

THE MARTIN COUNTY COURT HOUSE *

Two Hundred Dollars Voted
for Court House

On September 4, 1860, the commissioners met at their annual session and made a tax levy for all purposes, of four mills on the dollar. A. W. Young was this year elected auditor. The commissioners were B. C. Hinkle, chairman, J. C. Hudson and J. W. Sleepier.

The winter of 1860-61 was very cold at times, with considerable depth of snow. The settlers suffered much from the cold weather. On January 1, the county commissioners met an annual session. B. C. Hinkle, chairman, J. C. Hudson and J. W. Sleepier and A. W. Young county auditor. They voted to raise \$200 to complete a county house for the use of officers and court purposes.

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Court House Building Committee
Appointed

January 7th, 1862, the county commissioners met. Present were Wm. H. Budd, W. S. Campell and L. F. True. Wm. H. Budd was elected chairman. A building committee was appointed and ordered to report plans and specifications for a county building at some other meeting. They also drew 24 names for a grand jury and 33 names for the petit jury. J. H. Goodrich was appointed county auditor.

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Court House Grounds Cost \$100

The county commissioners at this time [1862] bought the present courthouse grounds from Benson C. Hinkle, price \$100.00.

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* These are excerpts from pages 15-19, 46 & 96 of William H. Budd's *Martin County Before 1880*, a collection of articles that were published in installments in the *Martin County Independent*, and in a cloth-bound edition in 1897. The book was reissued with supplementary notes by Walter Carlson in 1973. The excerpts are complete though reformatted. Budd's spelling and punctuation have not been changed.

Budd Builds Court House

The commissioners met in session June 2nd, 1862, with all present. A. C. Dunn was allowed \$15 for acting as county attorney in the case of the state versus Morse. The contract for building the county house was let to W. W. Carrington, for the sum of \$200. Mr. Carrington hauled the lumber from Shelbyville, and let the contract for the work to W. H. Budd. The sills, floor, joists and rafters were cut in the grove and hewed by hand. This is the building that was used for twenty years for county offices and court purposes, also used for holding public meetings.

In this building was held the first Sabbath school of the county. It was also used, at the time of the establishing of a fort here, by the officers and men. This building is now standing in fair condition southeast of the present courthouse, and was sold by the commissioners on the completion of the present building, to A. L. Ward, who reports the roof and sides, and the plastering to be in good condition and that he believes the builders did an honest job. There were a number of preachers in the county by this time and on the completion of this building they would take turns In holding meetings every Sunday. The church rules and regulations were somewhat loose at this time, the hand of fellowship and good will was extended alike to the Presbyterian, Baptist or Methodist.

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Office Business Ordered to Court House

The county auditor was instructed to notify the county officers that on and after the first day of January, 1865, they must hold their offices at the county seat and in the court house, which they did. One man would represent a number of officers — that is, he would be a deputy for a number of officers.

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Second Court House Built

The commissioners let the contract for the building of our present courthouse and jail to J. A. Smith for \$9,242.10.

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The building of the court house progressed rapidly and it was completed in the fall [of 1880] and occupied by the county officers.

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Population Statistics

We have spent a great deal of search and inquiry in order to get an official statement by the census of the condition of this county in 1860. That would be the first census after the settlement of the county. We find that the population of the county in 1860 was 151; in 1865, 1,430; in 1870, 3,867; in 1875, 3,738, there being a decrease between 1870 and 1874 of 129 caused by the locust devastation. In 1880, 5,253. twenty-four years' growth of the county, shows that it took 24 years to make a population of 5,253. Our people at this time would consider this a very slow growth to take place in a quarter of a century. ■

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