

“ COUNTY COURT HOUSE AND JAIL ” *

IN

HISTORY OF

Fillmore County

MINNESOTA

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COUNTY PROPERTY.

Court House. Various places in Preston were used for offices for the county officers, for the sessions of court, and for the meetings of the commissioners and supervisors, in the early days, but the county headquarters, generally speaking, were in a building which occupied the site of what is now the Farmers' and Merchants' State Bank. In September, 1859, the board of supervisors took up the matter of county buildings, and found that there had been placed on file thirty-three bonds (one withdrawn for correction) to support an agreement of free rent of a hall for two years, and seven deeds conveying to the county thirty-six lots and four half lots in the village of Preston. These documents were all signed on the condition that the county erect a court house in the village of Preston, at a cost of not less than \$6,000 within two years of September 15, 1859. The documents were accepted on that condition.

At the same time there had been placed on file a deed from H. C. Butler conveying to the county block 10, in the village of Carimona, and leasing to the county, free of all charges, for three years, the upper story of the block built by W. H. Strong.

Court house square was platted for county purposes when the original village of Preston was laid out. The deed conveying the property was formally received by the county commissioners, April 5, 1863, bearing the names of Barbara Schweitzer and John Kaercher. On the same date the commissioners received and accepted an offer from the County Court House Building Association, through the executive committee, A. S. Linsley and Reuben Wells, to erect a court house free of charge to the county.

A meeting having been held by the citizens of Preston, February 24, 1863, at which it was decided to erect on the public square a brick court house, fifty feet square and two stories high, subscription paper was passed, and the signers agreed to furnish,

as required, money, labor or material, before August 1, 1863. The cash furnished was used to purchase material, which was put together by those who had agreed to furnish labor.

The list, found among the papers of the late S. B. Murrel was as follow: Jeremiah O'Brien, material \$25, cash \$25; Michael Hopp, mason work \$50; Joseph Palmer, work \$15; A. Rappe, mason work \$40, cash \$10; William Sawyer, twenty days' work \$30; William M. Taylor, cash \$10, work \$15; F. M. Knight, cash \$10; Menno Eby, work \$40; Frederick Whiting, work \$25; Andrew Fetch, ten days' work \$15; W. Galbraith, ten days' work, \$15; William K. Read, work \$40; R. F. C. Kent, work \$20; Daniel O'Brien, work \$25, cash \$25; Martin Weybright, work \$10; Perry Long, team work \$25; Jonas Maust, work \$25; Anton Ibach, work \$50; Charles Huttig, work \$25, cash \$10; B. S. Loomis, work \$20; John Taylor, work \$25; William Taylor, work \$25; S. M. Shook, fifteen days' work \$30; Michael Neuman, work \$25; Reuben Wells, cash \$30; W. R. Underwood, work \$25; Thomas Quinn, \$35; F. Huttig, \$10; Patrick McCabe, work \$10; F. Read, four days' work \$6; D. C. Kerr, twenty days' work; Richard Madigan, five days' work \$10; William Seely, twelve days' work \$24; E. Newton, Jr., cash \$10; Jeremiah Shook, five days' work \$10; Richard Hahn, cash \$10; Dennis Flattery, five days' work; Alex Wright, cash \$25; J. J. Merrill, work \$25; Simon Dodge, work \$10; E. Gould, five days' work; John Riehl, fifteen days' work; Joseph Ibach, \$10 cash, work \$15; M. E. Billings, ten days' mechanical work.

The court house was formally accepted by the county, July 4, 1864, and the following persons released from their bonds: S. B. Murrel, William W. Fife, D. B. Colman, Conkey Brothers and J. C. Easton. This court house was the main portion of the present court house. A bell was placed in the tower in 1865.

The two wings to the court house were completed in the fall of 1884, H. J. Anderson having the contract, and Thomas Quinn, a member of the Board of County Commissioners and appointed to

represent them, working by the day. The matter of adding to the court house or building a new one had been agitated for some time, and matters were brought to a climax in the spring of 1884, when the grand jury condemned the old vault as unsafe for the storing of the valuable county records.

County Jail. After the court house was built, the old jail on the present site of the Farmers' and Merchants' State Bank, continued to be used until January 6, 1870, when a jail, on the present site of the new jail, was formally accepted by the county commissioners. The first step toward building the jail was taken January 5, 1866, when the commissioners asked Dr. Luke Miller to request the legislature to pass a bill looking toward the erection of a suitable jail in Fillmore county.

September 5, 1868, the following resolution was passed by the board: "That the board of commissioners of Fillmore county will, for and in said county, erect a new county jail for the safe keeping of prisoners, and that a committee of the following members of the board, to-wit: D. B. Coleman, Orsin Holmes, and W. A. Pease, be appointed to select and purchase ground for a site for said jail, and to procure plans and specifications, determine upon and arrange details, and execute a contract for building said jail, and that there be issued bonds of the county to an amount not exceeding \$8,000, for the purpose of building and furnishing said jail." Two months later the board appropriated the sum of \$750 from the county fund for the purpose of paying for lots on which to build the county jail, and to get plans and specifications. ■



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