

## Commercial and statistical review of the city of Memphis, Tenn 1883

### *MEMPHIS GRAIN AND PACKAGE ELEVATOR.*

Situated in the very center of the most fertile and productive portion of the great Mississippi Valley, which comprises nearly two-thirds of the entire area of the United States, the commerce of this great valley alone will make the city of Memphis one of the greatest mercantile and commercial centers on the globe. Considering her geographical position, with her railway system yet in its infancy, and her unrivalled facilities for river transportation, there can be no doubt but that Memphis will, ere long, control the bulk of the commerce of this imperial valley. Already the city is the largest and most important inland cotton market in the country, and the rapid strides she is daily making with reference to the receipt and handling of grain, which should naturally here find the most available market, challenges the admiration of all those who have of late years marked the progress and enterprise of her merchants and business men. Appreciating her many advantages, and with that commendable and enterprising public spirit, which is so eminently a characteristic of her leading and most influential capitalists and business men; less than two years ago, Messrs. J. C. Neely, Napoleon Hill, Louis Hanauer, C. M. McGee and others, gentlemen, whose names are closely associated with the history of the progress and material interests of the city, and her leading commercial and industrial institutions, inaugurated an enterprise which is the most important, so far as its influence upon the future of the city is concerned, of any to which we have had occasion to allude on these pages. An enterprise to which we feel unable, in the short space necessarily allotted to us, to do that full and complete justice to which its mammoth proportions, and the standing, influence, capital and energy of its proprietors, entitles it. About two years ago the plans were drawn up for the construction of the Memphis Grain and Package Elevator, and the erection of the buildings was at once begun under the skillful supervision of Mr. W. Watson, a leading architect of Chicago, who makes a specialty of such work. Through delays occasioned by the high waters of the Mississippi, during the years of 1881 and 1882, the work was not completed until nearly eighteen months afterwards. The space occupied extends from the south side of Poplar street to the north side of Locust street, thence from the west side of Promenade street to the water's edge. Some idea of the enormous extent and capacity of the building can be gained from the fact that its storage-room embraces fully six acres of space. All this is covered with a two-story warehouse, except where the grain elevator stands at the northwest corner. The grain elevator is 110x56 feet in size, 102 feet high, and is built of white pine lumber, the beams of yellow pine, the floors being of two inch oak, the whole rendered fire proof by a sheathing of heavy corrugated iron and roofed with slate. Three million feet of lumber were used in the construction of the building. The cost of the entire work amounting to \$200,000. The capacity of the grain elevator is 500,000 bushels, and the amount of grain on storage averages from 1,000 to 5,000 tons. The building is almost entirely built upon stone foundations, in connection with which every precaution is taken against any washing or cutting into the bank by the action of the river. Large water pipes abound in every part of the vast building, which furnish water to thirty-two fire plugs, and are connected with both the water works and the steam pump of the largest engine in the building. The hose is of the same size as

that in use in the city fire department, and the corps of watchmen who are constantly employed are thoroughly drilled, each one having his particular post and duties to perform in case of any outbreak of fire, thus making it almost a matter of utter impossibility for a fire to make any headway or cause any material damage. Barges are loaded or unloaded by three endless belts, capable each of handling 100 tons per hour. The legs of the grain elevator have a capacity of 10,000 bushels each per hour. Six Fairbanks scales, with all latest improvements, are in the building, and have a weighing capacity of 45,500 pounds. All of the machinery, appliances and apparatus in use, are of the very latest and most improved pattern that the ingenuity of man has been able to devise, the motive power for which is furnished by fourteen large engines with 350 aggregate horse-power, and a powerful battery of steel boilers. The elevator is also fitted up and supplied with the most modern appliances and machines for the cleaning and packing of all kinds of grain, and in the various departments of the business employment is given to thirty hands. The company owns 2,500 feet of railroad track connecting with all the railway lines entering the city, affording them great advantages for loading and unloading cars with expedition. In fact their facilities for receiving and shipping grain either by river or rail could not be rendered more perfect than they are. Three steamers can be easily handled at one and the same time. Their business has already begun to assume vast proportions and consists of the loading and unloading of steamers and barges, and the general storage of grain and other merchandise. To form an intelligent idea of the great magnitude of the concern and the extent of its operations it must be seen at work, pregnant with life and activity, with its army employes busy in their respective departments, its machinery in rapid and constant motion, its huge engines vibrating with mighty power and its furnaces pouring forth volumes of smoke to mingle with the clouds. An attractive feature which we failed to mention are the offices, in the arrangement and decoration of which the most refined taste and elegance is displayed. The offices are reached by an elegant double staircase, are located on a half floor between the second and third floors of the elevator building and command a magnificent view of the river. The elevator is owned by a joint stock company, mostly composed of citizens and merchants of this city, the officers of the company being, J. C. Neely, of the well-known house of Brooks, Neely & Co., president; P. G. Bigley, secretary, and R. Galloway, superintendent. It is to the class of enterprising and energetic citizens represented in the organization of this enterprise, that Memphis owes her present proud position in the galaxy of the representative cities of the Union, and if we have been able to make some enduring record of the vast influence exercised by the enterprise under consideration upon the present and future prosperity and progress of the city, our work will not have been in vain.