

From *The Stuart Locomotive*, May 2, 1872:

Twenty-six months ago, where the town of Stuart now stands, was one unbroken belt of raw prairie, upon which stood but one solitary habitation. What a change has taken place since then. Today, the town can boast of nearly two hundred buildings, among which are some very fine ones, and, according to the census taken last week, the number of inhabitants will almost reach eight hundred. If the count be made at 12 o'clock noon, reckoning in every person within the limits of the town at that hour, we have no doubt but that our population every day, excepting Sundays, will foot up in the neighborhood of one thousand souls. This is a pretty good increase in a little over two years and, to those in the Eastern States who are unacquainted with the rapid growth of these western towns, it will seem almost incredible.— But some will say that our town has grown too fast, and is already far ahead of the country surrounding it. We are happy to say that such is not the case, for while our town, with its fine location and important attractions, has induced this rapid influx of newcomers, the magnificent country around us, with its beautifully undulating and flowery prairies has been behind us. From early spring till late in the Fall of each year, since the railroad opened up inducements for emigration, the “white caps” of the “prairie schooners” have been constantly visible in almost every direction, seeking an anchorage upon the prairies adjoining us, and thus this country has been rapidly filling up. Two years ago, where the lone pioneer could stand and gaze over mile after mile of unbroken prairie without encountering a single human habitation, save his own, now can be seen as far the eye can reach, the dark rich soil of the “breakings,” dotted here and there with farmhouses and barns, within almost hailing distance of each other. The town and country have kept pace with each other and been rapidly increasing in wealth and population. Yet, we have room for thousands more, and to all who will come and join with us in building up our town and country, a hearty welcome will be given.

During the year which commenced with the first number of the LOCOMOTIVE and ends with this issue, a great many new buildings have been erected, among which are some fine dwelling houses and stores. Besides these, a church has also been commenced; sidewalks have been built, and several thousand shade trees have been planted in the streets and city park. The railroad company has also, within the past few months, commenced laying the foundation for a new Round House, which, when completed this summer, will compare with any other building of the kind outside of Chicago. From eighty to one hundred workmen, machinists and others, are constantly employed in the company's machine shops and yards at this place, whose wages amount in the aggregate to over \$100,000 per year. This number is, of course, constantly increasing. Taking the above in connection with the fact that Mr.

Charles Stuart alone, for the 12 months last past, has bought and shipped to Chicago over 150,000 bushels of grain, besides 75,000 bushels more, which he has at present, stored here—making a total of 225,000 bushels purchased the year—we do not wonder our merchants claim that their yearly sales will foot up the enormous sum of \$200,000. This is exclusive of the lumber and real estate trade, which, with Mr. Stuart alone, amounts to fully \$100,000 more, to say nothing of the yearly sales of Messrs. Maxwell & Kenworthy, and other Real Estate men. If there is another two-year-old town in the State that can show any better figures than the foregoing, we would like to hear of it right now.

Two years ago, we had but one store here; today, we have the following: Three large hotels, one church, one schoolhouse, one real estate and banking office, one printing office, one grain elevator, four large dry goods & grocery stores, three grocery stores, one hardware store, two drug stores, one furniture store, one boot, shoe, hat & cap store, one merchant tailor shop, one saddler's shop, one boot & shoe shop, 2 wagon shops, two blacksmith shops, two saloons, two treat shops, one barber shop, one doctor and lawyer's office, one photograph gallery, one masonic and odd fellow's hall, one large concert hall, two livery stables and a number of carpenter and cabinet shops, besides the extensive machine and blacksmith shops and out buildings used by the railroad.

The above shows pretty clearly the rapid growth of our town and we are glad to say that the end is not yet. Building is still going on, and, as spring opens, a great many new houses and stores will be commenced. In another issue, we will particularize more fully the different branches of business represented here, but, for the present, the above will suffice to give some idea of the size of the place. In a year from now, we hope to be able to show still better figures.