

“History of the Rice County Court House and Jail” \*

IN

HISTORY OF  
RICE AND  
STEELE COUNTIES  
MINNESOTA

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*Illustrated*

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CHICAGO  
H. C. COOPER, JR., 7 CO.  
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**MLHP: the following appeared on pages 114 and 370-371 of the first volume of this joint history of Rice and Steele Counties. Though reformatted, it is complete.**

## **COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

**The following year, 1873, the board met on January 7, composed of the same gentlemen as was in the last board, with the exception that Hudson Wilson was dropped out and T. B. Clement appeared in his place, and the board was organized by electing the latter gentleman chairman. They then spent some time in burning redeemed county orders: The next matter taken into consideration by the board was the erection of a court house and jail, and a bill was drawn up for presentation to the next legislature, to authorize the county commissioners to issue bonds for the erection of those buildings, not exceeding \$50,000 in amount, and the same to be submitted to a vote of the people. This was the same, in substance, as the resolution passed in 1867. The salary of the county superintendent of schools was fixed at \$1,000 per year.**

**At a session of the board in May the building committee was authorized to purchase lots six and seven in block forty-four, of Patrick McGreevy, at a cost not to exceed \$5,000, also to advertise for bids on the court house. In July, the contract of completing the stone work on the basement of the court house was let to Pfeiffer & Co., for the sum of \$9,615. The bid of Babcock & Woodruff was accepted. They agreed to do carpenter work in the basement, also to furnish everything and complete the building from the water tables up, according to certain plans and specifications, for the sum of \$26,515. At the session of the board in August of this year it was resolved as follows:**

**“That the board of county commissioners of Rice county acknowledge themselves and the citizens of Rice county under great and lasting obligations to the Hon. Henry M. Rice, of St. Paul, from whom our county takes its name, for a large and valuable collection of books and documents, consisting of upwards of 200 volumes, recently presented by that gentleman, the same being the first contribution to our county library.”**

**At the August session of the board the building committee reported that it had let the contract for building the jail onto the McGreevy house, according to plans and specifications made by C. N. Daniels, architect to Messrs. Sibbald, Hatch, Johnson and McCall, to be**

completed by October 1, 1873. A contract was also made with Henry Peltier for brick at \$8.25 per thousand. Bradey & Greenslade contracted to furnish the iron work on the jail for \$2,300. July 1, 1873, the county commissioners issued fifty bonds of the denomination of \$1,000 each, and payable from ten to twenty years from date, with interest at 9 per cent, in payment of the county buildings.

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**County Court House.** The court house of Rice county is a beautiful building located in block 43, Faribault, and erected in 1873-74 at a cost of about \$50,000. Incidents of the location of the county buildings are related elsewhere by F. W. Frink. January 5, 1856, the county seat was located by the commissioners in section 31, township 110, range 20. This was amended by the addition of the south half of section 30. April 10, 1856, order number 7, was ordered drawn to James Shields for lots 6 and 7, block 43, in the town of Faribault, for the purpose of erecting a public building. The county commissioners selected as a site for the county buildings, lots 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, block 43, in the town of Faribault, the same being surveyed by B. Densmore. April 11, the board of county commissioners procured a site for the court house and other buildings. The site selected for the county buildings, lots 8, 9 and 10, block 43, was quit claimed by Amos B. Wattles, in consideration of the sum of \$55 and purchased of the proprietors of the town of Faribault for \$125 making in all \$180 for the two lots. January 9, 1857, it was voted to call for bids for the erection of the register of deeds and treasurer's office and county jail. August 4, the contract was let to Josiah Dickerson at \$2,050. This building was used for the offices. Later a jail was built in the same block, the offices and the jail serving until the erection of the present court house in 1873-74. The north part of the block, lots 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 was acquired later than the south part. June 9, 1873, the county acquired blocks 4 and 5 from Randall Fuller and John B. Braley for \$2 .000. September 24, 1867, an undivided half of lot 2 was purchased from Moses E. Webb for \$700. On the thirtieth of the same month, the other undivided half of the same lot was purchased from William H. Dike for \$800. October 5, 1867, lot 3 was purchased from Jerome Madden for \$2,400. August 19, 1868, lot 1

was purchased from Samuel J. Clemans for \$1,200. The story of the selection of the location is told by F. W. Frink, else where.

**County Jail.** The property now occupied by the county jail was purchased from Patrick McGreery, June 12, 1873, for \$5,000. At the same time the city purchased the present fire house property, and the county subsequently sold the city a small strip of the jail property also. A jail was built on the rear of the residence, and was several times remodeled and improved, the most notable enlargement occurring June 24, 1890. Until 1910, the jail was used by the county for a county jail and by the city for a municipal lockup. The jail and tile dual system were not satisfactory to the board of control, and January, 1910. Judge Thomas S. Buckham, and the state board of control served notice that the jail was to be condemned. The commissioners therefore at once decided to erect a new jail, and sheriff's residence. For this purpose a tax levy of \$18,000 was laid. Albert Schippel, of Mankato, was the architect. The new building is of artistic face brick, furnished by the Twin City Brick Company, and of Kettle river cut stone. The contract was let to William O'Neil & Son, of Faribault, the contract price being \$25,751. The sheriff's residence contains nine rooms, and the jail sixteen cells, being equipped with all the modern arrangements of an institution of this kind. The contract for the steel work was let to the Stewart Jail Works Company, the heating and plumbing to P. J. Gallagher, the electrical work to Kingsley and Payant. The building is one of which the county may well be proud. The first appropriation was made for a county jail and offices, January 9, 1857, the basement of the building to be used as a jail. The building was erected in the block in which the court house is now located, but was used very little, if any, for a jail. The jail was later erected of heavily nailed boards in the same block, and was used until the present jail property was purchased from McGreery.

**City Jail.** From the incorporation of the city until 1910, the city prisoners were housed in the county jail. This method was disapproved by the state board of control, and when the new county jail was started in 1910, the city also started the municipal jail. The jail is a brick structure, located just north of the city hail,

**and was built by John P. O'Neil at a contract price of \$7,800. It contains six cages, and a tramp and women's room.**

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