

**“ FIRST COURT HOUSE OF TODD COUNTY ” \***

in

**HISTORY**

OF

**Morrison and Todd Counties**  
Minnesota

**THEIR PEOPLE, INDUSTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS**

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BY

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

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\* MLHP editor: The following appeared on pages 234-236 of the second volume of this joint history of Morrison and Todd Counties. Though reformatted, it is complete. Several typos have been corrected.

## FIRST COURT HOUSE.

The county was given a court house at the February meeting of the board and the following was the tender made: "We the undersigned hereby agree to tender to the board of county commissioners for the use of this county *forever*, the building standing upon the tract of land occupied by the liberty pole which house is owned by citizens of Long Prairie, which it is understood will be conveyed to the county as soon as practicable. (Signed) BUILDING COMMITTEE. July 5, 1870."

This building proposition was at once accepted by the county board. In the spring of 1870 all county officers were ordered to take the effects of their several offices to Long Prairie, the designated county seat. On January 5, 1870, the county contracted with Chandler & Fisher for \$10 to paint with lime mortar the inside of the building known as the "County Building" at Long Prairie, to the ceilings and also to bank up same, the amount to be paid in Todd county warrants.

On January 5, 1870, a \$30 heating stove was ordered, purchased, the same to take in three-foot cordwood sticks. Two cords of hard maple wood were also contracted' for at \$2 per cord. At the same board meeting L. D. Fonda was appointed from Hartford township to act as school superintendent, he to take his office April 1, 1870. In June, 1870, the board ordered the roof repaired to the county building; also some record books for the various officers were provided for. It appears that Mr. Fonda declined to serve as school superintendent and the board then appointed John Jones.

The first mention of relief for the unfortunate poor within the newly organized county was at the April meeting of the board, in 1870, when \$50 was appropriated for such humane purposes. At the March, 1870, meeting the commissioners appropriated \$150 for the making of proper plats and field notes for the county.

EARLY FINANCES.

In September, 1870, the county treasurer was “examined” and he made the following showing of the finances of Todd county:

Legal tender notes on hand .....	\$1,618.88
County orders on revenue funds.....	678.20
County orders on bridge fund.....	250.00
County orders for poor.....	41.35
Town orders.....	<u>136.58</u>
Total.....	\$2,725.01

In 1871, H. F. Lashier was appointed school superintendent. At the board meeting, January 6, 1875, it was ordered that the Todd County Academy be allowed free use of the old court house till they might procure better quarters. The same meeting the board ordered a safe for the register of deeds, the same costing \$240. In 1884 the board bought thirty cords of maple wood (green) at \$2 per cord, four-foot length. In 1890 the commissioners purchased for \$100 enough iron marking posts to mark the corner of each congressional township in the county. In 1897 the minutes show the board ordered a retaining wall erected about the court house square.

Among the early-day items found in the minute-books of the commissioners are the following: In 1875 the board offered a bounty of three cents a quart for all grasshoppers that might be caught and killed within this county. William Neil, of Hartford township, was appointed to act in conjunction with the various township clerks, as measurers of the little winged pests, then doing damage in many sections of this state. This was paid from what the books show to be the “Grasshopper Fund.” Again in 1879, at the meeting of the board, it was decided that no penalty or interest should be collected on the taxes which had not been paid in 1875 and 1876, on account of the ravages of the grasshoppers in Todd county.

In 1908 the county bonded itself for \$50,000—ten-year, five per cent. bonds—for drainage purposes.

## COURT HOUSE AND JAIL HISTORY.

As has already been stated the first court house accommodations were provided in Todd county by a donation of a building at Long Prairie in 1870. The next move made is shown by the minute books of the county commissioners, dated March 21, 1873, when bids were advertised for building of a court house, which was to be a substantial frame two stories high and thirty-four by forty feet in size. It was to be completed not later than November 1, 1873, and not to cost in excess of \$2,500. Payment was to be made in county warrants. It was stipulated that the building should be erected on block No. 13 in Long Prairie, \$800 was payable October 10, 1873, \$500 by March 1, 1874, and \$700 by July 1, 1874

The bidders were as follow: Charles Harkens, \$3,280; Joseph Paquin, \$2,700, and G. V. B. Williams, \$2,499. Williams was awarded the contract, and he finished the work and it was approved and legally accepted on September 15, 1873. This building served well the purpose for which it was intended until 1883, when more talk was heard of needing better court how facilities At the January session of that year, a building committee was appointed, with Thomas Ward as chairman of the board of county commissioners M. J. Martin was then serving as county auditor.

May 2, 1883, bonds were issued for \$25,000 with which to erect the present court house. It was erected and accepted from the hands of the builders on November 17, 1883. Samuel Lee was made superintendent of the work of construction. A bid was had for building the structure for \$20,000 and this was accepted. It is a fine brick building, with all necessary office rooms and well heated and lighted by modern equipments.

The present county jail was built, with the apartments for the jailor, from plans submitted in July, 1900. It is also a modern building, with a slate roof and all needed interior fixtures to meet the modern-day requirements as to safety and health. ■

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