

time, no doubt, be made a resort for bathing purposes, and also furnish the motive power for valuable machinery.

I need not say that this is one of the best timbered and watered counties in the State; that its prairies are small, rolling and dry; that as an agricultural county it has no superior—these are facts known and recognized by all who have seen much of Iowa.

The county has, I am told, several hundred miles of hedge fence; it is doing well, and has demonstrated its adaption to Iowa soil. A great amount was set out this year, more will be set out next year, and year after year. I will leave it for some one who is better informed, to give an account of the manner fences are now made of it.

Hoping that this hasty sketch has somewhat of interest, I will as time will permit, prepare you one or more articles upon the earlier settlement of the county.

HISTORY OF MAHASKA COUNTY, WITH ITS CITIES AND TOWNS.

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

CHAPTER FIRST.

Mahaska county was organized by an act of the Territorial Legislature, February 5th, 1844. The county is situated in the Des Moines Valley, about one hundred miles west of the Mississippi River, and about two hundred miles east of the Missouri River, and about fifty miles north of the north line of the State of Missouri. It is surrounded by the following counties, to-wit: on the east by Keokuk, on the north by Poweshiek, on the west by Marion, and on the south by Monroe; and in a climate unsurpassed for salubrity by any portion of the United States. It has never fallen to the lot of man to enjoy a more pleasant and beautiful country. Its summers are healthy and pleasant, and its winters much more agreeable and endurable than those of States east of us.

It contains five hundred and seventy-six square miles, and sixteen townships, viz: Cedar, Harrison, Des Moines, Jefferson, Scott, Oskaloosa, (embracing two townships), White

Oak, Monroe, Adams, Madison, Black Oak, Richland, Prairie, Union and Pleasant Grove. The county is principally watered by the Des Moines and North and South Skunk Rivers, which flow through it from the north-west to the south-east, and afford an abundance of water power. There are a number of smaller streams, such as the Muchekianock, Cedar, Middle Creek, Spring Creek, Bluff Creek, and others. Good and pure water can be obtained almost anywhere in the county, by sinking wells to the depth of from fifteen to fifty feet. This is specially true of the prairie lands. This is somewhat remarkable; for as a general thing, water is more easily obtained in the timber land than on the prairie. The prairies are rolling, of medium size, with good timber, consisting in part of white oak, black oak, hickory, walnut, elm, linn, hackberry, birch, maple, &c. There is not a township in the county that does not produce timber, and taken as a whole, there is plenty to supply all demands. As an evidence of this, good wood is now selling in Oskaloosa at from three to four dollars and fifty cents per cord, delivered.

There is plenty of choice building stone in different portions of the county, consisting of lime stone, sand stone, &c. This is especially true of the rivers named. These afford upon their banks an abundance of stone suitable for building and other purposes; while in the immediate vicinity of Oskaloosa, we have an inexhaustible bed of fine sand stone, that can be used for either building or flagging.

The supply of stone (bituminous) coal is inexhaustible. It abounds in various portions of the county, in beds of from three to nine feet in thickness. Many miners are at work taking it out for home supply, and for shipment to foreign points. It is almost incredible the amount shipped from this county to Keokuk, Burlington and intermediate points east, and to Des Moines and intermediate points west. It is very cheap fuel—being delivered at certain seasons of the year at as low as seven cents per bushel. We are informed by a gentleman who understands the whole thing, that about 500,000 bushels of this fuel was shipped from this county during the

year 1867, being about 100,000 bushels more than for the year 1866. It is easy to see from these figures that coal is destined to be a source of great wealth to the county. Allowing 260 bushels to the car, it required over nineteen hundred and twenty cars to remove the amount mined in 1867.

The soil of the county is very productive, yielding abundant crops of all kinds of grain grown in the west, and turns out as large crops and as good vegetables as any portion of the United States. It is admirably adapted to the culture of almost all kinds of fruits—such as apples, pears, cherries, grapes, strawberries, gooseberries, &c. A greater interest is being awakened on this subject, and in a few years the supply and quality will be equal to any portion of the country. Orchards well protected by groves will do well and yield largely. It would be well for our farmers and fruit growers to turn their attention to the planting and culture of these groves, as they answer the double purpose of protecting dwellings, orchards, barns, &c., and of fuel. In a few years after planting, the cotton wood, soft maple, &c., will afford an ample supply of fuel, without injuring the orchards, as they may be planted so very thick as to allow one-half or more to be taken out without injury. We see that one writer suggests that a considerable quantity of the land be devoted to this purpose and we regard it a good idea.

Grasses, both wild and tame, grow most abundantly, and are sold at very low rates. We believe that it is the general experience of our farmers, that tame grasses go much farther in sustaining stock than the wild—hence many are cultivating them largely. There can be no better stock growing country, as its supplies of grains and grasses are inexhaustible, thus making feed both plenty and cheap. Horses, cattle, sheep, hogs and poultry of all kinds do well and pay well to the grower.

EARLY SETTLEMENT.

In the fall of 1842, the United States purchased all the lands then belonging to the Sac and Fox Indians in the Territory of Iowa, the Indians relinquishing all their lands as far

west as Red Rock, on the Des Moines River. During the same winter the Territorial Legislature prospectively laid out the new purchase as far west as Red Rock into counties, Mahaska being one of them, but was unsurveyed.

For a considerable time previous to the 1st of May, 1843, large numbers of claim-makers were collecting and camping upon lands now within the limits of Mahaska county, waiting until the Indian claims should expire. Numbers of them did not attempt to sleep until midnight on the last day of April, and as soon as the watch indicated the hour of 12 o'clock, commenced marking out their future lands and homes, so that it is impossible to tell with any degree of accuracy who was the first settler, as there were a number who simultaneously laid claims to lands. This indicates the high favor in which the lands, climate, &c., was held by the first settlers of the county; and its present prosperous and healthy condition shows clearly that these pioneers were not mistaken.

It is believed by the best authority extant that A. S. Nichols, Esq., now an honored citizen of the immediate vicinity of Oskaloosa, erected the first blacksmith shop at what was then called Brim's Point, near where Kirksville now stands, in the south east portion of the county. Mr. Nichols is now largely engaged in the nursery and horticultural business, and from his long experience with the climate of the country, is admirably adapted to his business. He is a very worthy citizen, who has ever been true to the best interests of the country. In short, he is a Republican in whom there is no guile, and who had no sympathy with the late rebellion or its friends, north or south.

None of these early settlers knew what county they were in until the September following, when the county was run off into townships, and they found, by reference to the acts of the Legislature, that it was Mahaska. The first settlements within the boundaries of the county were made on what is familiarly known as "six mile prairie," some six miles from Oskaloosa, and in the direction of the Des Moines River. This is a beautiful and rich section of country, unsurpassed by anything

in the State, and just such a spot as we would expect persons in quest of nice and pleasant future homes to squat upon. It is now well improved, dotted over with fine, substantial dwellings, barns, out-houses, &c., and the owners are becoming wealthy by industry, enterprise, and from the products of a very fertile soil. While there are other portions of the county equally as fertile, yet there is a historic interest clustering around this region, in consequence of its early settlement, that gives it an unusual *eclat*. Those persons who first settled in this beautiful region, were for some time undecided whether they lived in Mahaska, or what was then known as Kishkekash (now Marion) county, and these doubts were not removed for some time. Of one thing, however, they were certain, that whatever the name of the county might be, the country was salubrious and rich.

The first house in what is now Mahaska county was built before the county was sold by the Indians, and was situated about one mile above where Eddyville now stands, which was then an Indian village called "Hardfishes," and where Mr. J. P. Eddy had a trading house—hence the name Eddyville. The house here referred to, was erected by a Mr. Macbeth, then connected with the trading post alluded to.

It is always a matter of interest to preserve the record of early times and historic events. This was fully illustrated to our mind several years ago, upon visiting Mount Vernon, the home of Gen. Washington. It was astonishing to see with what avidity the visitors secured some small relic from that estate, as a memento of the great and good Washington, and we were not an exception to the general rule.

It is not positively known who built the first house after the settlement by the whites, for the reason already given, that so many settlers squatted simultaneously. Quite a number commenced their structures at or about the same time, as all were very eager to get a shelter and to commence preparing their lands for the production of the necessaries of life.

The first election ever held in Mahaska county, was held at the house of Mr. Poultney Loughridge, who is still an

honored resident of the county. Mr. Loughridge recently sold 190 acres of his farm, lying about four miles east of this city, for the snug little sum of \$10,350, and has purchased the very pleasant residence of Mr. J. C. Wilson, in this city, where he will, in all probability, spend the remnant of his days. He is an uncle to the Hon. Wm. Loughridge, our present able and worthy member of Congress, and is a gentleman of great moral worth, having for a long time been an active and useful member of the U. P. Church. When this is said, it is not necessary to speak further of his political opinions and acts, as they have none who are not sound. We rejoice that he is becoming a resident of our city. The more such men we have the better.

At the same time another election was held at the house of William Stanley, on Lake Prairie, in what is now Marion county, both of these being precincts attached to Washington county. Think of that! Marion county is as much as sixty or more miles west of Washington, and Mahaska lies between them; so these precincts took in an area of as much as, probably, one hundred miles.

The first town laid out in Mahaska county was by William James, in June, 1843, and was on Six Mile Prairie, and was called Harrisburg. The probabilities are that it was never recorded. This, the reader will perceive, was twenty-five years ago; so that a correct idea may be formed of the facility with which the county has settled up and improved. The population of the county in 1867 was 18,581, classified as follows: White males, 9,434; white females, 9,147; colored males, 61; colored females, 51. We presume it would be safe to make our present population 20,000, as there has been quite an influx into the county within the past four to six months. Is not this a vast increase to be brought about in the short space of twenty-five years?—nearly one thousand a year; and it must be remembered that for the first ten years of that time the increase did not compare with the last fifteen.

Some time after Mr. James laid out Harrisburg, Mr. George W. Jones, the brother of our respected townsman, John W.

Jones, laid out a town on the same site, which he named Auburn, where he built a warehouse; but there never was any further improvement made. This is evidence that the plat of the former town of Harrisburg had never been recorded—otherwise a second town could not have been laid out on the same spot.

In the winter of 1843-4, a branch of the Fourier Association commenced operations on the farm then and still owned by Dr. E. A. Boyer, adjoining Rochester, on the Des Moines River. They made some slight improvements, but being destitute of capital, soon broke up and abandoned ground.

Dr. Boyer settled on the same farm where he now lives, some time in 1843, being one of the earliest settlers of the county. He marked out such lands as he he desired to enter, and thus secured a "squatter's right." He at once commenced the practice of medicine, having a wide and extensive ride for a number of years, traveling many miles to see patients. By industry and frugality, he, in a few years, gained a competence, and is now among the wealthiest men of the county. He owns a large body of land—perhaps in the neighborhood of one thousand acres—besides a store, mill, a large amount of stock, &c., and is adding materially to his wealth with each successive year. He has a very commanding, beautiful and commodious residence on the banks of the Des Moines River, where he lives at his ease. Aside from his wealth, the Dr. is a very companionable gentlemen, who feels for other's wants, and is always willing to render aid where he thinks it is really needed. In public enterprises, such as building churches, school houses, &c., he is always ready and willing to lend a helping hand. His heart lies within the extreme points of the compass, and always beats in unison with suffering humanity. Among his many other good qualities, he is a radical Republican, and every pulsation of his political heart beats in sympathy with the government that has protected himself and property; and for the four millions of Freedmen so lately released from bondage.

Immediately below Rochester, on the farm now owned and

occupied by Mr. Foster, Mr. John W. Jones, before spoken of in this article, became a "squatter." It was upon this farm that Harrisburg and afterwards Auburn were located. Not having conversed with Mr. Jones upon the subject, we do not know the exact length of time he remained upon this farm.

As we said in the outset of this article, we are indebted to formerly published articles for many of the facts contained in them—hence our reason for speaking of particular individuals. There are other old settlers, in different portions of the county, of whom we will speak before we close.

FIRST COUNTY OFFICERS.

On the 5th day of February, 1844, the legislature passed an organizing act for the counties of Davis, Wapello, Keokuk and Mahaska. It was necessary, under the act, that there should be officers appointed for the purpose of organizing these counties. Mr. M. T. Williams, still a resident of Oskaloosa, and one of the "old stand-bys," from whom we have gained much information in relation to the subject matter of this narrative, was appointed the first clerk. We shall have occasion, in the further prosecution of this work, to recur frequently to Mr. Williams, and any statements that he makes in relation to the early settlement of this county and the city of Oskaloosa, will be strictly reliable. Almost all the people of the county know him, and know this to be strictly true. He was, for many years, connected with his brother-in-law, Hon. W. H. SeEVERS, in the law practice, and has gained a notoriety as a good and reliable lawyer. He is now engaged in the practice of law and real estate business in connection with Henry P. NINDE, and we bespeak for him a liberal patronage. He is a Republican who has ever stood erect for the country, and against rebellion in every form.

Mr. William Edmundson, who was a brother to Mr. Matthew Edmundson, now a respected citizen of Oskaloosa, had prepared quite a history of the county, which was republished in the *Herald* in 1863, was appointed the first sheriff of the county. We are informed by Judge S. THOMPSON that Mr. Edmundson died about the first of September, 1862, a mem-

ber of Triluminar Lodge of Free and Accepted M^asons—having previously been a member of “Seevers” Lodge, and was, with many others, transferred to Triluminar Lodge. He was one of those men who treasure up in their memory all those little incidents pertaining to the early settlement of the country, genealogy, &c., and the result was it was always a feast to spend an hour in his company. We will doubtless have occasion to speak further of Mr. Edmundson in the course of this history.

Previous to his appointment as sheriff, Mr. Edmundson had been appointed a justice of the peace, by Governor Chambers, under an act regulating unorganized counties. This was the first office ever held in the limits of the present county of Mahaska. The election under which the county was organized was held on the first day of April, A. D. 1844, the county having been organized on the 10th day of March, 1844, by the appointment of M. T. Williams, clerk, and William Edmundson, sheriff, as before stated. At the organizing election, John White (not the president of the First National Bank and president of the Iowa Central Railroad, but a John White who lived on the farm now known as the depot grounds, in the south-west portion of Oskaloosa, and who was afterwards killed by being thrown from a buggy in the streets of this city,) was elected probate judge. Several members of his family are still in the county.

William D. Canfield was elected the first treasurer of the county. Mr. Canfield erected the first house within the present limits of Oskaloosa, in October 1843, and it was put up as a claim house. It stood in what is now Perry street, between Harrison and South near the south-west corner of the old town, and near the then residence of Richard Parker, Esq., afterwards of Dr. I. Fisher, and now of Mr. Ferrell. Britain Edwards was elected the first coroner, and A. S. Nichols, Wilson Stanley and Robert Curry the first county commissioners. It appears from this that in the early history of Iowa, the county commissioner system was adopted and practiced. Why it was changed we do not know, nor are we able

to see any good reason for it. From our experience we consider it a better system of county government than that of supervisors, for this, among other reasons: that the least possible number of representatives always produce the speediest and cheapest amount of business. This, of course, is not the fault of individual members of the boards of supervisors, but because of their multiplicity. As the matter now stands, as many interests have to be consulted as there are townships in the counties, while under the commissioner system, but three persons are necessary; and they having the same interests to look after. Custom has much to do with forming our likes and dislikes, and having been accustomed to the commissioner system all our life, may have much to do with forming our opinions upon this subject.

We have already spoken of Mr. Nichols in the course of this history, as being now an honored citizen of this city. Mr. Curry died some years ago, and we have no means of ascertaining anything of Mr. Stanley. We neglected to say, in its proper place, that W. A. Delashmutt was the first assessor. It appears that at that time the county assessor system was in force in this State. It was so for many years in Ohio. Mr. Delashmutt is the son of Mr. Van Delashmutt, for a long time a respected and enterprising citizen of Scott township. He was one of the pioneers, and became the neighbor of Dr. E. A. Boyer, spoken of in our last, where they lived for many years on terms of the utmost intimacy and cordiality.

David Stump was the first county surveyor, who has been gone from the county a number of years.

John W. Cunningham, Esq., now, and ever since, a resident of this city, was elected county commissioner's clerk. This was an office with which we are entirely unacquainted; that duty, as far as our experience extends, having been performed by the county auditor. Mr. Cunningham is now an acting justice of the peace in this city, and is a worthy citizen. He was so unfortunate, two or three years ago, as to accidentally lose his left arm, with the premature discharge of a gun which he was attempting to take from the ground while on

horseback. He is now well advanced in years, which makes him feel his misfortune all the more keenly.

These officers held their respective positions until sometime during that Fall—probably October—when a regular election was held; the one here spoken of being temporary as to time. We intend, in a future number of this history, to give all the county and township officers from the organization of the county up to the present time. M. T. Williams, Esq., who made many of the records, has promised us, that he will aid us in collecting all the facts.

We learn from him, that from Waugh's Point, then six miles east of where Fremont now stands, to where Pellá now stands, there were but very few settlers on the road. At what is now Fremont, Mr. William Morrow, afterwards one of the proprietors of the town, had erected a cabin and was living there. There were no settlers between Fremont and what was then known by the name of the "Narrows," now Oskaloosa, except Richard Parker, Esq., still a highly esteemed resident of the county, who settled and lived on the farm now owned by Mr. William McKinley, about three miles south-east from this city. This was in the year 1843. During the Summer of 1844, Mr. James Seevers, now a resident of Oskaloosa, and highly respected by all classes, erected a house on the farm now owned and occupied by Henry Steddom, a member of the Society of Friends. Mr. Seevers is the father-in-law of M. T. Williams, Esq., and the father of Hon. W. H. Seevers, of this city, who has occupied a prominent place in the affections of the people of this section of Iowa, and has filled several offices of distinction—such as representative in the Legislature of the State, judge of the district court, &c., and was prominently before the Republican State Convention of last Fall as a candidate for supreme judge. "Father Seevers," as the old gentleman—James Seevers—is universally called, is one of the oldest and most highly respected Freemasons in this section of Iowa. The first Lodge organized in Oskaloosa was called "Seevers Lodge," in honor of the old gentleman.

From the farm of Henry Steddum, west, on what is known as the "divide," there was then no house this side of Black Oak Grove, where there was one settler. West of this point there was no settlement until the home of Samuel Peters was reached, who lived where Pella now stands. His house stood on what is now the public square of that flourishing and enterprising town of 3,000 or more inhabitants, and which can boast of three newspapers—two in the English and one in the Holland language.

FIRST COURTS.

The first term of the district court was appointed by law to commence on the second Monday, the 15th day of July, 1844, but as the judge did not arrive until Wednesday, the 17th, the court, of course, was not opened until that time. The officers of the court were Hon. Joseph Williams, judge, M. T. Williams, clerk, William Edmundson, sheriff. William Thompson, Esq., was appointed United States Attorney *pro tem.*, and Christian Slagle, Esq., District Attorney *pro tem.*; both courts being held and presided over by the same judge.

The court was held in a half finished log-cabin, which still stands as a monument of the growth and prosperity of the city. That the reader may know just where to look upon the spot and building where the first court was held in Mahaska county, we will describe it as well as we can. It is on the corner of Washington and Main streets, on the west side of Washington, and is a long, low, yellow building. Mr. Canfield, who has already been spoken of as erecting the first building within the limits of the city, had erected the east end of this building, for the purpose of commencing a store; but failing to get it completed before the meeting of court, and it being the only unoccupied spot in the place where the court could be held, it was appropriated for that purpose. This was but twenty-four years ago, and shows with what rapidity the county and city have grown in wealth and population.

This cabin was covered with clap-boards, had a loose plank floor, and door cut out. A broad walnut plank, (the only one,

we are told, in the place), was laid on the heads of two barrels, behind which a low platform was erected by placing boards on the logs cut from the door. The lawyers occupied one end of this walnut plank as a table, and the clerk the other, while the sheriff was left to shift for himself—showing that in primitive times even lawyers and clerks could get along without all the improvements and conveniences of the present day. The judge was seated in a large rocking chair, the property of Mr. Edmundson, which was placed on the aforesaid platform, which answered all the purposes of a “crimson wool sack.” Is it not astonishing how people can squeeze along when compelled to do so? A judge at this day, in this county, would feel that his dignity was considerably lowered had he to occupy so humble a position in the discharge of his official duties.

The Judge Williams here spoken of is, we presume, the same gentleman who made the closing speech at the late Democratic State Convention, held at the city of Des Moines. He is 79 years old, and has held office under democratic rule for forty-five years—so says the *Register*. Where the “democratic rule” here spoken of existed, is not said. Judge Williams said he “taught the first Sunday School ever held in Iowa, and his first law student was Jerry Black, of Attorney General fame. I will forever be a democrat,” and said “God bless James Buchanan.” He wound up with, “May God bless the democratic party of Iowa and elsewhere.”

In the court room before mentioned, most of the lawyers were furnished with chairs (quite an honor), while the jurors, litigants and spectators were seated on planks laid on blocks, &c. The grand jury room, by order of the court, was the hollow north of the city, about where Washington street crosses said hollow. The grand jury sat all week without doing any business, but as the United States paid all expenses, there was no special occasion for haste.

There was but one case before the petit jury—James Hall, appellee, vs. Joseph Koons, forcible entry and detainer, which related to a claim on public lands. This case occupied nearly

all of the time of the court, which did not adjourn until the Saturday evening following. At the close of this trial it became a question where the jury would go to deliberate upon the matter. As has been stated, there was no separate place nor any vacant room in the whole town. They retired, in accordance with the best information in our possession, to a lot of lumber that chanced to be somewhere in the town, and there made up their verdict. Thus the administration of justice commenced in Mahaska county.

M. T. Williams, Esq., came to this county, at the solicitation of an elder brother—Jesse Williams, one of the commissioners appointed to aid in the location of the county seat, and of whom we shall have more to say as we progress with this history—in the year 1843, and has remained ever since. The commissioners for the location of the county seat, met at the house of Mathew D. Springer, on the first Monday of May, A. D. 1844, the next year after M. T. Williams, Esq., came to the county. On the 25th of December, of that year, 1843, Mr. Williams, William Edmundson, Mathew T. Springer, Henry Temple and one of the Troys, raised a log house for Wm. Brown, known as "Center Bill Brown," near the center of the county. Of these persons Messrs. Edmundson and Springer are dead. Temple, after filling a number of offices in the county, removed to Cass county, in this State, where he is now a practicing lawyer. Troy has been gone from the county for a number of years, and Brown, whose house was raised on the occasion mentioned, was one of the proprietors of the city of Omaha and, we believe, is still a resident of that place.

Jesse Williams, before mentioned, informed us a few days ago, that there was considerable strife about the location of the county seat—that three points, to wit: Six Mile Prairie, the center of the county, about three miles north of the city, and the "Narrows," where Oskaloosa now stands, were all contestants for the honor; but after considerable talking, it was decided that the "Narrows" was the most suitable point, and it was so settled. This stirred up quite a good deal of

opposition from the rejected points, and the matter was carried into the August election, (the regular time for holding the annual election.) We believe we stated that this was in October; but August was the time. After a sharp contest, the friends of six mile and the center uniting against the "Narrows," it was finally settled by the voters at that election in favor of the last named point. Since that time there has been no ill feeling upon the subject.

NAMES OF THE FIRST GRAND AND PETIT JURORS.

As we have before stated, the first court held in the county was organized on the 17th day of July, A. D. 1844. The following named persons were the grand jurors for that term, to-wit: James Vance, George Argabright, John Rose, Aaron D. Bowers, Richard Parker, Adam Cline, Michael S. Morris, Osee Mathews, Geo. W. Jones, Jefferson Chitwood, William Bean, James Hickenbotham, Wellington Nasman, James Comstock, Adam Storts, William Welch, John Shelleday, Harmon Davis, John B. Stewart, Brantley Stafford, Jacob Crane, Alexander May and John Vance. Of these Richard Parker, William Bean, Jacob Crane and John Vance are still residents of the county. George W. Jones is a resident of the city of Des Moines; James Vance, Aaron D. Bowers, Adam Cline and James Comstock are dead, and all the residue have gone to parts unknown. We see by this record that in the short space of twenty-four years, all the persons here named have died or left the country, with the exception of four.

The following named persons were then selected as petit jurors, to-wit: John Newel, Samuel Peters, John D. Baldwin, Thomas Brooks, Alfred SeEVERS, William BOVEL, Robert HAMMOND, Thomas FANCHER, Jacob NORDIKE, James SeEVERS, William D. BROWN, James ROSS, Alfred HOOD, Solomon BARBER, Pleasant PARKER, Green T. CLARK, John P. MAJORS, Joseph H. BENEDICT, Thomas WILLIAMS, Isaac BARKER, Wesley H. FREEL, Thomas WILSON, Robert CURRY, Jr., and Benjamin THOMAS. Of these there are still living in the county, John Newel, John D. Baldwin, Thomas Fancher, James SeEVERS, James Ross, Green H. Clark, Thomas Williams, Thomas

Wilson and Benjamin Thomas; a much greater proportion than of grand jurors. Of the others quite a number are dead, and the residue gone to Oregon and other western points. The William D. Brown, here spoken of, is the same Brown spoken of previously, under the title of "Center Bill Brown," so that the reader knows what has become of him.

DOINGS OF THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS.

On the 11th day of May, A. D. 1844, it was ordered by the county commissioners, that the returns of the locating commissioners be recorded in the record book of the county, which was accordingly done; and in addition thereto, the affidavit of said commissioners, to-wit: Jesse Williams, Ebenezer Perkins and Thomas Henderson, was entered upon the records.

In this connection we will give the amount received by these commissioners for their services in that capacity. Messrs Henderson and Perkins resided in the neighborhood of Washington, this State, a distance of sixty or more miles from Oskaloosa, and, as a matter of course, had to travel that distance on horseback. The time employed coming, a week here and returning, was ten days, and their charge, as the records show, was twenty dollars each, or two dollars per day. Mr. Williams lived at Iowa City, probably twenty miles further, and his charge, as the records show, was twenty-eight dollars. Only think of that! Men laboring hard, riding on horseback, footing it, &c., for ten or more days, for the pittance of two dollars per day. Who is there that would be willing now to work at a less figure than this? And men who do such business now as was done by these commissioners, would expect five times as much pay, and the work would not be more than half so hard, as the facilities for travel, &c., are so much better and easier.

It will be borne in mind, that what was then called Mahaska county embraced a great deal more territory than is now included in the present county. It is important that this fact be kept in mind—otherwise the reader will become confused.

The original election precincts, as laid off before the holding of the first irregular election, were as follows, to-wit:

White Oak Grove, Muchachinock, Oskaloosa, Harrisburgh, North Fork, Skunk River, Black Oak Grove, Lake Prairie, White Breast, Cedar, West Half Powesheik and East Half Poweshiek. A portion of these are now within the limits of the organized counties of Marion and Poweshiek. Mr. Williams informs us that the way the persons who held this first election were notified of their appointment, was by visiting them in person and giving them the necessary instruction—that this work was done by Mr. Edmundson and himself, who visited all the persons who held the election. There were no roads or other marks by which they could travel with any degree of accuracy; but if they wanted to go east, west, north or south, they would strike out, following the indications of the sun, until they came into the neighborhood of where they wanted to go. This, as the reader will see, was a hard task; but in order to effect an organization had to be done.

At a meeting of the county commissioners, held on the 7th day of January, A. D. 1845, the county was organized into regular townships, as follows, to-wit: White Oak, Harrison, Spring Creek, Monroe, Union, Des Moines, Oskaloosa, Madison, Jefferson, Jackson, Cedar, English River, Lake and White Breast. While many of these townships are still parts of the county, a number of them are in other counties. Jackson, English River, Lake and White Breast are not within the limits of the present county.

The officers of the first elections held in the county were as follows, to-wit: Harrison, Britton Edwards, Jno. Newel, Jac. Hamilton and Ephraim Munsell; Oskaloosa, Jonathan Williams, Isaac N. Seevers, D. Bowers, Geo. W. Seevers and William Pilgrim. This election was held on the Shaw farm, about two miles north-east from the present city, Jefferson, A. C. Sharp, Allen Lowe, Thomas Long, Thompson Stanley and John Long. White Oak, John N. Butler, Henry Bond, Pleasant Parker, B. Stone and Jacob Hunter. This election was held at the house of Henry Bond. On Six Mile Prairie, G. G. Rose, Thomas Wilson, Wesley Treel, William Bassett and John Patches. Monroe, John Hollingsworth, Isaac Bed-

well, M. P. Crowder, Robert Ritchey and George Bailey. Red Rock, William E. James, Samuel Geddis, Argus A. Martin, John H. Mikesell, and John Jordan. Scott, Adam Tool, John Vance, Jacob H. Majors, Mr. Highland and Hezekiah Gay. White Breast, J. B. Hamilton, Alfred Vertreese, Elias Elder, Osee Matthews and John T. Clark.

We find the following order on the commissioners' record, under date of May 11th, 1844: "Ordered by the board, that sealed proposals will be received by the commissioners' clerk, at any time from this date until the 1st of July next, for the building of a court house in Oskaloosa, the seat of justice of Mahaska county." This was the initiatory movement towards the erection of the building now owned and occupied by Mitchell Wilson as a storehouse. At a meeting of the commissioners commenced on the 8th day of October, A. D. 1844, we find the following record: "Ordered, that M. T. Williams, agent for the sale of lots, pay to James Edgar the sum of \$100, on contract for building court house, and that he file the receipt thereof with the treasurer, and the clerk be required to notify said Williams of the same." Thus it was that the erection of the court house progressed from time to time.

(To be Continued.)

HISTORY OF JOHNSON COUNTY, IOWA.

BY CAPT. F. M. IRISH, IOWA CITY.

(Concluded.)

CHURCHES IN IOWA CITY.

In drawing the original plat of the city, the commissioners laid off a number of quarter blocks to be devoted expressly to the use of churches, and the following liberal offer was made: Any religious denomination might select one of those quarter blocks, and by erecting upon it a substantial brick church edifice of a specified value, to be completed within a limited time, the society should then receive a deed *in fee simple* from the territorial government for the quarter block, on condition that a church building should always be kept upon it.

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