropped 16 percent from figures in 1925, the first year of the study (from 185,000 down to 155,000). Population increased 35% between 1925 and 1949 — from 203,000 to 274,000. Realtor Moorhead Tukey, Chairman of the Traffic Count Committee, reported, "While undoubtedly some of these people are shopping at neighborhood stores, this Committee feels that this is an alarming trend... it is believed that any assistance or contributions by the Omaha Real Estate Board to the City's parking problem will be quite beneficial."

Below: A portion of the figures compiled for the Annual Pedestrian Traffic Count. There were 38 stations in all, each located in the middle of a block. The accompanying written report also noted such factors as weather, construction, and parking facilities.

Station No.	LOCATION	Average 1924-26	Average 1927-29	Average 1930-32	Average 1933-35	Average 1936-38	Average 1939-41	Average 1942-44	Average 1945-47	Average 1948-50
	FIFTEENTH STREET									
1	Douglas to Farnam—E. Side	2,863	2,425	1,931	2,082	1,940	2,240	2,272	2,588	2,194
2	Douglas to Farnam—W. Side	2,539	2,559	2,375	1,795	2,335	2,273	2,302	2,627	2,131
3	Farnam to Harney—E. Side	2,303	1,362	1,041	1,048	1,111	1,200	1,170	1,755	1,301
4	Farnam to Harney—W. Side	1,888	1,123	1,386	1,479	1,498	1,458	1,417	2,486	2,422
	SIXTEENTH STREET									
5	Dodge to Capitol—E. Side ..	2,498	2,416	1,744	1,869	1,614	1,748	1,913	2,147	1,477
6	Dodge to Capitol—W. Side .	...	3,062	2,179	3,050	2,563	3,214	4,009	3,052	1,788
7	Dodge to Douglas—E. Side .	3,050	3,889	2,597	2,730	2,347	2,547	2,958	2,928	2,274
8	Dodge to Douglas—W. Side	12,320	9,473	10,656	10,275	7,029	10,610	10,781	9,519	8,298
9	Douglas to Farnam—E. Side	5,092	4,529	4,662	4,438	3,737	4,235	5,087	4,541	3,193
10	Douglas to Farnam—W. Side	14,799	12,764	13,509	13,447	14,101	12,688	12,210	12,100	12,783
11	Farnam to Harney—E. Side ..	5,418	4,833	5,485	5,219	4,576	4,378	4,745	4,597	4,192
12	Farnam to Harney—W. Side	9,150	9,197	9,913	11,182	10,736	10,353	10,708	10,665	9,520
13	Harney to Howard—E. Side..	3,657	3,217	2,994	2,463	2,533	2,268	2,726	3,054	2,500
14	Harney to Howard—W. Side	6,494	6,564	6,097	8,202	7,221	5,724	6,042	5,985	5,251
15	Howard to Jackson—E. Side	1,292	1,602	1,505	1,529	1,457	1,323	1,524	1,653	1,103
16	Howard to Jackson—W. Side	1,853	1,549	2,274	2,435	2,075	2,308	1,761	2,644	2,018
	SEVENTEENTH STREET									
17	Dodge to Douglas—E. Side .	....	2,778	2,280	2,183	1,948	2,040	2,121	2,168	2,623
18	Dodge to Douglas—W. Side .	....	1,089	852	872	805	819	854	1,039	1,050

Quotes From Old Coots

"The real estate market at that time (1947) cannot adequately be described. People were buying anything that had four walls and a roof. One of my salesmen complained bitterly that he had not been able to eat a single meal without an interruption, and his wife was ready to quit cooking for him."

- G. E. Shukert
Written in 1986

Presidents Of The Omaha Real Estate Board

1940—1949



R. R. Otis
1940



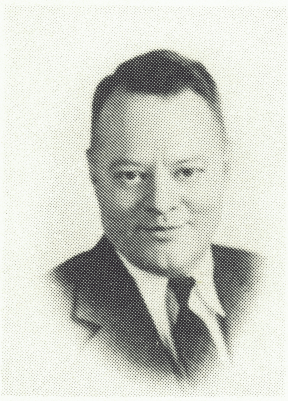
Alfred E. Burr
1941



Walter C. Johnson
1942



Robert W. York
1943



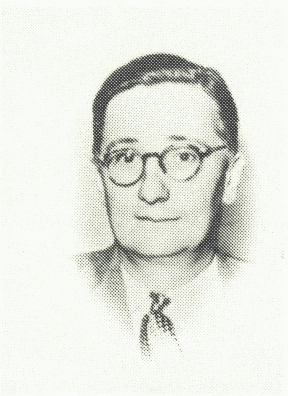
William O. Larson
1944



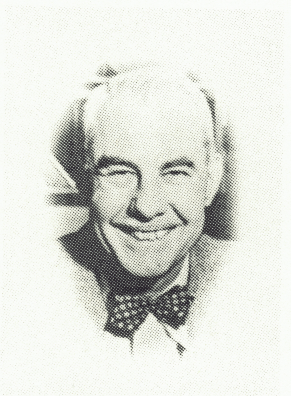
Russell M. Bailey
1945



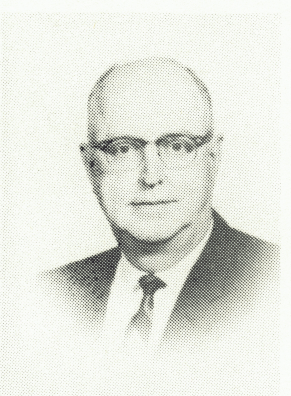
Wayne C. Selby
1946



G. E. Shukert
1947



Harold J. Grove
1948



Robert C. Hastings
1949

T. H. Maenner became President of the National Association of Real Estate Boards in 1949; he is the only Omaha Realtor who has earned this honor.

Executive Secretary—Ermal E. Whitcomb