

In electing representatives to the first State legislature, men were voted for with regard to their views in relation to these disputes, without reference to their political principles. At this election, Lee County, notwithstanding there was in the county a large democratic majority for State officers, sent to the legislature a representation partly composed of democrats and partly of whigs, the ticket elected having been made up of men who were favorable to the interests of the settlers on those lands, without reference to their other opinions.

If Lee County had elected a full representative ticket of whigs, or of democrats, there would have been a decided majority in both branches of the legislature. The representatives from Lee County, to a certain extent, acted independent of the two political parties, and the result was, the first legislature of the State failed to elect Supreme Judges or United State Senators, and for the first two years of the State government Iowa was not represented in the United States Senate. This combination of parties in Lee County created much interest in the State at the time, which will be noticed hereafter in connection with other matters.

HISTORY OF MAHASKA COUNTY.

BY CAPT. W. A. HUNTER, OF OSKALOOSA HERALD.

[Continued from page 302.]

CHAPTER II.

The reader has doubtless observed that we make no special attempt at connection in this history. Our main object is to give the leading facts of interest as they come to our notice, and in doing so, we endeavor to state nothing but facts.

The commissioners' record, under date of May 25, 1844, contains the following important item: "Ordered by the board, that grocery license shall be allowed to grocery keepers in said county, for the sum of twenty-five dollars per year, and the same in proportion for a shorter time."

The question naturally arises here, what did this license authorize the recipient to sell? Was it coffee, tea, sugar, to-

bacco, fish, molasses or vinegar? A gentleman who knows all about it, says it was, almost exclusively, for the sale of intoxicating liquors—that the commissioners so understood it. There are some other points in this. First, a “grocery” license to sell liquor, and secondly, the power of county commissioners to grant such license; but these were primitive times, when people did as best they could.

On the commissioners’ book, under date July 5, 1844, we find the following, in relation to the revenue of the county: “Ordered, that there shall be collected for county revenue, five mills to the dollar, and fifty cents to be collected on each poll, and that one-half mill be collected on each dollar, for territorial purposes. The amount of revenue for the year 1844, as per assessment, is as follows: Amount of personal property, \$46,661. Tax on the same, at fifty cents on each hundred dollars, is \$233,30½. Tax on 498 polls, at fifty cents each, \$249.00. Territorial tax, one-half mill on the dollar, is \$23.35. Total, \$505.63½—with all of which the collector stands charged.”

Are there not some items of interest connected with this? The entire amount with which the collector stood charged, was but \$505.63½. At the present rates for collection, and we presume they were no higher then, the office of collector would not be a very lucrative thing. Again, it shows that there were then 498 voters in the county; and the territorial tax—that was for defraying territorial expenses—was but \$23.33. If people could get along with such nominal taxes now, they would feel it to be a very great relief; but it takes money to pay for advancing civilization and improvement.

From a record of the commissioners under date of July 8, 1845, we find the following facts: “Whole amount of taxes for 1844, \$505.63. Collected, \$361.99. Balance unpaid, \$144.64½. Fines collected, \$15.00. Signed, W. D. Canfield, Treasurer of Mahaska County.”

It appears from this report, that \$144.64½ was uncollected in July, 1845. This, we presume, was owing to foreign land owners.

At the September, 1845, meeting, we find the following record:

“Total amount of taxable property of Mahaska County for the year 1845, amounts to \$64,273. Amount of revenue on the above amount, at fifty cents on the one hundred dollars, makes \$321.36½. Territorial tax at one-half mill on the dollar on the above amount of \$64,274, makes \$32.13. The number of polls is 615, at fifty cents on each poll, makes \$307.50; making the sum of \$628.86 taxes for the county, and \$32.13 territorial tax; with all of which the treasurer stands charged.”

The reader will observe the increase of valuation, taxes and polls, over the preceding year. The valuation in 1844 was \$46,661—in 1845, it was \$64,273. The taxes in 1844 were \$505.63½—in 1845, they were \$660.99. The polls in 1844 were 498—in 1845 they were 615. This shows the steady progress made during a single year, and that while the county was in its infancy.

We find that “the amount of taxable property in Mahaska County in the year 1846, is \$85,871. Fifty cents on the hundred dollars on the above amount, makes \$429.35½. The number of polls in Mahaska County in the year 1846, is 671. Fifty cents on each poll makes \$335.50. Fifty cents on each hundred dollars of revenue in Mahaska County for school purposes amounts to \$429.35. The Treasurer and Collector of Mahaska County stands charged with all of the above tax. Signed, G. W. Baer, T. M. C.”

Here we have the first evidence of a school tax having been levied in the county.

In the Treasurer's report, dated January 6, 1847, we find the following interesting facts:

“Received county tax for the year 1846, \$354.14. Also for the year 1845, \$10.00. Interest on this last amount, \$5.00. Amount of school tax collected for 1846, \$201.67—amount uncollected, \$227.68. Amount collected from justices of the peace, \$10.00. Amount of real estate upon which the school tax for 1846 remains unpaid—John Montgomery, \$1.00, and

William Smith, \$1.50. Amount of territorial fund received, \$29.60."

This exhibit shows the financial condition of the county at that time. The condition of the school fund is especially worthy of remark. Not one half of the amount levied was collected the first year. It would be interesting to have the enumeration of the youth then in the county entitled to the benefit of the school fund. It must have been limited or the children went uneducated. This, however, was not strange, as such is usually the fate of new countries. The pioneers in a new country are entitled to many more thanks than they usually get. We know something of pioneer life, having located in a new country, and a dense forest at that, where the people endured all the inconveniences and privations incident to frontier life. Although we located in the county seat there were times when it was next to impossible to procure the actual necessities of life. We have traveled as much as three miles on foot, with a sack, for the purpose of procuring flour to maintain life, and, as the Yankee would say "toted" a few pounds—all we could procure—home upon our shoulder. Our principal living during the summer was bread, wild honey and blackberries. Berries were so abundant that we laid by a winter's supply. We speak of these as single instances, but might enumerate many others, were it necessary. The pioneers of this county, can, no doubt, tell many interesting stories about the privations, hardships and pleasures of frontier life, for it must be admitted, that while there are privations and hardships, there are "pleasures" in the early settlement of a country. Then it is that genuine friendship exists among all classes; the truth is, they cannot afford to do otherwise than be friendly, as they have many interests in common, and are dependent upon each other for assistance and protection. That feeling of aristocracy and selfishness that pervades an old country can find no place in a new. In the early settlement of a town or county, every man knows all the neighbors about him, and when they meet feel as if they were friends; but not so in older countries. Take our

cities and densely populated counties, as an example, and we scarcely know, and have no intercourse with our nearest neighbors. We do not charge this upon civilization and education, but an aristocracy and selfishness that is almost sure to possess the minds of persons after a country becomes very largely populated. Persons in the country do not realize so much of this as do the people of towns and cities.

We copy a portion of the commissioners' record dated January 5, 1846:

“Ordered, that John Scott be permitted to keep a ferry across the Des Moines river at the mouth of Raccoon river, near Fort Des Moines, by the said Scott paying the sum of ten dollars into the county treasury, and the clerk be authorized to give the said Scott license for one year from this date; and the said John Scott is hereby authorized to receive the following rates of ferriage: Two horses and wagon, $37\frac{1}{2}$ cents; four horses and wagon, 50 cents; man and horse, $18\frac{3}{4}$ cents; single horse, 10 cents; cattle per head, 10 cents; sheep and hogs per head, 5 cents; footman, 10 cents.”

This shows that the authority to run a ferry near where the city of Des Moines now stands, twenty-two years ago, came from this county. Who can truthfully say that there has been no progress made in the country since that time? Look at the city of Des Moines, with her ten thousand inhabitants, as a refutation of any such idea.

As we have said since commencing to write this history, we are always anxious to correct any errors we may fall into, and are very thankful to parties who point them out to us. Mr. Welch, of the *Conservator*, of this city, very kindly made the following corrections. Wellington Nossaman is still living near the same place he did (now in Marion County) at the time of holding the election in question, and William Welch is living in Pella. We should have said Lake Prairie Township. He says there are some other small errors, but such as are scarcely worth correcting.

Mr. A. S. Nichols informs us that the first court was held in the house east, and immediately across the street, from the

one we named. We received our information from one of Oskaloosa's oldest citizens, who now lives in the county. It is possible that we misunderstood him, but be that as it may, we gladly make the correction, as we are satisfied that Mr. Nichols knows all about the matter. He further informs us that the house we described as being the place where the first court was held, was at that time occupied by Perry L. Crossman, a brother-in-law to our friend J. W. Jones, and that the judge boarded with him during the setting of the first court. After the house in which the first court was held was finished, Mr. W. D. Canfield removed into it and opened out a hotel. This house went by the familiar cognomen of the "Great Western," and was a home for man and beast. As there was much travel westward in search of homes, this house was very frequently well filled with men, and its barn with horses, as travelers at that day did not enjoy the luxury of railroad riding.

As we stated in a former number, Mr. Nichols lived at Brim's Point, about the spot where Kirksville now stands, Mr. Richard Parker on the McKinley farm, Mr. Canfield at the "Narrows," now Oskaloosa, and one settler at Black Oak Grove, name not recollected. These residences were all in the range of travel from east to west, and as there were no hotels in the country the travelers availed themselves of the hospitalities of these early settlers for food and shelter. As it would be natural to suppose, their houses were not the spacious mansions of which the country can now boast, but were single log cabins, just large enough for the accommodation of small families; but the early settlers of a country know too much about privations and the want of the actual necessities of life, to say nothing of the luxuries, to turn away a hungry and weary man or beast. Mr. Nichols informs us that it was no unfrequent occurrence to see the floors of these cabins strewn all over with tired and weary western hunters; and as the houses named were the only ones in the country, they were very certain to catch all the travel. Having had some practical experience in frontier traveling, we can realize very

clearly how those weary, westward-bound travelers enjoyed the luxury of these cabin hotels, and how eagerly the owners of them caught up every item of news from their guests.

On the first day of May, 1843, the Indians gave peaceable possession of all the country between the eastern boundary (about eight or nine miles west of where Fairfield, in Jefferson County, now stands, and about the same distance east of where Agency City now stands) and crossing at the mouth of Red Rock, in what is now Marion County. By this arrangement, this large and fertile section of country was opened up to the introduction of the white man and civilization; and as it was soon ascertained by eastern residents that it was naturally rich, dry, healthy and attractive, they soon began to flock to it in large numbers. We presume we hazard nothing in saying that no new country within the limits of the United States, ever filled up more rapidly than did the section here described. One of the modes of access was by water to Keokuk—the Key City—thence up the Des Moines river in such water crafts as could be procured, to points where they could move out by teams and wagons. We know of some instances of this kind ourselves. Capt. James Mathews, of Knoxville, father-in-law of Gov. Stone, availed himself of this mode of travel, when he came to the country, some twelve years ago. We had the good fortune to be well and intimately acquainted with the Captain many years ago, having been raised in the same township, in Ohio, with him. He represented one of the districts of that State in Congress for two and one-half terms, was a successful lawyer, has given much attention to horticulture, and is now the president of the Albia, Knoxville and Des Moines projected railroad. He is, perhaps, as well posted in the matter of horticulture as any man in the State, and is now largely engaged in the propagation of many varieties of the latest, finest and most popular grape vines, the strawberry, currant, &c. He is now the vice president of the State Horticultural Society, and we hope he will find it convenient to visit our city at an early day and give our people a speech on the general subject. He has promised

to do so, and therefore will do it. His experience will be of great value to our society in its infancy, and will infuse into it a new life and interest.

In the year 1843 or 1844, Thomas and Henry Mitchell procured a government permit to erect a bridge across a stream (name not now remembered) on what is known as the "divide road" between Oskaloosa and Des Moines, out of which they made, for those days, a "big thing." From the proceeds of this bridge they were enabled to open up a large and valuable farm, upon which one of them now lives. The other returned to Fairfield several years ago. This was a continuation of the thoroughfare from east to west, and enabled home-hunters to get further west than before.

The second board of commissioners for the county consisted of A. S. Nichols, S. Droulard and Harmon Davis, who were elected at the August election. On the 8th day of October, 1844, Messrs. Nichols and Droulard took their seats. At a meeting held on the 6th day of January, 1845, the whole Board was present and much business was transacted. As a matter of interest, we quote from the Commissioners' Record of October 9th, 1844, matter pertaining to the view, survey, &c. of the first road ever legally laid out in the county: "Ordered, that view and survey be granted for a county road, on the petition of John P. Majors and others, commencing at Oskaloosa, and thence to Levi Brainbridge's at Lake Prairie, by the way of the south-east corner of section seventy-six north, seventeen west, thence on said township line to the timber, and Stephen Cooper, Michael S. Morris and J. M. Rose be appointed said viewers, and David Stump, County Surveyor, on said view, who are to meet and lay out said road on the first Monday in November next, or within five days thereafter, as the law directs."

A commissioners' record, dated March 11, 1845, contains the following facts: "Ordered, that township seventy-five north, fifteen west, known by the name of Spring Creek township, be attached to Oskaloosa township."

These townships are still attached, the line running north

and south through the alley immediately west of the Gospel Ridge school-house, and the voting is all done in the city.

At the same meeting of the commissioners at which these townships were united, the order before spoken of in relation to the issuing of grocery license was revoked; and at the same session, a license was issued to Elias Whetstone to keep a grocery, for which he was required to pay into the county treasury the sum of fifty dollars—double what was required before.

At the same meeting the following record was made: "Ordered, that the country attached to Powesheik County on the west, and so much of the attached part west of Mahaska County as lies west of range eighteen, and north of John Mikesell's, form a township to be known by the name of Washington, and the place of holding elections to be at Adam Tool's."

As we progress with our work, we find it becoming more and more interesting. To the old settler it is a matter of interest, because it refreshes his memory as to past events, while to the new settler it is equally interesting, because it posts him up as to the history of the past, and fits and qualifies him for a fuller and more perfect knowledge of the country. Persons should always endeavor to obtain as full a knowledge as possible of the county in which they live. The man who takes no interest in the progress and welfare of the country in which he lives, cannot, by any interpretation of language, be considered a useful citizen. While it may not be necessary for every one to be a politician and devote his whole time to that subject, it is necessary that every man should take interest enough in the country in which he lives, to become familiar with its history and progress, and this is generally true of the county. Every resident of Mahaska County has, or should have a deeper interest in its welfare and prosperity, than in that of any other county; and in order to this end, should acquire as full a knowledge as possible of that that goes to make up the county; hence it becomes necessary to go back to primitive times. What would be thought of a man who

would undertake to study Greek or Latin, without first acquiring a knowledge of our English alphabet? Would such an one be likely to ever become a thorough scholar? We think not. While it is not so important to have a full and complete knowledge of the early history of the county in order to a knowledge of it in its more matured and developed state, yet it is important to know these things, that we may know more fully how to appreciate what we now enjoy. It is often said that persons who do not take an interest in the increase and development of the county in which they live, in the way of important and valuable improvements, such as schools and school buildings, churches, morality, railroads, &c., &c., are not of any essential value to the country, and we are very strongly inclined to believe it.

We thought best to print this word of explanation and encouragement, in order, if possible, to infuse into the minds of the readers of this history more interest. Every thing we do should be done for a purpose, and that purpose always should be to benefit those by whom we are surrounded. This is the object of schools, churches and everything having in view the education, morals and religious training of the people. This same is true of newspapers. Having much to do with moulding and shaping public sentiment, they should always endeavor to inculcate sentiments and publish such matter as will benefit their readers both morally and intellectually. Having the last named object in view, we were induced to commence this history.

On the 8th day of April, 1845, the name of Jackson township was changed to that of Scott. This is one of the richest, most fertile and beautiful townships in the county. From a small beginning in 1843, it has grown into great wealth and population.

From an examination of the early records of the county, we find that the trade in wolf scalps was considerable. Persons were then entitled to fifty cents each for these scalps; and it was a frequent thing to see records of the payment of ten or more dollars for them at each meeting of the commissioners. The drain upon the treasury was so great, in the

then sparsely settled country, that at their meeting on the 7th July, 1845, the commissioners discontinued paying for them.

As persons generally feel "proud" of what they did in the early settlement of a country, we will refer to some of the acts of W. H. Seevers, now known as Judge Seevers, believing that he will take no offense at it. At the April meeting, 1845, of the commissioners, we find the following record: "Ordered that W. H. Seevers be allowed twelve dollars and fifty cents, for services in setting up notices of election." At the same meeting of the board, we find the following: "Allowed W. H. Seevers one dollar and twenty-five cents as chairman." Still at the same meeting we find the following records: "Allowed W. H. Seevers two dollars, lot funds, for services as deputy sheriff." Also, "Allowed W. H. Seevers three dollars for services as deputy sheriff." It will be seen from this that the judge did not consider it improper to "turn an honest penny." It is always better for persons, no matter what their rank or condition in life may be, to employ their time honorably and profitably, than to spend it loitering about doing nothing. Honest industry will always meet with its reward.

At the July, 1845, meeting of the commissioners, we find a record as follows: "Ordered, that White Breast township be hereafter considered for election purposes as an unorganized precinct, and that Edward Bilps, Michael S. Morris and Edward Droulard be appointed judges of the election in said precinct." At the same meeting we find a record to the effect that congressional townships 78 and 79 north, 17 west, and that part of township 77 north, 17 west, which lies north of the Skunk river, constitute one township, to be called Richland, and that the place of holding elections be at the house of John Godby. Also, that Union township be hereafter considered an unorganized township for election purposes, and that Daniel Satchel, (now an honored resident of Scott township, upon the farm of Mr. Ross, a resident of this city,) Nathan Brown and Ogden, be appointed judges of election, and that the election be held at the house of Nathan

Brown. Also, that Monroe township be hereafter considered an unorganized township for election purposes, and that M. P. Crowder, James Higgenbotham and Isaac Bedwell were appointed judges of election for the year 1845.

The first evidence we find of the appointment of assessors is at this meeting of the commissioners, when we see recorded the following facts: "That James Higgenbotham was appointed assessor for Monroe township, and Nathan Brown for Union township." We will show in our next how much money these and other assessors received for their services, and then what an assessor receives now, so that the reader may have some idea of the difference.

Having shown what Hon. W. H. Seevers did at an early day in order to "turn an honest penny," we will now say a word about his brother-in-law, M. T. Williams, Esq. It would fill a whole chapter of this history, and more too, were we to undertake to give anything like what Mr. Williams did. He was agent for selling lots, furnishing Court House with desks, chairs, &c., for which he received a very moderate remuneration. We may have occasion to speak of this at another writing. We find such a record as this: "Ordered, that M. T. Williams be paid two dollars and fifty cents for carrying chain on road." We cannot say whether Mr. Williams would now relish the job of carrying a chain on a road survey or not. Perhaps he would, and perhaps he would not; but be this as it may, he would not consider it degrading to do so. Honest toil is much better than indolence and want. If we wish to succeed in any business, we must labor. The farmer, mechanic, merchant, lawyer, doctor, minister, editor, or whatever his calling is, must work if he would eat.

Having devoted considerable space of this history to Mahaska County, we now propose to give some information in relation to the early settlement of the city of Oskaloosa, after which we will resume our remarks upon the county. It is possible, that in the course of our remarks, we have given the time when Oskaloosa was located and by whom; but as we desire to devote considerable space to the city, exclusively, will commence with the doings of the locating commissioners; and in

doing so, will be compelled to draw considerably from printed matter in our possession.

On the first Monday of May, 1844, the commissioners for locating the county seat, met at the house of Matthew D. Springer, and after looking over the whole ground fixed upon the "Narrows," now Oskaloosa, as the most eligible spot. These commissioners were Jesse Williams, of Johnson County, Ebenezer Perkins, of Washington County, and Thomas Henderson, of Keokuk County. The news having spread, that the commissioners were on hand for the location of the county seat, the people, though the country was but very sparsely settled, collected to witness the fact. There were three points pressed as suitable locations for the honor, to-wit: Six Mile, the Center and the Narrows, while a few persons favored the spot near where Matthew D. Springer lived. The commissioners, as Mr. Jesse Williams, brother of M. T. Williams, informed us, spent about one week in examining the whole field, and finally fixed upon the "Narrows" as the best spot for the whole county. By a vote of the people present at the time of the location, the town was named "Mahaska." It was the intention of the commissioners to have called it Oskaloosa, but were overruled by the persons on the ground. Why the people preferred Mahaska to Oskaloosa is not stated, nor do we see the object.

The county commissioners met on the 13th day of May, A. D. 1844, for the purpose of transacting the business of the county. Only two of the commissioners—A. S. Nichols and Robert Curry—appeared and took their seats on that day, but on the next day, the 14th of May, Wilson Stanley was duly qualified and took his seat. At this meeting the commissioners proceeded to lay out the county seat. Prior to making any records or opening up the commissioners' books, W. D. Canfield proposed that the name of the town be changed, as he did not like Mahaska. After some discussion, the proposition appeared to meet the approbation of the commissioners and the people present, and it was determined to make a change. This having been done, it became a matter of some interest to know what name should be given to the town,

when M. T. Williams, Esq., proposed the name of Oskaloosa, the name most desired by the locating commissioners. After considerable discussion, the question was put and decided in favor of Mr. Williams' proposition. We have seen several definitions of the word "Oskaloosa," but so far have seen nothing that is fully satisfactory to our mind. We asked Mr. Jesse Williams what interpretation the locating commissioners gave the word, but he was unable to tell. He said, however, that it was generally supposed to be an Indian word, but that the commissioners did not understand it. Their impression was, that it is a Spanish word, but did not know its proper signification.

The county commissioners proceeded at once to plat and lay out the town. It may be interesting at this point, although somewhat out of place, to give a record of the commissioners, made at their session, August 6, 1845: "Whereas, at a previous session of the commissioners, the clerk of the board was authorized to effect a loan of two hundred dollars, to enter the town quarter of land, on which the seat of justice of the county of Mahaska is located, and the said loan has been obtained of William Wilson, for which the commissioners have given their note, payable in twelve months from date, bearing interest at the rate of twelve per cent. per annum until paid, which is to be paid out of the lot fund."

As this "lot fund" was a matter of much importance at an early period in the history of the county, it may be well to explain what it means. As the foregoing record shows, the commissioners, under a then existing law, purchased the "town quarter," and paid for it by giving their note for the money, payable in twelve months, at twelve per cent. interest, a pretty round rate of interest, the reader will doubtless say, to be paid at that early day, when labor, provisions and lands were very cheap; but it was the best that could be done. Having become the purchasers of the quarter, the commissioners had a portion of it surveyed and platted into town lots. The reader will allow another digression from the main thread of our discourse, in order to arrive at an important matter in connection with the platting, &c. At this first meeting of the

commissioners, we find such a record as this: "Ordered by the board, that M. T. Williams be appointed an agent for this board, whose duty it shall be, to attend to the surveying and platting said town, and attend to such other business as may by him be deemed necessary in the absence of the board."

At the same meeting and on the same day, we find the following record: "Ordered by the board, that David Stump, county surveyor of Mahaska County, be directed to survey and plat 292 in-lots and 21 out-lots at the county seat of said county, and return said plat to said board, on Saturday the 25th day of May, inst." At a meeting of the commissioners held on the 4th day of July, 1844, we find the following record: "Ordered, that M. T. Williams be appointed agent for this board, to dispose of lots in the town of Oskaloosa, the seat of justice of Mahaska County, during the absence of said board, and he be required to insert in each certificate issued by him to purchasers of lots, a clause conditioned that the board of commissioners shall not be required to make deeds to purchasers until said board obtains a title to said town quarter from the United States." These records are all connected with an explanation of what is to be understood by this "lot fund." The "town quarter" being the property of the county, the lots were sold under the supervision of Mr. Williams, agreeably to the foregoing authority, and the proceeds applied to the payment of many of the incidental expenses of the county, as well as the payment of the two hundred dollars borrowed by the commissioners, to pay for the "town quarter." An examination of the commissioners' record, shows that a great proportion of the expenses of the county for some time was paid out of this lot fund.

The opposition of the friends of the other points named for the location of the county seat, was so very strong, that at a proposed public sale advertised to take place in June, 1844, very few persons were in attendance. The story having been industriously circulated that the county seat would probably be removed, the people would not purchase lots, and the result was, they went at such nominal prices the commission-

ers, after selling eight lots, stopped the sale. Thus matters remained, but few lots selling until after the August election, when the contest was decided in favor of Oskaloosa, which ended the controversy, since which time the town has gone steadily forward. In the following September several buildings were put up and occupied as business and dwelling places. The first dry goods store was kept by M. L. Smith and Thos. Cameron, in a small log cabin at the southeast corner of the square, near where the Agricultural Works now are.

Oskaloosa, the county seat of Mahaska County, is located near the center of the county, and is, therefore a fixture. There is no trouble in any quarter of the county so far as our knowledge extends, with its location, but all are contented with it. When the town was laid out, it was on a broad prairie, with scarce a tree or shrub near, but soon after it began to improve, the people planted cotton-wood, soft maple and other forest and fruit trees, until it now has the appearance of a forest. Persons from the east who visit the city in the summer season are perfectly astonished. An idea prevails quite extensively, that Iowa has scarcely a stick of timber in it—that the people, were it not for the coal that abounds, would actually suffer for the want of fuel and shade. How mistaken! We remember distinctly what awful stories we heard about this before coming to the State, but we soon saw upon visiting it, that it was all exaggeration. With the exceptions of Cleveland and Norwalk, Ohio, we do not recollect, in all our travels through a number of the States of the Union, to have seen a city or town more beautifully decorated with trees than Oskaloosa. The owners of lots have taken special pains to surround them with the most beautiful trees, the foliage of which is really charming in the summer season; and there is one other very apparent thing connected with this matter, and that is, trees grow about as much here in a single year as they will in many other States in three.

Oskaloosa is a city of the second class, in accordance with the statutes of the State, and contains a population of about five thousand persons. It is located two and one-half miles from the nearest station on the Des Moines Valley Railroad.

This, as we are creditably informed, (not having been a resident of the county at the time,) was the work of opposition to the growth and prosperity of the city, on the part of parties connected with the Valley road, but as matters are turning out, it is not going to do the city any injury. We now have a very fair prospect for having two other very important roads passing through the city—roads, either one of which, will be of infinitely more value to the growth and prosperity of the place, than the Valley. The Iowa Central, connecting St. Louis on the south, with St. Paul on the north, is considered by those best posted on the subject, to be a fixed fact; and W. T. Smith, Esq., who is director on the American Central road, returned a few days ago from a meeting of the board of directors, and is very sanguine that the road will be speedily constructed. This road has for its starting and ending points, New York City in the east, and Omaha in the west, thus opening up the greatest thoroughfare that any where exists from east to west, through the United States. It is confidentially expected that these roads will cross each other at this point, making it one of the best railroad points in the State. This may be regarded as “bragging,” but it is the sober truth.

Oskaloosa is about one hundred miles from Burlington and Keokuk, and about sixty-five miles from Des Moines, the capital of the State, and is located in the heart of one of the very best countries in the world. We think we hazard nothing in saying, that no country any where can surpass Mahaska County in the productiveness of its soil, the healthiness of its climate, the abundance of its coal, the beauty of its scenery, the abundance of its pure water, the pleasantness of its seasons, the morality and loyalty of its people are unsurpassed. We are not ignorant of the fact, that much has been and is now being said by persons east of Iowa, about high winds, cold winters, changeable seasons, want of timber, impurity of water, monotony of scenery, want of building and fencing material, &c., but it is all the result of a want of a practical information upon the subject. If the persons who talk thus would visit our beautiful and thriving young city and spend a

few days in investigation, they would very soon change their minds on these points.

As we have shown in other parts of this history, it is but about twenty-four years since Oskaloosa was laid out as a town, and at that time there were but few log cabins in the place. Now it contains an actual population of about five thousand persons, all of whom are engaged in some kind of business. There is this one remarkable feature, if no others, about the place—it has but few idlers. We have remarked this feature, particularly, for three years, and find it to be in advance of almost any town we were ever acquainted with in this particular. There appears to be no room or call for this class, and the result is, we are not troubled with them. We have now in active operation a number of good schools, occupying the time and labors of twelve or more good and competent teachers. This is independent of the college, which institution requires the services of a number of very competent and good christian men as teachers. For school facilities the city contains as good advantages as any city of equal population in the State; and what is still better, the people voted a school tax this spring sufficient to raise ten thousand dollars a year. This shows that our people have the cause of education deeply at heart, and that they are willing to spend their money in that way.

HISTORY OF JACKSON COUNTY, IOWA.

COLLATED BY F. SNYDER, EX-EDITOR JACKSON COUNTY SENTINEL.

Jackson County was organized in the year 1838, and comprises in area fourteen full and six fractional townships. It was surveyed by Col. Cox and a Mr. McDaniel. Its principal towns are Bellevue and Sabula, on the "Father of Waters," Maquoketa, on the Maquoketa River, and Andrew, the county seat.

"The character of the soil is rich and fertile, and the ranging heights and diversified scenery on the banks of its numerous water courses, present an abundance of beautiful building sites."

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