

“COURT HOUSES and JAILS of RENVILLE COUNTY ” *

IN

THE HISTORY

OF

**RENVILLE COUNTY
MINNESOTA**

COMPILED BY

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ASSISTED BY

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**HON. DARWIN S. HALL,
HON. DAVID BENSON and
COL. CHARLES H. HOPKINS,
Renville County Pioneer Association Committee.**

ILLUSTRATED

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CHAPTER XXVI
OFFICIAL TRANSACTIONS
COURT HOUSES and JAILS of
RENVILLE COUNTY

The board of county commissioners for this year [1869] were Francis Shoemaker, of Flora: Newell Morse, of Heaver, and William Emerick, of Mud Lake. They could provide no place for County Auditor Hall; and Mr. Ahrens, the treasurer, was to be found on his farm if anything special was wanted. After Mr. Hall had qualified as comity auditor he succeeded in persuading N. Stone, who had just erected a store building, to allow a small room, seven by nine, to be partitioned off with building paper in the rear part of this store for a county auditor's office. Other temporary arrangements had to be made when there was a board meeting for the room was not large enough to hold much more than one person with any comfort. This was the first county auditor's office in Renville county.

March 4, 1869, an act passed authorizing the county to vote \$3,000 bonds to build a court house. No action was taken by the county. Later Mr. Hall moved the auditor's office into his house. Then Lane K. Stone built a small building alongside of N. Stone's store which he leased to the county for the register of deeds and some other county officers.

....

After such an exciting and not a little expensive time in securing office [in the election of November 1870], the successful officials began to lay plans for a building of some kind to hold them. So when the legislature convened in January [1871] a special bill was introduced, authorizing Renville country to issue \$2,000 in bonds for the purpose of building a jail. The county was issuing large sums in county orders for transportation, care and board of prisoners, and those in favor of building a court house thought that if the proposed building was called a county jail less objection would be raised by the opposition. However, much quiet work was being done by those interested to permanently locate the county seat at Beaver Falls, and an

emissary was sent to the state capitol to assist in "logrolling" the bill through the legislature, a purpose in which he was most successful.

The act was approved Feb. 27, 1871, and became a law. It was provided in the act that the question of issuing county bonds should be submitted to electors of the county at the town meetings in March and that the town clerks should include in their notices that the bond proposition would be voted upon, but the act further particularly provided that if any of the town clerks failed to give such notices it would not invalidate the election or prevent the canvas of the votes that were cast.

The text of the act is as follows:

"An Act to Authorize the County Commissioners of the County of Renville to Issue Bonds for the Erection of County Buildings.

"Be it enacted by the legislature of Minnesota :

"Sec. 1. That the county commissioners of the county of Renville are hereby authorized to issue the bonds of the said county, to the amount of two thousand dollars, for the purpose of erecting a jail, at Beaver Falls, the county seat of said county.

"Sec. 2. Such bonds may be issued with coupons attached thereto, and of such denominations as the county commissioners may determine, and shall bear interest at a rate not exceeding 12 per cent per annum, which said interest shall be payable half yearly, and the principal thereof shall be payable at any time, not less than three nor more than six years from the date of said bonds.

"Sec. 3. Said bonds and interest coupons attached thereto shall be signed by the chairman of the board of county commissioners, and countersigned by the auditor of said county, and said auditor shall keep a record of all bonds issued under the provisions of this act, giving numbers, dates and amounts, to whom issued and when payable.

"Sec. 4. The said board of county commissioners shall have authority to negotiate said bonds as in their judgment shall be for the best interests of said county; provided, however, that

said bonds shall not be negotiated for less than eighty-five cents on the dollar.

"Sec. 5. The said board of county commissioners, and the proper authority of said county, shall, and are hereby authorized and empowered to levy an annual tax on the taxable property of said county, in addition to all other taxes required to be levied, sufficient to pay the interest accruing on said bonds, and the principal of said bonds as they shall mature, which said taxes shall be levied and collected in the same manner as other taxes for county purposes are levied and collected, and no part of such shall be appropriated for any purpose whatever other than the payment of said bonds and the interest thereon.

"Sec. 6. The proposition to issue said bonds shall be submitted to a vote of the electors of said county at the next annual town meeting. The ballots shall have written or printed thereon the following words, 'For issue of bonds for building jail,' or, 'Against issue of bonds for building jail,' said vote shall be cast at said election in the same manner as votes cast for town officers, and if upon a canvass of said votes, a majority of said voters, who shall have voted upon said proposition, have voted in favor thereof the issue of said bonds shall be lawful. The town clerks of the several towns in said county shall, at the time of the giving notice of the annual town meeting, insert in said notice a paragraph setting forth that the question of issuing said bonds will be voted on at said town meeting; provided, that any neglect or failure on the part of any town clerk to give such notice, shall not invalidate the election or prohibit the canvass of votes cast upon such question.

Sec. 7. This act shall take effect from and after passage.

"Approved February 27, 1871."

Mail service was slow and facilities for information were few at this time. Only the town clerks of Beaver Falls and Flora knew anything about the legislative act or gave the required notice, hence these were the only towns to vote on the bond issue and, as was expected, the proposition was carried.

At this time the commissioners were R. G. Weed, chairman, Louis Kope and Bernhard Marchner, Ed. O'Hara having been eliminated in the upheaval the fall before. The "conspirators" for

the building of a court house, masked under the name of a jail, now became active. Many informal meetings were held, attended by the county commissioners, of which no record was made. Much secrecy was maintained and methods pursued that would be considered outrageous at this time. But in those days it was considered that anything was fair in war and war it certainly was that was waged between Beaver Falls and Birch Cooley for the possession of the county seat honors. Much of the preliminary work for the issuance of the bonds, such as procuring the blanks and the like, had been accomplished.

So, upon May 18, 1871, the before mentioned commissioners met at Beaver Falls and ordered that \$2,000 in bonds of the county be issued for the purpose of building a jail in Beaver Falls. A resolution adopted and signed by each member of the board, presenting the manner of issuing and negotiating said bonds, was made a part of the records. It was a kind of "Round Robin," with the object of holding each commissioner responsible, for \$2,000 was a large sum of money in those days. That the act of issuing those bonds was consummated with trepidation by those responsible is seen by the careful wording of the following resolution:

"Whereas by an act passed by the legislature of the state of Minnesota, approved Feb. 27, 1871, authorizing and empowering the board of county Commissioners of Renville county to issue the bonds of said county for the purpose of building county buildings at Beaver Falls, the county seat of said county upon certain specified conditions named in said act, and whereas by the provisions said act, the said board of county commissioners were authorized and empowered by a majority of the legal voters of Renville county, voting on said subject to issue bonds in the sum of \$2,000 for the purpose expressed in said act and, whereas, said board of county commissioners have agreed and decided to erect a jail in Beaver Falls, the county seat of said county by virtue of the authority vested in them by the provisions of said act and a majority of the legal voters of said county voting thereon.

"Now, therefore, it is resolved by the said board of county commissioners that D. S. Hall, county auditor of said county,

shall proceed forthwith to prepare and negotiate the said bonds in sums of not less than \$.50 each nor more than \$100 each, to the amount of \$2,000 as provided in said act and at no greater rate of interest than provided by said act, and on such terms, less the maximum interest, provided in said act, as he can obtain the funds at any time within the publication of the notice herein provided for, and the auditor shall report to the board of county commissioners, his contract with the purchaser or purchasers of said bonds, properly signed, sealed and executed within ninety days from the adoption of these resolutions by the said board of county commissioners.

"And be it further resolved by the said board of county commissioners that the said bonds shall be divided in three equal classes, as near as may be, that the first class shall be due and payable at any time will in four years after the issuance thereof, at the option of said board of county commissioners and in like manner the second class, at any time within the fifth year after the issuance thereof and the third and last class shall be due and payable at the option of the said board of county commissioners at any time within the sixth year after the issuance thereof with interest pro rata at the rate of negotiation, not exceeding the maximum rate of interest allowed by said act in accordance with the terms thereof.

"And that it is further resolved by the said board of county commissioners that the said D. S. Hall, county auditor, shall publish in condensed form, in the St. Paul Daily Press and in the New York Daily Tribune for one week and in a weekly newspaper published in an adjoining county to Renville, for the space of two weeks, a notice that bids will be received for any part of said bonds or the whole thereof, for sixty days from and after the first publication of said notice. That all of said bonds purchased by persons residing within the state of Minnesota shall be paid when due, according to the tenor thereof, at the office of the county treasurer of Renville county, Minnesota, of Beaver Falls, in said county and state, and all bonds purchased by parties without the state shall be payable when due according to the tenor thereof at any place or places, in the city of St. Paul, Minnesota, that may be designated in the said bonds by the said D. S. Hall, the said county auditor."

This resolution was so carefully considered and thought to be so important that it was then and there signed by R. G. Weed, Louis Kope and Bernhard Marschner, county commissioners, and attested by D. S. Hall, county auditor.

At the next meeting of the commissioners, June 16, 1871, the ground was measured off and a site selected for the county jail which the money from the sale of the county bonds was going to pay for. No time was to be lost, for at this meeting R. G. Weed, H. W. Nelson and Henry Ahrens were appointed a committee to procure plans and specifications and to add uu)re ground to the proposed site if necessary.

It appears that D. S. Hall, the auditor, had been active and had sold the bonds to Horace Thompson, of the First National Bank of St. Paul, without advertising and without doing many of the things required by the resolution of the board passed May 18, directing the issuance of these bonds. Time was of the utmost importance, the rumblings from Birch Cooley, an aspirant for the county seat, were somewhat alarming, and it was rumored that W. H. Jewell was about to, or already had, begun a suit to enjoin the commissioners from building, and it was feared the sale of the bonds might be prevented. Thus the real need of converting the bonds into cash was apparent and the resolution of May 18 was practically reconsidered, County Auditor Hall being directed to do the things he had already done by the adoption by the board of the following resolution:

"The resolution passed by the board upon May 18, 1871, ordering the issuance of \$2,000 county bonds to build a jail at Beaver Falls is so amended as to read as follows:

"D. S. Hall, auditor of said county, shall proceed forthwith to prepare and negotiate the said bonds in such sums as may be desired by the parties purchasing, and that the sum be made payable in St. Paul or New York if better prices be obtained for the bonds by so doing and that \$600 be made payable in the fifth year and \$700 be made payable in the sixth year, after the first day of July, 1871, the day said bonds shall be made. The report of the county auditor regarding the contract for the purchase of the \$2,000 county bonds which he had made with H. Thompson,

of St. Paul, was received and accepted, and it was ordered that the bonds be properly executed and signed by the chairman and countersigned by the county auditor and forwarded by the said county auditor to the First National Bank of St. Paul, and that the cash received therefor be payable to the order of Henry Ahrens, county treasurer of said county of Renville and state of Minnesota."

Bids were advertised for and activities looking to the building of the county jail were apparent when at a meeting of the county board on August 10, 1871, Chairman Weed announced that several bids had been received, but he had been ordered by the district court to proceed no further with the building of the jail or awarding contracts; until at a hearing before said court, it was shown by what authority said jail was about to be built. Hence no bids were opened and Chairman Weed was authorized to procure counsel and defend the jail building proposition in court.

The case as brought was W. H. Jewell, plaintiff, vs. R. G. Weed, et al., defts. E. St. Julien Cox, afterward judge of District court, plaintiff's attorney, Alfred Walling, later judge of the Supreme court, North Dakota, defendants' attorney. Mr. Jewell sets forth in his complaint among other things: That the county commissioners did secretly and surreptitiously procure and obtain the passage by the legislature of the state of Minnesota of an act to authorize the county commissioners to issue \$2,000 in bonds for the purpose of building a jail at Beaver Falls, the county seat. That the opposition was to be submitted to a vote of the electors of the county at the town meetings; that it was not so submitted and the town clerks not advised. That the matter was secretly, covertly and designedly kept from the knowledge of the electors, saving only those of Beaver Creek and Flora in said county. That thirteen towns in the county would have cast eight hundred votes: that only Beaver Creek and Flora were advised, casting 120 votes in all, eighty for and thirty against said bond proposition. The complaint further alleged that the commissioners were about to issue or already had issued bonds to carry out their scheme fraudulently conceived, and that the act was a fraud upon the inhabitants of

Renville county because it attempted to locate the county seat at Beaver Falls. In short, the complaint bristles with words illustrating the war-like spirit prevailing at the locating of the first county seat of Renville county.

The case was tried before District Judge M. G. Hanscom in September, 1871, and decided against Mr. Jewell. At a meeting of the board of county commissioners, Oct. 2, 1871, they were informed by the clerk of the court that they were no longer restrained from proceeding with the erection of the building for which bonds had been issued. The commissioners then and there, without delay, proceeded to open the bids which they were enjoined from doing in August previous. It was found that David Carrothers, of Beaver Falls, was the lowest bidder for the building of the jail, his estimate being \$1,700. He was awarded the contract and immediately proceeded to break ground and gather "niggerheads" (as the rocks from the prairie were called), of which the walls were to be made. A warranty deed to the county from Essler & Carrothers, the town proprietors, had already been recorded.

Mr. Jewell not being satisfied with the decision of the District court appealed his case to the Supreme court (Minnesota Report, Jewell vs. Weed, Vol. 18, page 247), which held with the District court. A legal review of the case appears elsewhere in the history.

Peter Henry, commissioner in place of R. G. Weed, was appointed inspector or overseer of the work, but before much could be started cold weather came on early. Nothing much could be done in the winter, but in the spring of 1872 things began to assume shape. Quite a respectable stone building was erected. The jail was in one end, two good sized rooms were fitted up for county offices, and those with a hall on the upper floor in which to hold court, comprised the completed jail. Lane K. Stone released the county from a two-year lease of his building, then occupied by some of the county officers, and the commissioners agreed to move the county offices into the new court house, the so-called "jail," on Oct. 1, 1872.

There was evidently no "graft" in the building of Renville county's first court house, for the commissioners allowed David Carrothers, the contractor, \$169 above his estimate to partly reimburse him for his loss on the contract.

The court house being completed, the auditor and treasurer moved into one of the rooms, the register of deeds and judge of probate into the other. Other county officials provided their own quarters, Henry Ahrens, county treasurer, was made custodian of the court house hall and was ordered to charge \$6.00 for dancing parties and shows, and \$1.00 for each twenty-four hours' use by the justice court. He was directed to pay at once into the county treasury all moneys thus received.

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In March [1873] it was found that two cell doors were needed for the new jail. Henry Hippie, the village blacksmith, was awarded the job at \$75, and Gus Strenzel, the other blacksmith, was appointed to inspect the work when completed. On April 6, of this year, Geo. H. Megquier, having obtained a first-grade certificate, was appointed county superintendent of schools and April 7 John M. Dorman resigned as county attorney and Megquier was appointed county attorney in his place. Megquier being judge of probate at the time of these appointments, continued to hold these three offices with no appearance of physical exhaustion or fatigue.

That year [1873] a bed was needed in one of the jail cells. Horton W. Nelson, a carpenter of Beaver Falls, agreed to construct the bed at a reasonable price. This same carpenter was later appointed an expert by the commissioners to investigate the financial condition of the county from the time of its organization.

. . . . 1875 – 1889. . . .

The result of this election [on June 4, 1889, on whether to change the county seat from Beaver Falls to Bird Island] made the friends of Beaver Falls feel some jubilant and the citizens of that place at once manifested a generous and liberal spirit to the

extent that on July 18 they offered to pay \$500 for certain lots and buildings and furnish a site on the public square free of cost to the county, provided the county erect a court house with vault on said site costing not less than \$3,500 and during the year 1889. The object was to firmly fasten the county seat at Beaver Falls, with a new court house. It appeared as though efforts looking to removal had terminated and the Board of County Commissioners must have been of that mind, for they at this same meeting adopted unanimously a motion for a building to be 40 feet wide, 60 feet long, and 20 feet high, with vault and furnace to cost not more than \$3,700. O. F. Peterson, Pat. Williams and John Warner were appointed a building committee with authority to proceed with the erection of said building.

This building committee advertised for sealed bids, for the erection of this new court house, including vault, etc. Sept. 3, 1889, it was found that the lowest bid was \$3,939, by John P. Thiry, which was finally approved by the commissioners and the contract let to Mr. Thiry for that amount. The contractor was urged to make no delay, so he at once began to break ground, assemble his material and workmen for a rapid work. On December 13, of this same year, the building committee reported the new court house complete according to contract and it was at once approved by the board.

Now that the county seat matter was apparently settled for all time, Beaver Falls wished to assume more dignity, and upon this same day presented a petition, asking to be incorporated as a village. This was granted, and the electors notified to hold an election Jan. 21, 1890, at the court house to decide the matter. December 14 the commissioners by resolution directed the county officials to move their offices into the new court house not later than Dec. 21, 1889.

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At the [commissioners'] meeting, May 6, [1890,] it was proposed to remodel the old jail and make it a residence for the sheriff as well as a jail. S. R. Miller was allowed \$10 for making contact for

new court house, same to be deducted from county attorney's salary for September.

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Now [1894], it would seem with the new court house, vault, good office rooms, and everything for conducting the county business better than ever before, and Beaver Falls incorporated, that the county seat removal would never be again thought of or suggested, but busybodies, ambitious towns and rival interests soon revived the question, and this time Olivia reached out for the county seat and began an active campaign.

On May 2, 1894, P. W. Heins, for and in behalf of, and by authority of the village and county seat committee of Olivia, appeared before the board and offered to deposit with the county treasurer \$4,100 to aid in new county buildings at Olivia, to deposit with said treasurer a deed for a block in Olivia upon which to build a court house, to furnish office rooms to August, 1895, and stipulating that the citizens of Olivia would waive all right of action to recover any part of the donation, as well as pledging their sacred honor to do all this in the event of Olivia securing the county seat.

. . . .

On July 10, [1899], R. T. Daly appeared as attorney for Bird Island, offering a building gratis to the county if the county seat be moved to that place. On the same day Attorney George F. Gage, on behalf of the citizens county seat removal committee of Olivia, offered to place in the hands of Auditor Brooks a warranty deed for the "Winhorst block, with all the buildings thereon, or a choice of several blocks of land in Olivia upon which to build a new court house, free, provided the county seat be removed to the village of Olivia, and at this same time Attorney Gage notified the board that the village of Olivia was about to enter upon a contest for the removal of the county seat permanently to that place.

So the county seat removal war dogs were again taking up the cry with both Bird Island and Olivia lining up their forces for a

drive to win. The tension was nearly at the breaking point in this county those days. August 23, 1899, the board met at the county auditor's office to inspect and consider a petition filed in that office on August 3, 1899, praying for the removal of the county seat from Beaver Falls to Bird Island. ...

....

On Sept. 15, 1899, the board again met in the county auditor's office, this time to inquire into and examine a petition for moving the county seat from Beaver Falls to Olivia, but found that an action had been commenced against the commissioners and all the county officers, with Justin I. Brown as plaintiff, also that a writ of injunction had been served, restraining them from examining the Olivia petition until the termination of the action. After endless delay and attorney's defenses, the injunction was dissolved.

The Olivia petition was passed upon favorably and an election was ordered to be held throughout the county upon the twenty-fifth day of October, 1900, at which election 2,786 votes were cast. Against Olivia there were 1,251 votes. In favor of Olivia there were 1,535 votes. So again the commissioners declared the county seat of Renville county located at Olivia. The votes were canvassed in the forenoon of the twenty-ninth of October, 1900, in the afternoon, county officers were warned that no legal business could now be transacted in Beaver Falls. Commissioners Desmond, Hickok and Johnson were appointed to provide for packing and transporting all furniture, records, etc., to the county seat now at Olivia. Immediately, and with all due haste, Commissioners Butler and Schroeder were dispatched to Olivia to arrange for county offices. Haste was admonished on every hand.

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Jan. 8, 1901, the commissioners were: F. A. Schroeder (chairman), W. E. Kemp, Norman Hickok, W. C. Keefe and Carl Anderson; J. T. Brooks, county auditor. The Renville "Star-Farmer" company received the county printing that year. May 7 the board adopted a resolution authorizing the board, with the

county auditor, to visit Swift, Lac qui Parle, Polk and other counties to aid them with knowledge thus required to build the right kind of a court house at Olivia for Renville county.

May 14 Commissioner Keefe offered a resolution that the county issue \$50,000.00 in bonds with which to build and furnish a court house at Olivia, which was agreed to. Commissioner Kemp on the same day offered a resolution soliciting plans and specifications for a court house to cost not less than fifty or more than seventy-five thousand dollars, which request should be published in a number of newspapers. This also was agreed to. May 15, 1901. Commissioner Kemp offered a resolution for a special election, to be held in the several precincts in the county on June 26, 1901, submitting the question of the \$50,000 bond issue by the county for court house purposes, which was adopted. On motion of Commissioner Kemp, the county auditor was directed to give notice of the election on the county bond issue.

June 4, 1901, the commissioners were considering the location of a court house. The question which side of the railroad track to build was to be considered. Those citizens on the south side were asking more time to prepare their arguments and submit their proposals. Thus, even with the county seat at Olivia, all was not harmony. Eric Ericson was placed in charge of the old court house at Beaver Falls. June 6, 1901, by resolution of the board, block 16, which the village of Olivia had donated to the county, was traded for a block of ground known as Nester Park, upon which to build a court house, the village receiving \$500 difference in the trade. Upon this resolution, Kemp, Schroeder and Keefe voted yes, with Hickok and Anderson voting no. June 28, 1901, the following named architects appeared before the board and submitted plans and specifications for the new court house: F. D. Kinney, Austin, Minn.; F. D. Orff, Minneapolis; E. S. Stebbins, Minneapolis; E. Strasburg. Crookston, Minn.; Pass and Schipple, Mankato, Minn.; J. F. Taggart, Minneapolis; A. F. Terryberry, Duluth, Minn.; W. H. Dennis, Westfield, N. Y.; John F. Thomas, St. Louis; Birdsall & Sturgis, New York; and I. P. Hicks, Omaha.

The entire day was occupied by the board examining these plans and the next day. June 29, F. D. Orff was selected as the architect to superintend and furnish plans for the proposed new court house for Renville county at Olivia. July 9 following, the county auditor was directed to advertise for bids for the construction of a basement to the court house to be erected. The auditor was also directed to advertise for sealed bids for the purchase of \$50,000 bonds of the county for the purpose of building and furnishing a court house at Olivia, the county seat of said county. Sealed bids were also invited for the sale of the court house, grounds and old stone jail in Beaver Falls. July 29 it was decided by the board to use portage Entry Red Sand Stone from the Portage Entry Quarries Co for the construction of the basement of the new court house. O. H. Olson, of Stillwater, Minn., was awarded the contract for the basement. Commissioner Kemp offered a resolution that the court house to be erected by this county, to be located in the block in the village of Olivia known as Nester Park, which was adopted; he also offered a resolution that the county purchase the so-called village park of Olivia for \$2,000.00 to be used as a site for the new court house. This resolution was also adopted and the board adjourned.

August 15 ten sealed bids were received by the board for the purchase of the \$50,000 court house bonds, and the commissioners decided, through Auditor R. C. Dunn, to take the money from the permanent school fund of the state, and made application for the same, setting up therein among other things, that an election was held June 28, 1901, on the proposition and that 740 voted in favor and 642 against issuing the bonds, and thus the county secured funds needed in the business. The commissioners ordered photographs of the old stone jail and the court house in Beaver Falls to be framed and hung in the new court house. W. J. Hines offered \$315 and W. P. Christianson \$352 for the old court house, grounds and heating plant in Beaver Falls, which bid was rejected, though William Wichman secured the old stone jail and grounds for \$50.

On August 16 it was found that, though the board had decided on Nester Park for the location of the court house and the village

council of Olivia had directed its president and village recorder to execute a deed to the county for the purpose before mentioned, the village president absolutely refused to do so, and as the county had had some taste of litigation, they shied at the prospect of more. So when Perry W. Birch, as agent, offered them all of block 2, Peterson's addition, except lots 7, 8 and 9, for \$3,950 and James Kirwan offered them the three lots for \$1,000, they closed the deal and that is where the court house now stands. August 27 the commissioners accepted deeds executed by George W. Burch and wife conveying lots 1, 2, 3, 10, 11 and 12; from James Kirwan and wife conveying lots 7, 8 and 9, and from Stephen E. Fay and wife conveying lots 4, 5 and 6 to the county.

On September 6 the commissioners decided that the foundation walls of the new court house should be made two feet lower than specified in the plans, for which they allowed Contractor Olson \$1,116.00 extra. Nov. 25, 1901, the commissioners accepted the basement of the new court house as completed and paid Architect F. D. Orff \$800 as part payment of his fees. December 2 was taken up examining plans for the superstructure of the new court house. December 3 Commissioner Keefe reported that he had sold the heating plant in the old court house in Beaver Falls to the Birch Cooley Lodge, No. 122, I. O. O. F., for the sum of \$400, which was agreed to.

The auditor was instructed to advertise for bids for the erection of the new court house Jan. 7, 1902. Norman Hickok was chairman of the board of this year, J. T. Brooks auditor, and the owner of the "Star-Farmer," the public printing. The commissioners notified the board of control that they would consider building an up-to-date jail for Renville county during 1902. January 15 the contract for the construction of the new court house was awarded to O. H. Olson; contract for heating plant to F. B. Kreatz; contract for plumbing to Chas. Wilkins & Co., contract price not noted in the commissioners' record. January 27 the Art Metal Furniture Co. were authorized to furnish steel vault and office furniture for the sum of \$1,758.65, and the Phoenix Furniture Co. to furnish the court room and other needed wood furniture for \$3,369.00. April 3, 1902, the old court house and

grounds at Beaver Falls were sold to Dora Scheer for \$800. Thus the county did well in not accepting the first offer. On this day \$25,000 was transferred from the ditch to the building fund. The county contracted with Dora Scheer to board the paupers of the county at \$2.50 per week. The county attorney was directed to begin an action to reform the deed given on behalf of Olivia citizens to block 16 prior to the removal of the county seat to that village. Chas. Wilkins Co. secured the contract for installing a lighting system for the new court house at \$995. Chas. B. Ferrir was appointed to superintend the construction of the new court house at \$5.00 per day. August 21 the commissioners contracted with F. M. Dolan to lay out the court house grounds with trees, walks and ornamental shrubs. October 9 L. A. McIvar presented to the board a proposition for decorating the inside walls and rotunda of the court house, which was accepted, price not recorded. Nov. 1, 1902, John Toomey purchased from the county commissioners lots A and B of block 1 of Windhursts' subdivision for \$3,000, the same having been donated to the county by the citizens of Olivia. M. J. Dowling purchased a dwelling house standing on the court house grounds for \$765, which he agreed to remove.

Dec. 5, 1902, upon recommendation of Fremont D. Oriff, the architect, the commissioners, by resolution accepted the new court house as being completed according to plans and specifications, finding the contractor, O. H. Olson, entitled to the sum of \$11,726.80. The board then proceeded to settle with F. E. Kreatz, the heating plant contractor, and find him entitled to \$2,155.20 as final payment. The county auditor was authorized to procure and have put up coat and hat racks in all the closets, while P. J. Schafer was employed to furnish and put in place 83 window shades, for which he was to receive \$92.00. The sum of \$3,000 was paid to the Phoenix Furniture Co. on wood furniture for the new court house. Jan. 9, 1903, was the date set for holding a sale in the basement of the court house of all the old and undesirable furniture belonging to the county.

....

Jan. 10, 1903, the board appointed March 11, following, as the time when they will take up the question of building a county jail and providing ways and means for the same. Feb. 17, 1903, J. M. Salstrom was given the contract for furnishing screen doors and windows for the court house, receiving for the same the sum of \$225. March 11, 1903, M. J. Dowling, J. J. Schoregge and S. R. Miller appeared before the board and asked to be heard on the proposition of building a county jail. Final action was postponed to April 20, next.

April 22, 1903, the question of building a jail for the county was taken up and considered and on motion indefinitely postponed. May 28, 1903, Mrs. Scheer, who purchased the old court house in Beaver Falls, was again given the contract to board the county paupers, this time at \$2.75 per week. July 17 N. L. Headline was appointed custodian of the court house.

Jan. 9, 1904, Commissioner W. C. Keefe was appointed purchasing agent for the year 1904, to purchase for Renville county all stationery, blanks and blank books used by the county officers, all fuel and gasoline used by the county for lighting and heating the county buildings, and all other necessary supplies of every kind. March 10, 1904, the board instructed the county auditor to advertise for plans and specifications for a county jail and sheriff's residence to cost in the neighborhood of \$15,000 to \$22,000. April 5, 1904, the board purchased from Erick Greep lots 7, 8 and 9, block 1, Peterson's addition to the village of Olivia, consideration \$1,000, for a site for a county jail and sheriff's residence, and the entire day was taken up by the board examining plans, and specifications submitted to them by Louis Magen, \$20,000; F. D. Orff, \$20,000; Schuler Brothers, \$19,000; Kinney & Ditwiler, \$19,000; Buchner & Orth, \$20,000; Haland & Squires, \$21,500; R. J. Hochkiss, \$20,000. On motion of Commissioner Sherin, Kinney & Ditwiler were selected as architects and supervisors of construction for the jail and sheriff's residence at five per cent of the total cost of such building. Thus a county jail at Olivia was started under more favorable conditions than the old stone building for the same purpose at Beaver Falls some thirty years before.

May 6, 1904, the commissioners ordered the plans and specifications furnished by the architects be submitted to the state authorities* for approval. This was not necessary when the old "stone jug" at Beaver Falls was built, the old jail plans would hardly have stood such scrutiny. July 13, 1904, the board proceeded to open and examine bids submitted for the erection of a county jail and sheriff's residence. They were as follows: Pauly Jail Co., steel work only, \$9,541; Diebold Safe & Lock Co., steel work only, \$7,743; Meyer Bros., steel work only, \$6,700; D. H. Lord, building without steel works, \$11,170; Emil M. Johnson, without steel works, \$10,975; Saxton Heating Co., for heating plant, \$779; O. H. Olson, building jail and sheriff's residence, \$21,000. July 16, 1904, O. H. Olson was awarded the contract for \$21,000, the building to be completed by December 1, 1904. On November 14 the commissioners spent the entire afternoon in considering matters pertaining to the erection of the county jail; on December 7 the auditor was directed to issue his warrant to Contractor Olson, then engaged in erecting a county jail and sheriff's residence.

Jan. 3, 1905, the commissioners were O. S. Olson (chairman), M. E. Sherin (vice-chairman), Carl Anderson, B. C. McEwen and Julius Potzwold; H. J. Lee, county auditor. . . . February 13 the board instructed the county auditor to issue his warrant in favor of O. H. Olson for the sum of \$5,962.75, and on March 12 another warrant was drawn in favor of O. H. Olson, contractor, for erecting county jail and sheriff's residence in the sum of \$2,500. March 27, 1905, the commissioners spent the afternoon looking over the new jail and sheriff's residence. March 28, on motion of Commissioner Potzwold, it was ordered that no purchase be made by any county officer for supplies for his office in any sum exceeding \$5.00 without first consulting this board. On this same day the commissioners accepted the jail and sheriff's residence as completed according to plans and specifications, directing the county auditor to draw his warrant in favor of O. H. Olson, the contractor, for the sum of \$2,877 as final payment on his contract, though completed three months later than contracted for, a number of things preventing.

* The reference is probably to the State Board of Corrections and Charities.

May 4 [1905,] Matt. Hedlund, of Olivia, was awarded the job of laying cement sidewalks around the jail grounds at eighty cents per square yard. William Windhorst put on the screen windows for \$41 and M. J. Dowling wrote \$10,000 fire and lightning insurance on the building. Thus, with new court house and new modern jail and sheriff's residence, Renville county takes rank with the best in making things convenient for her county officials. How different from the early start in Beaver Falls! But all things are moving under improved conditions. □

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