

Saint Joseph, Mo.

BY

R. R. Vineyard

**SAINT JOSEPH, MO.**, city and county seat of Buchanan County, the third city in size and wealth in Missouri, and located on its western border on the east bank of the Missouri River, 131 miles southeast of Omaha.

**History.**—In 1826, Joseph Robidoux, born in Saint Louis of French parentage, established a trading post at this point known as the "Blacksnake Hills," and thus became the founder of the city, which he later christened with his own name. For hundreds of miles on every side, the whole country was then an unbroken wilderness, inhabited only by the aborigines, who gained a scanty subsistence by trapping and hunting. The furs and pelts of the wild animals they killed soon became a source of extensive traffic between the trader and his Indian neighbors. The famous "Platte Purchase" was accomplished through a treaty with the Indians, dated 17 Sept. 1836. The trading post grew into a town, incorporated in 1845, and then into a city, incorporated in 1851. Its growth at first was not rapid, but steady and gradual. Planted, however, in the midst of one of the finest and wealthiest agricultural sections of the United States, and drawing to itself the larger part of the trade that came from the country to the westward, it later on began to assume a more vigorous and rapid growth. In 1880 it had a population of 32,431; 1890, 52,324; 1900, 102,979; and 1903, 120,000.

**Trade.**—The development and extension of the business and material resources of the city kept pace with its increase in population. As a distributing point for the entire West, from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean, it has but few rivals, and, outside of Saint Louis and San Francisco, no superiors. In 1903 it had 48 large wholesale establishments engaged in all branches of trade, with over 1,200 traveling men in the field, selling goods to the retail merchants in almost every town and hamlet throughout this vast region of country

lying to the westward. The volume of the jobbing business of the city for the year 1902 exceeded \$65,000,000, and the manufacturing output was over \$25,000,000. This is exclusive of the retail trade, which has been correspondingly large.

Schools, Churches and Charities.—The school census, taken pursuant to the requirements of State law, shows that the children of school age, ranging from 6 to 20 years, number 35,865. A large portion of these are in actual attendance upon the public schools, housed in 32 public school buildings and taught by 278 teachers. The most imposing of the school houses now in use is the High School building, erected in 1894-5 on a commanding hill over-looking the city, and involving an expenditure of \$113,534. From it and its humble predecessor 1,107 graduates have been sent forth, since the establishment of a high school course in 1868. All the public school buildings, with the grounds on which they are situated, are valued at \$898,412. The attendance upon the private schools is likewise large, and the buildings used for that purpose correspondingly valuable. In the city are 66 church buildings, owned and used by the different denominations as follows: Baptist, 11; Christian, 4; Jewish, 2; Congregational, 2; Episcopal, 4; Lutheran, 3; Evangelical, 2; Methodist Episcopal, 11; Methodist Episcopal South, 7; Presbyterian, 8; Catholic, 8; Reformed, 1; Unitarian, 1; Christian Science, 1; Latter Day Saints, 1. The aggregate value of this church property is in excess of \$1,000,000. The Young Men's Christian Association building was erected in 1886-7 at a cost of \$60,000, and four years later the Young Women's Christian Association took possession of its handsome home on Tenth street. The Memorial Home for the support and care of helpless and needy old people, and the Home for Little Wanderers, for the sheltering and rearing of poor and neglected chil-

dren, built and endowed by charitable disposed citizens at an outlay of nearly \$100,000, are substantial structures, worthy of their founders and supporters. The most important charitable institution, however, in Buchanan County, is Hospital No. 2, for the care of the insane, located just east of the city limits, erected and sustained by the State. The original building, which was erected in 1873, at a cost of \$200,000, burned down in 1879, but was at once rebuilt, and has since been added to and improved at a total cost of about \$500,000. The institution, which is a very capacious and imposing structure, has a capacity of 1,350 patients, and requires the services of 205 employees. It is modern in all its appointments, and its management has always been a model of excellence.

Public Buildings.—The court-house, built anew in 1873-5 at a cost of \$173,000, injured by fire and rebuilt in 1885, is in the shape of a Maltese cross, and is a very imposing and capacious structure. Here two divisions of the circuit court, a criminal court, a county court, a probate court and several inferior courts are in continuous session most of the year. Here also are located the offices of the county officials. The United States circuit and district courts are held in the Federal building, finished in 1890, involving in its erection an expenditure of \$345,000. In this building are also located the post-office, the United States internal revenue office and the surveyor of customs and his assistants. Even thus early after its completion the building has been found to be wholly inadequate to meet the demands of the public service; and Congress in 1903 appropriated \$225,000 for the purpose of enlarging it to more than double its present size and capacity. There are now in the post-office proper 80 employees, whose yearly salaries aggregate about \$96,000. The receipts of the post-office for

the fiscal year ending 30 June, 1903, aggregated \$191,249. The receipts at the South Saint Joseph post-office, located in the stock yards district, amounted to \$19,240 for the same period. A city hall and market house was erected in 1873 at a cost of \$50,000, which serves the purpose of a market place on the ground floor, and of offices for the numerous city officials in the upper stories. The city is the owner of two public library buildings, one erected in 1902 in the southern part of the city, at a cost of \$25,000; the other erected in 1900 in the central part, at a cost of \$106,534. Though in their infancy, there are 27,500 volumes on the shelves of these libraries, accessible to the free use of the reading public. Saint Joseph has two large opera houses of modern construction and equipment, with a seating capacity of 1,785 and 1,740, respectively, beside a large number of smaller places of amusement. The Commercial Club, assisted by the Board of Trade, looks after the commercial interests of the city. Both organizations occupy the Chamber of Commerce, built in 1884-5 at a cost of \$105,000. Almost \$100,000 have been already subscribed toward the building of a Convention Hall. This subscription is expected to be largely increased in the course of the next few months, when the work of building will be commenced. The city has 50.68 miles of paved streets, 59.33 miles of main and district sewers, a number of hotels and hospitals, one convent, two elevators, several flouring mills, many factories and five parks, all except one being small in size, but all in an excellent state of improvement. There are 21 newspapers published in Saint Joseph, 5 daily, 9 weekly and 7 monthly.

Light and Water Plants.—The city owns an electric light plant, representing in its construction an expenditure of over \$100,000, and which will be enlarged in the near future to

twice its present capacity, in order to meet the demands for additional street lighting, resultant from the recent growth of the municipality. In 1902 there was consumed in the city 180,000,000 feet of gas, at a cost to the consumer of \$1.00 per thousand cubic feet. The gas plant, which was built in 1878 and has been in almost continuous extension and improvement since that time, now represents an investment of about \$1,000,000 of money expended in construction. It has in use 56 miles of main pipe and has a capacity of furnishing 2,000,000 cubic feet of gas every 24 hours. Saint Joseph is supplied with water through an extensive system of waterworks, first built in 1879, and improved and extended since that time, until it now represents in cost of construction an expenditure of over \$1,800,000. The water is pumped from the Missouri River, at a point about three miles above the city, into reservoirs and settling basins, located on a hill 317 feet above the level of the river, and is clarified and purified by means of these basins and the Jewell system of filtration. It is then emptied into water mains, which now aggregate 92 miles in length, and is carried by the force of gravitation to the fire hydrants, 794 in number, and to the myriad points of distribution for the consumers throughout the city.

Railroads.—Saint Joseph has 38 miles of electric street railway, with an extensive electric plant connected therewith, to furnish the motive power for its operation. The equipment of cars, both in number and perfection of construction, is such as to satisfy the demands of street railway travel. By a systematic course of supervision and improvement the whole system has been kept at all times in splendid condition. In 1902 there was a change of ownership in the street railway plant, the purchasers paying therefor as an investment the sum of \$4,000,000. The city

is connected with the outside world by nine railroads, including one in course of construction in 1903. Three lines run to Chicago, three to Kansas City, two to Saint Louis, two to Omaha, one to a connection with the Union Pacific railroad at Grand Island, Neb., and two others traverse that vast territory lying to the west and southwest. Most of them use the Union Station, erected in 1896 at a cost of \$126,000. During the year ending Sept. 1, 1903, there were 438,800 pieces of baggage handled at this station. Two of the railroads centering in the city cross the railroad, wagon and foot bridge, which spans the Missouri River at this point, built by the city in 1872 at a cost of \$716,000. This bridge is about to be enlarged by the two railroad companies using it, so that it will be greatly strengthened and its capacity doubled.

Stock Yards.—A great impetus was given to the growth and prosperity of the city by the improvements and extensions made at the stock yards located at this point, which were begun in the year 1897, and which have been carried on extensively ever since. The stock yards proper consists of 500 acres of land, 80 acres of which are covered by the pens and sheds. There are twenty miles of railroad tracks upon the grounds, and five packing houses engaged in the slaughtering of animals, three of them, Swift & Company, Nelson, Morris & Company, and the Hammond Packing Company have erected large and extensive plants here at a cost of several millions of dollars. A part of the Hammond Packing Company's plant was burned July 5, 1903, but is now being rebuilt on a much more extensive plan than before. During the 12 months, ending Sept. 1, 1903, there were slaughtered by these houses 645,694 cattle, 1,681,784 hogs and 637,033 sheep, a large increase, except in the killing of hogs, over the business of the preceding year. During the

same period there were 21,407 horses and mules bought and sold, and 51,642 cars of stock handled at the stock yards. There is also a packing house at this point located outside of the stock yards, which does a large business, not included in the foregoing statement.

Financial.—There are nine incorporated banks doing business in Saint Joseph, three national and the other six organized under the banking laws of the State. The Comptroller of the Currency at Washington and the Secretary of State at Jefferson City called for statements from these banks, showing the condition of their business on Sept. 9, 1903. All responded, making their statements under oath, from which it appears that the entire resources of all the banks in the city, at the close of business on that day, was \$19,478,855.19, and that they had on deposit \$17,371,533.20. The clearings of the five banks belonging to the clearing house for the 12 months ending Sept. 30, 1903, aggregated \$249,736,100.01. The city has a bonded debt, less the sinking fund in the treasury applicable to its payment, of \$925,562.15. This outstanding indebtedness is in bonds, bearing  $3\frac{1}{2}$  and 4 per cent interest in about equal proportions for each rate. There is no floating debt, the city charter prohibiting the contracting of any debt, without there being money in the treasury with which to pay it. The assessed valuation of property in the city, made upon a basis of about 40 per cent of its actual value, is \$30,240,120.

Government.—Saint Joseph is governed by a mayor, elected for two years, who is the chief executive officer of the city, and by a common council, entrusted with the enactment of all municipal legislation, whose members are elected for four years, one member from each ward of the city, but chosen by the voters of the whole city, the terms of one half expir-



ing every two years. The city has also a board of public works, charged with originating and recommending to the council all ordinances for the improvement of the streets and other public works, and superintending the construction thereof. This board is appointed by the mayor, comptroller and auditor, not more than two members of which can belong to the same political party. There is also a board of park commissioners, to which is committed the custody, improvement and management of the parks, and a board of police commissioners, appointed by the governor, which has charge of the selection and control of the police force and the enforcement of the police regulations. The public schools are controlled by a school board consisting of six members, one half chosen from each of the two leading political parties, so as to free the management of the schools as much as possible from partisan bias. They serve without pay, and their terms of office are so arranged that two of them expire every two years. The fire department, under the control of the mayor and council, consists of a chief, his assistant and 70 firemen, located in 12 firehouses, distributed throughout the city, and equipped with all the engines, hose, ladders and other appliances needed for extinguishing fires.

Biography.—Barns, "The Commonwealth of Missouri" (1877); "Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri" (1901); "History of Buchanan County, Missouri" (1881); Buchanan County and Saint Joseph" (1898); "Saint Joseph Directory" (1903).

B. R. VINEYARD,  
Saint Joseph, Mo.

For particulars as to articles on other cities and subjects of National and International importance, address *The Scientific American* Compiling Department, 258-260 Fifth Avenue, New York.