

“ County Buildings ” *
IN
HISTORY
OF
BROWN COUNTY
MINNESOTA

ITS PEOPLE, INDUSTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS

L. A. FRITSCHÉ, M. D.
Editor

With Biographical Sketches of Representative Citizens and
Genealogical Records of Many of the Old Families

VOLUME I

ILLUSTRATED

1916
B. F. BOWEN & COMPANY, Inc.
Indianapolis, Indiana

*MLHP: the following appeared on pages 285-287 of this history of Brown County.
Though reformatted, it is complete.

COUNTY BUILDINGS

Not until the fall of 1858 had there been any action taken to provide for county buildings. In November, that year, three plans for a jail were submitted to the commissioners: J. Berndt produced two, the cost of erecting the first plan was to be five hundred and eighty dollars; of the second, three hundred dollars. J. Pfenninger handed in a plan and an estimate of cost at about four hundred dollars. On motion, it was resolved to accept the first plan of J. Berndt. No contract, however, was entered into until the next autumn. In March, 1859, it was resolved to authorize the chairman to "issue a proclamation about the building of a county jail as resolved by the board in November." Soon after a contract was entered into and the jail ordered built, the same being accepted as a jail, September 14, as being constructed according to contract. This jail was a log building situated in German Park and was the only county building of any kind until the fall of 1865, when a brick building was provided, at a cost of four thousand dollars, in which the county officers were kept until the present structure was provided. Another jail, however, seemed necessary for the county in 1872, so the commissioners ordered one erected and the same cost almost ten thousand dollars, but this was a combined court house and jail. Prior to that time the various county officers held their offices at different places in the town, in leased rooms. The court house and jail just mentioned stood on the east side of the present court house. The present court house was erected in 1889 at a cost of thirty-five thousand dollars, ten thousand dollars of which had to be raised by the people of New Ulm, as the citizens at Sleepy Eye wanted the county seat removed to that place, and offered to be liberal in the matter of making the change not cost the taxpayers much. Bonds were then issued to pay for the remainder needed for the present court house.

The present jail and sheriff's house, just to the west of the court house, was erected in 1915-16, at a cost of twenty thousand dollars. This is among the handsomest jail buildings in southern Minnesota, and is modern in every particular. These two public buildings are indeed a creditable monument to the wisdom and good sense of the people of the county.

When first erected the court house was upon a hill with high banks sloping off on either side, and was hard of access. The banks were then protected by high stone retaining walls, and twenty-odd steps had to be descended upon going from the pavement to the court house door. In 1913 this huge bank was all leveled to grade, or nearly so, and now the park-like appearance of the square is indeed beautiful. ■

-A-