

HISTORY OF WEBSTER COUNTY, IOWA.

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(Continued from page 293.)

COUNTY OFFICERS—THE OFFICE OF COUNTY JUDGE VIRTUALLY ABOLISHED—SUPERVISORS ELECTED—LAND OFFICERS—MAILS AND MAIL ROUTES—NUMBER OF TOWNSHIPS—VALUATION OF PROPERTY IN 1859—ERECTION OF COURT HOUSE, &c.

In February, 1855, Wm. Pierce, the first county judge, resigned. April 1855, Wm. N. Meservey was elected for the balance of the term, but by some means managed to serve two years from the time he was elected. April, 1857, Samuel Rees was elected and served till August, 1857, when Luther L. Pease was elected and served two years. October, 1859, Wm. N. Meservey was again elected and now holds the office.

At the session of the legislature, 1859-60, the office of county judge was virtually abolished, and provision made for the election of township supervisors, whose duty it was made to manage the affairs of the counties, the law to take effect on the 5th of January, 1861. In October, 1860, in conformity to this law, the following persons were elected township supervisors for the several townships in the county: for Washington Township, S. K. Barnes; for Webster Township, D. Daniels; for Dayton Township, D. T. Richey; for Yell Township, A. Goshart; for Sumner Township, Goodrich; for Otho Township, N. H. Hart; for Waukonsa Township, John Garaghty; for Douglas Township, S. G. Stephens; for Jackson Township, Richard P. Furlong; for Hardin Township, Fisk; for Johnston Township, Richard Vancleave. The present county officers are: county judge, W. N. Meservey, elected October, 1859; register and recorder, &c., E. G. Morgan; district clerk, W. P. Logan; sheriff, John W. Brady; coroner, John Heffley; surveyor, John Jenkins. Present land officers of the government land office, are: receiver, Thomas Sargent, and John M. Stockdale register; both of whom were appointed in September, 1857, in the room of Gen. Van Antwerp and W. H. Merritt. The first

James B.
District Court was held at Fort Dodge, in August, 1856, Hon. C. I. McFarland, presiding. After Judge McFarland, the Hon. John Thompson presided. The present district judge is the Hon. John Porter. The following post offices have been established in Webster County: at Fort Dodge, West Dayton, Otho, Border Plain, Hesperian (Buchanan), Belleville. New mail routes established to Fort Dodge, as follows: From Dubuque to Fort Dodge, tri-weekly; mail from Des Moines, tri-weekly on east side of the river; from Des Moines once a week on west side; from Newton, weekly; from Sioux City, once in two weeks; from Mankato, Minnesota, twice a week (by way of Algona). On these routes there is regular service; on the routes from the fort to Spirit Lake, Emmett City, and to Council Bluffs, there are established routes, but service not yet put on.

There are eleven organized townships in the county, as follows: Washington, organized in August, 1853; Wahkonsa, organized in August, 1855; Webster, Hardin, Dayton, Yell, Sumner and Otho, organized in 1856-7; Douglas, organized in 1858; Jackson and Johnston, in 1860.

During the years 1858 and 1859 but few settlers came into the county; the revulsion in monetary affairs of the country generally, appeared to check all immigration to this part of Iowa. Another great drawback on the settlement and improvement of this county and the counties generally along the Des Moines Valley, has been the unsettled state of the titles to the lands claimed by the Des Moines River Company, included in what is known as the Des Moines River Grant, which included every odd section of land five miles on each side of the Des Moines River, from its mouth up. This question of title has prevented settlers from improving a large portion of the best lands in Webster County. The most rapid improvement has been made in the north part of the county in the vicinity of Fort Dodge.

I have stated that the valuation of property in the county in 1850, when the county embraced what is now Hamilton County, was \$40,000. The valuation of taxable property in

1859, since the division of the county, was \$1,201,149.50; that of 1860 will not vary much, perhaps be above \$1,300,000. The present population is, agreeably to the last census, between 2,500 and 2,600; from 1,000 to 1,200 of that number are residents of Waukonsa Township including Fort Dodge.

In 1858 an agricultural society was organized, and they have had three exhibitions, the two last of which would do credit to much older and more populous counties.

On the north and south of Lizard River, and on the east and west side of the Des Moines, some splendid farms have been improved.

In June 1856, the Dubuque and Pacific Railroad was located through the county, making Fort Dodge one of the important points on the road, it being by said road about 190 miles west of Dubuque, and about 140 miles east of Sioux City on the Missouri River.

In April, 1858, the then county judge (Judge Pease), submitted to the citizens the proposition to build a court house at Fort Dodge, which was carried at an election held in April, 1858, by a majority of 199 votes. In August, 1858, the contract was given to H. D. Merritt and Israel Jenkins (who were the lowest responsible bidders), at their bid of \$39,450. The plan submitted by A. V. Lambert, architect (of Fort Dodge), was adopted. Messrs. Merritt and Jenkins commenced the work, and in June, 1860, sold out the contract to Thomas Snell, of Illinois, and Abner Taylor, of Fort Dodge, who have progressed with the work rapidly, and will have it finished by the 1st of January, 1861; Messrs. Manson and Douglas, of Waterloo, Iowa, superintending as master workmen. This court house will be an ornament not only to Webster County, but to the state of Iowa. It is decidedly the best building of the kind in the state, built of finely cut and ornamented stone taken from the quarries near Fort Dodge.

The Fort Dodge Company made a donation of four lots on the corner of Market and Sixth streets to the county of Webster, whereon the court house is erected. The court house

is 48 feet front on Market street by 76 feet on Sixth street, with jail in the basement, county offices in the first story, and the court room in the second story; all very conveniently arranged.

No town in the state has had so many difficulties to encounter, so much opposition to contend against, as Fort Dodge. This opposition commenced at Fort Des Moines. The citizens of that place, for three years, when the greatest immigration was pouring into the state, were constantly engaged in turning the course of all who wished to settle, to the counties west and south-west of Des Moines, giving to all the assurance that there was no country fit to settle in ten miles north of their place; representing it as a country covered with lakes and ponds, and destitute of timber. Their object in such course was to induce settlers to go into the counties west and south-west of them, that they might have them organized and settled up, preparatory to their efforts to have the state capital removed to their place; that object effected and their opposition ceased. Next we had the citizens of Boone County and Boonsboro to contend with; they were loud in their statements that there was no country fit to settle in north of them, no timber, and the country over-run with Indians—their object of course was to build up Boonsboro, to sell lands and lots to those who were in search of homes. Next came Homer and the south part of our own county. As Fort Dodge began to come into notice, the citizens of Homer and the south part of our county, become very violent in their opposition, and made efforts to keep Fort Dodge back and build up their own town. They hailed every person who came in, cautioning them against Fort Dodge, asserting that there was no country north of them, that the Indians were very numerous and hostile, that there was no title for the land on which the town was laid out, besides all stories they could invent; the result of all this was, that they stopped all the timid and credulous, and least to be desired immigrants, and Fort Dodge and vicinity got all the most enterprising and intelligent portion.

The result has been that the northern portion of Webster

County, is peopled by immigrants from the eastern and middle states, an enterprising, intelligent population; while the southern portion of the county is peopled by a similar class of citizens to those who first seized upon the lands, and settled there, immigrants principally from North Carolina, Missouri and Indiana, the majority of whom had been frontier settlers all their lives. Since Webster County has been divided, Homer being included in Hamilton County, they have turned their attention to Webster City; their opposition is directed to that quarter.

MINERAL—QUALITY OF LAND—STREAMS—NAMES OF RIVERS AND CREEKS IN THE COUNTY—DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THE FIRST SETTLERS.

In the northern portion of Webster County there is an immense deposit of plaster of paris or gypsum, perhaps the best in the United States. It is eighteen to twenty feet thick, and covers an area of not less than ten miles square. There is an abundance of building stone, such as limestone, sandstone, and gray marble, which admits of a fine polish. There is an abundance of brick clay as well as cement clay for fire brick, and a species of red earth resembling red ochre, which may be used like Blake's Ohio paint, sandstone, suitable for grindstone, and iron ore and coal.

The soil in Webster County, and particularly the alluvial bottoms, is extremely rich and fertile. It is a black, vegetable mould, intermixed with a sandy loam, easily cultivated and stands a drouth remarkably well. The upland prairies will average from eighteen to twenty-four inches in depth, and on the rich bottom lands from thirty to forty-eight inches in depth. Off from the streams the face of the country may be termed moderately undulating. Along the streams the ranges of bluffs are of considerable magnitude, intersected with ravines. The county is well watered, abounding with fine springs of water *both fresh and mineral*.

There are several fine rivers and creeks which flow through the county affording good water power, the principal of which

are, the Des Moines (*E-ah-sa-wah-pa-ta* the Indian name), the Boone River, or *Cha-sis-sa-se-wa-ka-tah*. This river was named Boone, after Capt. Boone, U. S. A., who first explored the country. The Lizard River (or *Wa-sa-ka-pom-pa*); this river was named by Capt. Boone and his party from the fact that when they crossed at the mouth of this stream they found the shore and rocks in the stream covered with lizards. The course of the Des Moines is from north to south, winding its way through the county. The course of the Boone is from north-east to south-west, running through the south part of Webster County, emptying into the Des Moines. The Lizard River is also a tributary to the Des Moines, uniting with it a short distance above Fort Dodge, from the west. This stream has two branches; the north branch, running through the north-west portion of the county, the south branch through the south-west portion, forming a junction about two miles west of where it empties into the Des Moines River. There are numerous smaller streams in the county, viz: Indian Creek, Soldier Creek, Brushy Creek, Deer Creek, Skillet Creek, Elk Creek, &c., &c., along all of which there is timber. The timber in this county, as is the case generally in Iowa, lies along the streams principally.

The first settlers in this county endured many hardships and privations. Most of them were poor, and for the first three years, while the garrison remained here, they were frequently relieved by the troops at the fort, by getting from them provisions and clothing for their families. After the troops left their nearest point where provisions and necessaries could be obtained was Fort Des Moines; no mills in the country nearer, they were obliged to go there or to Oskaloosa for supplies. They generally managed to get along by hunting and trapping and trading furs, &c., for provisions. At some of these points the men were much troubled in leaving home, as the women were in constant dread of the Indians, and feared to be left alone while their husbands went in search of provisions to live on.

THE INDIANS WHO INHABITED THIS SECTION OF COUNTRY WHEN FORT DODGE WAS ESTABLISHED—THEIR ORIGIN—ANCIENT MOUNDS AND FORTIFICATIONS—MASSACRE AT SPIRIT LAKE—FLIGHT OF THE INDIANS FROM THE STATE.

The Indians who inhabited this county (Webster), and surrounding district of country were Sioux, made up of fractional bands of the Sissitons, amongst whom were the Five Lodges, numbering five hundred. Their acknowledged chief was Red Thunder. The germ of this band (the Five Lodges) was a family of murderers, who wandered away from the Sissitons many years ago, having murdered an aged chief, and constituted a little Nauvoo of their own, where rogues from all other bands found refuge. When we first came to this district of country they numbered probably one hundred and fifty lodges. Of the original refugees and desperadoes were *Si-dom-i-na-do-tah* (or Two Fingers), his brother, *Ink-pa-do-tah*, (end of the Red Top) and *Ti-ton-ka* (or Big Buffalo). After the establishment of Fort Dodge we frequently found numbers of the *Little Rock* band from the St. Peters mixed up with them. *Ish-ta-ha-bah* (or Young Sleepy Eyes) is the chief of the *Little Rock* band, and can muster five hundred warriors. This chief was connected by marriage, as he claimed, with the leaders of the other bands, and we found him and a portion of his people frequently living along our streams and roaming over the country with them. The principal leaders and chiefs of the Five Lodge (or Red Top) band, when we came to establish the post in 1850, and since, have been *Si-dom-i-na-do-tah*, *Inka-pa-do-tah*, *Ti-ton-ka* (or Big Buffalo), *Umpa-sho-ta* (or Smoky Day), *Wah-kon-sa* (or one who will be heard from), and *Cos-om-i-nee*. When the troops first began to hunt down and chastise those Indians for outrages committed, there was with them a very stout negro, who was amongst the most insolent and daring. We used every exertion to catch him but never could; would hear of him when any outrage was committed, but could not catch him before the Sac and Fox and Pottawattamie Indians left the state. These bands of Sioux increased their number very

much by gathering renegades and allies from the other bands of Sioux to aid them in fighting and pillaging their common enemy.

The Pottawattamies inhabited the southern and southwestern parts of the state, the Sacs and Foxes the southeastern part. Before we came and established the forts, these Sioux and Pottawattamies had some desperate battles in the neighborhood of the Lizard River and Twin lakes; also with the Sacs and Foxes (or Musquakies) on the headwaters of Skunk, Iowa and Cedar Rivers. A severe battle was fought at Mud Lake, a few miles south-east of Webster City, where Big Bear, a Musquakie chief, was killed. On another occasion the Sac and Fox Indians pursued the Sioux to a point on the east branch of the Des Moines, a few miles above where Algona is now located, where they fought a battle in which a chief called *Shoganeec* (or Little Hill) figured. At Twin Lakes the Pottawattamies and the Sioux had a severe fight, also on the South Lizard. The battle on the South Lizard was the last with the Pottawattamies. In that battle the Sioux were victorious. When the troops established Fort Dodge, these Sioux Indians fell back and harbored principally along the north branch of the Des Moines, North Lizard, Lizard Lake, Spirit Lake, Okiboje Lake, and Swan Lake, north and north-west of the fort. Also, a portion of them harbored at what is now called Buffalo Grove, on the headwaters of Boone River. They commenced depredations east of us on the Iowa and Cedar Rivers, also on the Coon and Boyer Rivers, south-west of us, picking up and robbing any of the white men who ventured that far north or north-west to settle or hunt. In the spring of 1852, they robbed an old man by the name of Green and his party who had ventured some distance up the Coon River to hunt. They robbed them of everything and sent them home. In October of same year, 1852, they attacked four families who had settled on Boyer River, about sixty miles south-west of the fort, robbed them of all they had, and took with them as prisoners a young man and young woman. On that occasion we pursued them until we caught

two of their principal leaders, *Ink-pa-do-tah* and *Umpa-sho-tah*, and held them accountable for the return of the persons and property. About ten days after they were brought in. On that occasion we pursued them from point to point through the country, and finally caught the supposed guilty party near the state line on the Des Moines near what is now called Granger's Point. Not long afterwards they took prisoners James Chambers, of Linn County, and a Mr. Madden of Muscatine, who had ventured up Cedar River to hunt. In this manner they roamed about the northern portion of the state, committing robberies alternately east and west of us during the time the troops remained at this post. After Fort Dodge was abandoned and the troops had left, they closed in upon us in considerable numbers and pitched their *tee-pees* (or tents), on the grounds they had formerly occupied. For some time after, they were engaged and much excited in a war with the Omaha Indians on the Missouri, which occupied their sole attention. In July, 1854, on their return from an expedition against the Omahas, in which about five hundred warriors were engaged (part of the number from Traverse DeSioux, Minnesota), having driven the Omahas into Council Bluffs, about sixty-seven young warriors of the party determined to have the scalps of some Sac Indians (their old enemy), who they learned were at Clear Lake (now in Cerro Gordo County), with some Winnebagoes. They put out for them and did kill one young Sac Indian, and drove off the rest, which caused great alarm amongst the frontier settlers along the Iowa River, and caused many of them to leave the country. I was empowered by Governor Hempstead of the state of Iowa, and afterwards by Governor J. W. Grimes, to preserve peace between the Indians and settlers, and if necessary to raise men and defend the settlers from the depredations of the Indians.

These Indians continued to gather in around Fort Dodge, and for some time we daily expected an attack from them. We had to be constantly on the lookout for them, and dare not venture out without being well armed, particularly after

the murder by Lotts (who in January, 1854, killed a chief, called *Se-dom-e-na-dotah*, and six squaws and children, on what is now called Lott's Creek). Soon after this murder they began to threaten settlers, who fled to the fort for protection. They grew more and more sullen and distant. In the spring of 1855 they again fell back, and generally withdrew to the Upper Des Moines and Spirit Lake country; only straggling parties remaining very near us. They then turned their attention to annoying the settlers on Coon and Little Sioux Rivers. In July, 1856, a party of them attacked and robbed a settler, on North Lizard, by the name of Broadskink, and threatened others, when Maj. Williams raised a party of men and pursued them, driving them to Minnesota.

They finally, in March, 1857, commenced an attack on the settlers on the lower settlements on Little Sioux River, under the lead of *Ink-pa-do-tah*, and his sons, named *Ma-kok-a-gue-mon*, and *Mo-ko-po-ka-mon*. A band of them, among whom were several half-breeds, passed up the Little Sioux River, robbing and committing horrible outrages upon the women, and entirely broke up the settlements on that river, but committed no murders until they reached the Okobogis and Spirit Lakes (the source of Little Sioux River). There, no doubt, the settlers undertook to defend themselves, but were overcome by the savages, who it appeared attacked them in detail, as they lived scattered around those lakes. They murdered all the settlers except four or five who were absent, and four whom they took with them as prisoners. This settlement numbered about fifty in all. The prisoners taken were Mrs. Thacher, Mrs. Marble, Mrs. Noble and Miss Gardner. They afterwards murdered Mrs. Thacher and Mrs. Noble. Mrs. Marble and Miss Gardner were afterwards rescued through the aid of some friendly Indians of the Little Crow band, employed by the Indian Agents in Minnesota. From these lakes the Indians passed over to Springfield, on the Des Moines River, attacked that town, and murdered and robbed several there, and their intention was to pass down the Des Moines River as far as they dared, and cut off and break up all

the settlements. At the same time, their chief, *Ish-ta-ha-bah* (or Sleepy-Eyes), with a band, was posted at Big Island Grove (now in Emmett Co.), and had commenced depredations, and threatened settlers on the Des Moines. On the alarm being given, Maj. W. Williams marched with three companies of volunteers as follows: Company A, commanded by Capt. C. B. Richards; Company B, by Capt. John F. Duncombe, and Company C, by Capt. Johnston, in all numbering one hundred and twenty men, the first two companies from Webster County, and the third from Webster City, Hamilton County. By forced marches they reached the frontier in time to turn and drive back the savages, and to rescue some twenty women and children, the remains of murdered families, also two wounded men, Thomas and Carver, and one young woman who had escaped in the melee and succeeded in hiding from the savages. All of these must have perished from hunger and the inclemency of the weather, had they not been released when they were. The plan laid down by these Indians was, no doubt, from their movements, to cut off and break up all the settlements north of Fort Dodge. *Josh*, a young Indian who had been living about Mr. Carter's house, and who had been with these Indians, gave Carter notice of their intentions to this effect, and advised him to leave some weeks before. But little attention was paid by Carter to his statement. After giving the warning to Carter, *Josh* left, and no doubt joined them. The detachment of volunteers routed *Ish-ta-ha-bah* and his party at Big Island Grove, who fled upon their approach in the direction of Springfield. We pursued them to the Minnesota line, when we found that a company of mounted infantry from Fort Ridgeley, commanded by Capt. Bee, had arrived at Springfield, and that the whole body of Indians had fled across the Big Sioux River, in the direction of the Jaques River, the country of the Yankton Sioux. After scouring the frontier and ascertaining that all Indians had fled from the state, as an act of humanity, parties were detailed to gather up and bury the murdered settlers. We buried at the lakes thirty-two men,

women and children, and nine at Springfield. Several were afterwards found. The killed, wounded, missing and prisoners numbered in all fifty-nine. We found, where the Indians had encamped at the lakes, that they had in one place ten *teepees*, and some distance from it four more. As near as we could judge, their number must have been from a hundred and thirty to a hundred and fifty. Their force was, by statements made by our Minnesota neighbors, but small; but all such statements have been made by persons desirous of retaining their trade with the Sioux on the Minnesota side. Their efforts were to clear the Sioux in that quarter, and keep in favor with them. The settlers at Spirit Lake must have made a desperate defence and have fought bravely, from appearances, and the situation in which we found the dead. The Indians also must have suffered loss, as we found, where their *teepees* stood, bloody clothes and clotted blood.

I have no doubt, from my knowledge of Indian character, that this attack and massacre was in retaliation for the murder committed by Lott. *Se-dom-i-na-do-tah* was the brother of *Ink-pa-do-tah*; and one of the squaws, a very old woman, murdered by him, was their mother. This, together with the rapid settlement of the whites on Little Sioux River, the Okebojis and Spirit Lakes and upper Des Moines River, their old and favorite haunts and hunting grounds, prompted them to it. Since this massacre they have not ventured far across the state line. Small parties only have been from time to time making incursions and stealing from the settlers in Dickinson, Cherokee and O'Brian Counties, in the north-western part of the state, where it is likely they will be troublesome to settlers for some time to come.

The detachment of volunteers above spoken of, suffered very much from exposure and fatigue. The snow had fallen to a great depth, and during the preceding months had drifted so that in all low grounds along streams, the drifts were from fifteen to twenty feet deep. For nineteen days they forced their way through snow drifts and swollen streams. The snow having began to melt before they turned for home,

the streams were very high. During the whole march the weather was very severe. They had no tents or covering—had to select points where there was the least snow to encamp upon; then their bed was the frozen ground, or brush. The whole march, up to the state line, we had to cut through snow banks every mile or two, and drag the horses and cattle and wagons through with drag ropes, and on our return swim and wade streams. The men were wet all day, and slept on the snow or frosted ground at night. Their suffering and fatigue was very great, yet they performed their duty without a murmur. We lost two valuable men who perished, both belonging to the detail to bury the dead at Spirit Lake. They were separated from their companions in a snow storm and were frozen to death, namely, Capt. Johnston, of Webster City, and William Buckholder, of Fort Dodge. There were fourteen others so badly frozen that they did not recover from it for nearly a year afterwards.

ANCIENT FORTIFICATIONS AND MOUNDS FOUND IN WEBSTER COUNTY—EXAMINATION OF SAME, &c.

After establishing the Fort, on reconnoitering the country, we found many remains of ancient fortifications and mounds, that had been evidently, from their location and construction, raised by some people at a very remote period for defense and for habitations, or look out purposes; and give evidence that this country has been inhabited by a race of people long before the present race of Indians. We were unable to find any one among the most aged Sioux (and there were some very aged) that had any knowledge of them, or by whom they were built, by tradition or otherwise. All stated that they were here when their fathers first came to this section of country. The most distinct of these will be found in the forks of Boone River on L. Mericle's place, and that vicinity; on the west side of the Des Moines, south of Fort Dodge, near where Mr. Beam now lives; on Indian Creek, 12 miles north of Fort Dodge; on Lizard River, and at Fort Dodge. Those that appear to have been places of

defense, are embankments thrown up in regular lines, and near them mounds thrown up which appear to have been intended as look-out points. Recently some of the mounds in Fort Dodge have been removed, and in digging into them they were found to contain the remains of human beings, such as small parts of skull bones, teeth, and parts of thigh bones. Along with them were found coals and pieces of burnt wood. From their position, high and dry, covered as they were with sand and gravel, physicians and others who examined them were of opinion a great length of time had elapsed since they were deposited there, perhaps two hundred years or more. These mound-builders, whoever they were, evidently were a different people from the Sioux Indians. They differed from them in their habits and customs. The Sioux do not so bury their dead: they generally place them on scaffolds, or suspend them on the limbs of trees. The bones found lay in such position as to favor the opinion of both Sioux and Pottawattamie Indians whom we have talked with about these mounds, that they were originally built for habitations, by erecting uprights of wood and covering them with earth and sod, and were originally higher, but from the great length of time since they were erected, the wooden props or supports had rotted, and the covering sunk down. It is believed by the Indians that they were built by the inhabitants to live in, or for the purpose of places to retreat to in case of attack from an enemy; that they were overcome by some enemy who killed them in these mounds, where the bones lay; the finding of the coals and burnt and decayed wood with the bones, favors the opinion. Otherwise the ancient inhabitants were in the habit of burning their dead, which is not the custom of any of our Indians. Nothing has been found in any of these mounds, so far as they have been opened, that would go to prove that the ancient mound builders belonged to any of the races of Indians on our continent. The latter are all in the habit of burying with the dead their war weapons, instruments and trinkets, but not a trace of anything of the kind could be found in any of these

mounds. It is to be remarked that from appearances all these mounds and ancient works for defence, have been erected about the same time, at some very remote period, long before any of the present race of Indians inhabited or roamed over this country; none of them have any knowledge concerning them from tradition or otherwise.

FORT DODGE, THE COUNTY SEAT, AND OTHER TOWNS IN THE COUNTY—THE FIRST SETTLERS—BUSINESS—THE FUTURE PROSPECTS, &c.

The original plat of Fort Dodge was laid out in March, 1857, so as to embrace the garrison or fort buildings, being the line of buildings now forming the north side of Williams street. The first plat included about sixty or seventy acres. The fort buildings were fourteen in number, built generally of hewn logs and weather-boarded, besides good barns, stabling and other outhouses. At the time the town was laid out, the only inhabitants, or persons living in it, were Wm. Williams, his son James, and John Heffley. Wm. R. Miller, who had been living nine miles above, on the Des Moines, fled to the fort with his family. He came in and was given a house to live in. Soon after, Robert Scott and John Scott, who had settled south of the fort, came in for safety, alarmed by the Indians. Soon after, as I have before stated, Preston Vancleave, John Vancleave, Volney Knight and S. A. Scovel, with their families, came in and settled with us. Cyrus C. Carpenter, Edward McKnight, Robert Johnston and Wm. Plumb, all single men, also came in and settled. These may be called the first settlers at Fort Dodge. I induced W. R. Miller to take the house now called the Bernhart House, and open a public, or boarding house, which was the first public house kept in the place. At this time, the nearest settlers were Thomas Holliday, Thomas White (a discharged soldier), James Mahoney and Jacob Mericle, who had settled five or six miles south of the fort. These were the only settlers in the town and near it in the spring and summer of 1854. That fall, E. H. Albee, George Goss, George W. Young, Wm. Young, Frederick Booth, E. E. Colburn, David Mallory,

Enos Mallory and family, Winton Smith, D. W. Prindle, Geo. B. Sherman, and others came in to the fort, and several settled near what is now called Border Plains. Asa C. Call, Esq., and his brother Ambrose Call, about that time, were the only settlers left above Fort Dodge, all others having left. No men deserve more credit for fortitude and perseverance than Judge Call and his brother. They endured many privations, and for a length of time, forty miles from any settler and surrounded by Indians, kept their ground under all difficulties and dangers. In the spring of 1855, immigrants began to come in freely, a great portion of whom settled in and about Fort Dodge, in anticipation of the opening of the land office for the sale of lands.

Having stated who were the first settlers north of Fort Dodge after the town was laid out, I will here state that in the spring of 1852, while the troops were here, Granville Berkley and two men named Winters and Butler, from Fort Des Moines, came to the fort and stated their intention to go up north of the fort and make claims and settle. They were encouraged to do so, and promised protection. They went up and commenced improvements nine miles above the fort, on the east side of the Des Moines, and remained there for some time. They differed in some way, when Berkley was left alone, the other two leaving. He afterwards sold the claim made to Wm. R. Miller, then employed at the fort as a farmer. Berkley left and settled at the forks of Boone River; so it may be said that Granville Berkley, Winters and Butler were the first settlers who ventured north of the fort before it was abandoned by the troops. In the fall of 1855, and during the spring and summer of 1856, a number of buildings were put up. Among the first erected were by C. Hazard Vincent, John Garaghty, Morgan & Biers, Hoyt, Sherman & Co., Green & Dawley, Wm. Hodges, L. L. Pease, T. Sargent and C. Hardman.

On the opening of the land office, Nov. 5, 1855, great excitement prevailed, and large numbers gathered in seeking after land. In 1856 lots were selling in Fort Dodge at from \$150 to \$500. In the same year an extension of the town

plat was laid out, and in June of that year the railroad was located, and a donation of land made to the railroad company by the Fort Dodge Company, for depot grounds, &c. A fine brick school house was also built, costing between \$3,000 and \$4,000, and schools established. In the spring of 1857 the Presbyterian Church was built, and during the years 1856-57 a number of good buildings were put up, churches established, and a general improvement made in the town. The winters of 1856-7, and 1857-8 were very severe, and many of the settlers became very much discouraged, some returning to the east. This was followed by a general pressure in the money market all over the country, which put a stop to all improvements in the place for the two following years, 1858 and 1859. This year (1860), several fine buildings have been put up in the town, as well as in the surrounding country. The Fort Dodge Company, in connection with the railroad company, have made further additions to the south, west and north parts of the town, which now, with the former additions by Messrs. Duncombe and Morrison, Snell & Co., and others, included all of Section No. 19, a quarter of Sec. 20, part of Sec. 30, and about the half of Sec. 29. Believing that Fort Dodge is destined to be a large place, they have made provision for it by laying out an extensive plat of ground, sufficient for a large population.

The first hotel was kept by Wm. R. Miller, in the house known as the Wahkonsa House. The first store was established by Lemp & Williams, kept by J. B. Williams, in the building formerly used by the troops as a hospital, on Williams street. The first blacksmith shop, by Cordis Hardman; first carpenters, J. D. Buckholder and J. L. Cheney; first cabinet maker, Henry Dimler; first shoemaker, Michael Crowley; first wagonmakers, Gilbert Marshall and Volney Knight; first stove and tin establishment, A. J. Humphries; first tailor, J. W. Thomas; first brickmaker, A. Matt; first practicing physician, S. B. Olney; first attorney at law, John F. Duncombe; first land agency, Gilmore & Chandler; first livery establishment, S. Woods. In the year 1856 the town improved rapidly, and filled up with a transient population,

the majority of whom were land jobbers, who styled themselves land agents and bankers—but few houses that had not a sign stuck up at the door, “Land Agency,” &c., until the great body of the lands in this district were sold. This flying troop of agents kept everything in confusion, and brought about a great deal of dissipation and reckless speculation. All appeared to turn their attention to speculating in land, and neglecting everything else until these land sharks left, and their places filled by a more temperate and considerate population. Not till the spring of 1858 was there any attention given to farming by the great mass of the citizens. Since that time we have had many good farms opened, and we now have, in the town and surrounding district, a permanent and good population. We had in 1859 about two hundred farms under cultivation in the county, the majority of them in the district around Fort Dodge. The town of Fort Dodge contains, at this time, a population of from one thousand to twelve hundred; has one hotel, the Bernhart House, seven variety stores, two groceries, three saloons, two stove and tin establishments, one baker and confectioner, two boarding houses, three shoe manufactories, one wagonmaker, two blacksmiths, seven carpenters, one confectionery, one clothing store, two miliners, two cabinet and furniture establishments, three house painters, one watch maker, two bankers or brokers, nine lawyers, four land agents, four churches, viz: the Presbyterian, Rev. J. L. Dodder, pastor; Methodist, Rev. J. Thompson, pastor; Episcopal, Rev. Goodale, pastor; Catholic, Rev. J. Marsh, priest. The Catholic and Presbyterian congregations have put up fine brick churches, and the Methodist and Episcopalian Churches are frame buildings, tastefully and neatly built. There is one newspaper, *The Ft. Dodge Republican*, published by Messrs. Ingersoll & Logan; a literary society, and an excellent public school, the teachers in which are Mr. Blair, male department, and Miss Welles, of the female department; a splendid court house, one flouring mill, two steam sawmills, and one nursery. There are also four bricklayers, three stone masons and three plasterers.

The town of Fort Dodge is situated on the east bank of the Des Moines River, and bounded on the north by Soldier Creek, distant two hundred miles from Dubuque, on the line of the Dubuque and Sioux City Railroad, eighty miles north of Des Moines, the state capital. It commands all the trade of the Des Moines Valley from the Minnesota line north (85 miles) to the Boone River south, 22 miles, together with a large range of country lying northeast, northwest and west, embracing the counties of Humboldt, Kossuth, Dickinson, Winnebago, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, Sac, Calhoun, Emmett, Clay and Buena Vista. When the railroads are completed it will be an important point for trade. The Dubuque and Sioux City Railroad Company have already selected and laid out their depot grounds here, and having abundance of stone coal convenient, intend erecting extensive machine shops. This road will open out the communication with the east. The Keokuk and Minnesota Railroad, also progressing, will cross the Dubuque and Sioux City Road at this place, which will give an outlet south and north. The abundance of stone coal and gypsum, with the produce of this district of country, will make a good business for those roads. Fort Dodge, no doubt, is destined to be a manufacturing town of some importance. All that is wanting is these railroads to give an impetus to the town and the surrounding country.

The post office at this place, one of the best arranged and most important in the interior of the state, is a distributing office for all the northern, eastern, southern and western portions of the state, to a great extent. The mail matter for the following offices is distributed at this office, viz: Homer, Border Plain, Dayton, Hesperian, Boonsboro, Swede Point, Belleville, Otho, Carson's Point, Sac City, Lake City, Spirit Lake, Paoli, Dakotah, Emmett City, Emmettsburgh, Jackson, Mankato, Spencer, Webster City, Mineral Ridge, Sioux City, Smithland, Sioux Falls, Newton, Island Grove, New Jefferson, Alden, Iowa Falls, Cedar Falls, Algona, Lott's Creek, Kossuth Center, Peterson, Eber, Cresco, Illinois Grove, La-

kin's Grove, Rosedale, Forest City, Waterman's, Upper Grove, Okoboje.

We have daily mails leaving the Bernhart House for some of the above points. Five of the routes have hacks on them for the conveyance of passengers.

This will give some idea of the improvements of this western, north and northwestern portion of Iowa within, it may be said, four years.

Border Plain is situated ten miles south of Fort Dodge, between the Des Moines road and the Des Moines River, on the east side of the river. It has a population of about one hundred souls, one store, one steam saw mill, one plow manufactory, a good school. This town is situated in the middle of a good farming community, but from its location off all leading roads, it does not promise to become a very large place, unless the railroad up the Des Moines Valley should be located on that side of the river.

West Dayton is situated on the west side of the Des Moines River, about twenty miles south of Fort Dodge; has, perhaps, fifty inhabitants; has a post office and a good steam saw mill in the vicinity; is situated in the heart of a good farming population, who are principally Swedes.

Buchanan is a small town, also situated on the west side of the Des Moines River, on the road to Fort Des Moines, has from forty to fifty inhabitants. Its location is a beautiful one, in the heart of a good settlement. There is a post office here called Hesperian. Has one physician, one blacksmith, also a good steam saw mill convenient.

Belleville is situated on the west side of the Des Moines River (on the west bank), is but a small place, contains but few inhabitants besides the proprietor, Isaac Bell. The prosperity of this town depends on the location of the Valley Railroad, or the improvement of the Des Moines River.

Paris is situated on the south side of Boone River, on the road from Fort Dodge to Fort Des Moines (east side of the river Des Moines.) It contains from forty to fifty inhabitants; is located near the Hamilton County line; has one blacksmithshop, one tavern, and a good steam saw mill.

The last named five towns will all make in time respectable country towns, being located in good farming neighborhoods.

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