

“HISTORY OF THE WILKIN COUNTY
COURTHOUSE”

An Excerpt From

HISTORY
OF
THE RED RIVER
VALLEY

PAST AND PRESENT

Including an Account of the Counties, Cities, Towns
and Villages of the Valley from the Time
of Their First Settlement and
Formation

BY VARIOUS WRITERS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME II

ILLUSTRATED

HERALD PRINTING COMPANY
GRAND FORKS

C. F. COOPER & COMPANY
CHICAGO

1909

* The following article first appeared on page 913 of Volume II of this history of the Red River valley. It has been reformatted. The title has been added by the MLHP.

HISTORY OF THE WILKIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE

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Like most western counties, Wilkin passed through her season of graft, beginning with the building of the courthouse, which was finished in December, 1882, and January 1, 1883, was set for removing the records and installing the offices therein. But on the night before, fire broke out in the old wooden building on Minnesota avenue, owned by Phelps & Smith, which held the county offices and county records, completely destroying the building and practically all the records of the auditor's office, including all evidence of the actual cost of the courthouse, and the county found itself the owner of a building worth about \$20,000 at a cost popularly believed to be approximately \$40,000.

The people goodnaturedly set about preparing to pay the debt by establishing a sinking fund for the payment of the bonds as they became due. But after paying into the sinking fund about \$1,800 in about twelve years, it was discovered that every dollar of the fund had been diverted to other purposes, leaving the debt of about \$38,000 still intact. In 1897 a movement was inaugurated that effectually put a stop to grafting. The revenues of the county were applied to their legitimate purposes, and in 1905 the last vestige of the county debt was wiped out, in which condition it has remained ever since, except that the credit of the county is back of about \$200,000 of ditch bonds which are being paid off at the rate of about \$10,000 a year by a tax on the lands benefited. ■

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