

EARLY OLMSTED COUNTY COURT HOUSES *

HISTORY

OF

WINONA, OLMSTED, AND DODGE
COUNTIES.

TOGETHER WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL MATTER, STATISTICS, ETC.

GATHERED FROM MATTER FURNISHED BY INTERVIEWS WITH OLD SETTLERS,
COUNTY, TOWNSHIP AND OTHER RECORDS, AND EXTRACTS FROM
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Early Olmsted County Court Houses

As yet [1857] the county was without a county building. The courts were held at Morton's hall, in the two-story frame building which yet stands at the corner of Main and Third streets [in Rochester, the county seat]. The board of county commissioners met in Dr. McLane's office, a small wooden building occupying a portion of the site where now stands the Cook House block. At the session of the board, July 12, 1856, John Lowery, E. A. McMahon and J. N. McLane were appointed a committee to make arrangements for erecting a suitable building for the use of the county. At the August session the committee made their report, which was accepted and placed on file. In the month of September following, the commissioners held another session, when they passed a resolution instructing the committee on county buildings to prepare and submit to the board, a specific contract, embodying the terms of a proposition made by C. H. Lindsley to supply the county with convenient offices and court-room. These arrangements resulted in the erection of the building on Broadway known as the "old court-house," and now owned and occupied by Mr. N. Peters as a hotel and boarding-house. In the fall of 1858, as near as we can ascertain, the county, through its officers, took formal possession of the building.

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In 1864 measures were taken by the board of commissioners looking to the erection of a more commodious and convenient county building. A tract of land, consisting of about three acres, and situated between Zumbro street on the south and Fourth street on the north, and between Hunter street on the east and Clark street on the west, in the city of Rochester, was purchased as the site for a new court-house. The same year plans and specifications for the new building were submitted and the contract for its erection was let to J. H. Grindall, of St. Paul. In the fall of 1866 the new courthouse was ready for occupancy, and the county records and offices were removed therein. The total cost of the new courthouse was \$32,000, for the payment of which no direct tax was levied. The funds in the county treasury, arising from the collection of delinquent taxes, together with interest on county funds, practically defrayed the entire expense. In this connection, it might be proper to state, that Olmsted was the first county in the state which became solvent after the general financial pressure of the few years immediately preceding the year last named. ■