

THE HISTORY
— OF —
Mower County Minnesota

ILLUSTRATED

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COUNTY COURT HOUSE. *

In March, 1857, the county board of commissioners engaged the office of A. S. Everest, in Austin, to be used as county seat headquarters. The register of deeds officed there and this was the place for holding the meetings of the board of commissioners. This and other small office rooms served for county seat buildings until the fall of 1868, when a court house was completed, through an act of the board of commissioners of April 9, 1868. At this meeting bids were received for the erection of a county building, and D. J. Tubbs being the lowest bidder, the contract was awarded to him in the sum of \$6,450. A building committee was appointed, consisting of Messrs. Beech, Stimson and Bishop. The building was to be completed by September 5, 1868. This was a two story brick structure and was located on the corner of Main and Maple streets, opposite the present court house. This building served the county well until 1881, when it was the will of the people that a new, larger and better court house be provided the rapidly progressing county. In accordance with this manifest wish, the board of county commissioners commenced laying plans to erect more spacious quarters. At a meeting of the board of commissioners, held March 29, 1881, block 13, the old public square, owned by various parties, was purchased for the total sum of \$1,925. A building committee was then appointed, which consisted of Oscar Ayers, O. C. LaBar and W. B. Mitson. Bids were solicited for constructing the basement of the contemplated court house.

D. J. Tubbs, whose bid of \$9,200.00 was the lowest offered, was awarded the contract and completed the work in a very satisfactory manner. H. J. Anderson was

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appointed as superintendent of construction, and received for his services \$30 per week.

The building committee took much pains to become thoroughly conversant with the various kinds of architecture, making trips to Milwaukee, St. Paul, Minneapolis and other points, to view and study into the plans of such building, and finally engaged the services of W. H. Dennis, of Minneapolis, as their architect and designer. June 14, 1882, the contract for erecting the superstructure was awarded to Snow & Allsip, of Chicago. Mr. Snow was the Solomon Snow whose name appears throughout this history, as one of the early residents of Mower county. The amount called for in this contract was \$52,291. The work of construction went on, and the building was completed and first occupied in the month of March, 1884.

About seven years before the completion of the new court house, the board of county commissioners began to stow away a fund for that purpose, by levying a light tax each year, thus the tax payers were not burdened by a heavy tax any one year, or compelled to pay interest on a large bonded indebtedness, as most counties have done, in this and other states. No small credit is due to the enterprise and public spirit of the city of Austin, who taxed herself to the amount of \$6,000 as an aid toward erecting the court house. The total cost of the building, lots, and heating apparatus, was, in round numbers \$67,900, divided about as follows: \$51,500 for building; \$1,925 for grounds; and \$4,500 for furniture and fixtures. After deducting the \$6,000 paid by the city of Austin, the cost to the people of Mower county, was about \$61,916.

The new court house was fittingly dedicated by the formal opening of the first session of court within its walls.

In the early part of 1879, an effort was made to have the county seat removed to Ramsey. The effort was made on the part of the people of Racine, Frankford, Pleasant Valley, Grand Meadow and other towns. A remonstrance was signed by 2,204 legal voters of the county, this being more than two thirds of the total vote cast at the previous general election. The removal bill failed to pass the legislature. ■

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