

Our first court in Van Buren county was held in the upper room of the jail, a room, I should say, about 20 feet square. After that, [it was held] in a large room of a hotel or over a store until the present brick structure was completed, say, 1845.

The first term in Davis [county] was in 1845, the forenoon (of the only day of the term) in a room say 15 to 20 feet square (with two beds therein), and the afternoon in a new log house, roofed that morning, without floor, windows or doors,—Judge Mason in a rocking chair, back of a board stretched on two barrels,—attorneys on shingle or clapboard blocks,—jurors in the only case tried, seated on boards stretched on blocks,—clerk at the end of the board forming the judge's desk,—and the grand jury on one side of the town (Bloomfield) in the open prairie,—and the petit jury on the other, during the deliberations, with watchful officers to keep off the curious or interested crowd.

First term in Monroe (then Kishkekosh) county, was held at Clark's Point, a few miles west of Albia, in a cabin. It is said that J. C. Hall and Ed. Johnstone (since living in Keokuk and president of Old Law Makers' Association) were disturbed during the night by being deprived of a part of their straw bedding by some horses nibbling it through the cracks of the unchinked and undaubed walls! The consequence was that both were quite near the cabin wall in the morning.

But for the present I leave these court houses. Of them possibly more hereafter.

---

A steam boat, one hundred feet long, is in process of construction on the island almost immediately under the Court Avenue bridge. We understand that the proprietor is Mr. Tisdale of East DeMoine. In case of a flood, how could this inchoate steamer be saved before its timbers are adjusted to their places?—*DeMoine Citizen*.

Signourney, Iowa, *Life in the West*, Feb. 17, 1859.

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.