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THE EARLY SETTLERS.

The first white settler in Cass county was Samuel Martin, who came here in the spring of 1853. As the time was before the organic act making Nebraska a territory, Mr. Martin had to obtain a permit from the secretary of war, which he did in order to settle here. The title of the Indians was not extinguished until April 17, 1854, almost a year after Mr. Martin landed. On his arrival Mr. Martin established a trading post on the ground now occupied by the city of Plattsmouth. In fact, to be exact, he, with the assistance of James O'Neill and two or three other men, built a log cabin on what is now designated lots 6 and 7, in block 31, in town plat proper of Plattsmouth. Mr. Martin traded with the Indians until December 15, 1854. After that his cabin was used variously as a store, postoffice, etc., until it was finally torn down to make room for a more modern structure.

Immediately after the title of the Indians was extinguished, a rush was made by settlers for the best location, and in a short time nearly all the desirable lands near the river in Cass County were taken up. The claim jumpers operated in this county in a similar manner to those of Douglas and other river counties. An operator would remove the stakes placed by a bona fide settler and replace them with ones with his own name thereon. Sometimes one of the claim jumpers would have as many as a dozen claims in his name when he would be entitled only to one. After causing a great deal of trouble in the early settlement, these detestable whelps were finally put out of business by various means used by the honest bona fide settlers.

The early settlers of Cass county were a hospitable class of men, and they never turned a hungry person from their door. Often these good people were imposed upon by land sharks and claim jumpers. A man would be sent out to the home of a homesteader, and having received the courteous treatment usually accorded strangers, would go out on the claim and drop stones, which he had carried for the purpose, at what he imagined to be the four corners of a house, split the ends of some sticks and therein insert a piece of glass. Sticking these in the ground on the supposed sides of the house for the windows, he would secure a piece of board, lay it down in the center of the supposed enclosure, take a blanket and retire for the night in his newly made home. In the morning he would go to the United States land office, and there swear solemnly that he had taken a claim, at the same time describing it; that he had built a house with glass windows and wooden floor, that it was his intention to make permanent settlement and that he wished to enter his claim; also stating that he had already moved into it. As soon as he had received his papers he would start to his eastern home, congratulating himself upon his shrewdness as a land speculator, and ease with which he had worked the green pioneer who had so hospitably entertained him. Such operations were very discouraging to the honest early settlers. They were in this manner gradually hemmed in and surrounded by the fraudulent speculators who held the lands for higher prices. By their own generosity and kindness they had assisted in isolating them-

selves from friends, neighbors and the comforts of life they had anticipated. These troubles, however, gradually became fewer as the country settled and became more law abiding.

Town Company.

As already stated, the first white settler in Cass county and Plattsmouth was Samuel Martin. The Plattsmouth Town Company was organized October 26, 1854, by Samuel Martin, James O'Neill, C. Nuckolls, J. L. Sharp, Manley Green and Lafayette Nuckolls. In November of the same year the town was laid out and platted by O. N. Tyson, the surveyor of the company, and on March 14, 1855, a special act of the legislature was approved defining the boundaries of Cass county and establishing the seat of justice, duly incorporating the (then) village of Plattsmouth. As in all early settlements, the town had a competitor for greatness in the town of Kenosha, situated twelve miles down the river. Considerable bad feeling was engendered as to the location of the county seat. It is related in this connection that a self-constituted committee of Plattsmouth citizens, going to Omaha as a lobby in the legislature had a map of Cass county prepared by one Henry Coulson, showing the mouth of the Platte river ten miles further north than it actually was, as respects its nearness to Plattsmouth. The map being laid before the proper committee and regarded as answering the only argument on the question, and Plattsmouth was accordingly made the county seat and Kenosha "went up in the air."

The First Ferry.

About this time a ferry was established across the Missouri river here under a charter granted to Wheatley Mickelwait and others; this being one of the seventy acts of incorporation of the First Territorial Legislature, being approved March 1, 1855. Until 1857 a flat boat was run, followed by the "Emma" and the "Survivor" in 1859, the latter sinking while crossing the river in 1860. The Survivor was first put in commission by Peter A. Sarpy, and run in opposition to the Emma for a year before a compromise was effected between the two companies by which it succeeded the former boat. The contest, while it lasted, was a hot one, and both ferries carried passengers and teams free of charge for the greater part of the season. Frequently a bonus was offered passengers, and it is related that on one occasion Sarpy offered to take one wagon over free (as he told the leader) if they would all go by his boat, he would give them a dollar and a gallon of whiskey. According to tradition they accepted.

Peter A. Sarpy.

Peter A. Sarpy, so closely identified with the early history of the state and Sarpy county, was a man of strong personal characteristics. He was a fearless trader with the In-

THE CITY OF PLATTSMOUTH

Has Long Since Discarded Her Swaddling Clothes for More Queenly Attire---Her Growth and Institutions

CITY THAT HOLDS ITS OWN

A Review of the Energetic Business Men of Plattsmouth Who are Today Alive to the City's Best Interests

dians, over whom he exercised the control of despot. His direct connection with the history of Cass county may be told in a few words. At the time he placed the Survivor upon the river he was living at St. Marys, Iowa, and removed from that place in Plattsmouth in 1851, engaging in the mercantile business with Henry Kabe. He brought along with him from St. Marys, a steam flour mill, which he continued to run for several years, when it was sold to Campbell & Wheatley, subsequently changing hands several times, until it was finally removed to Kearney, Nebraska. For many years Sarpy suffered from an incurable disease, and during the fall of 1864, continued to grow weaker and weaker, until in January, 1865, "in the early morn-

other frame houses, one of which was the "Nebraska House" or "City Hotel," built for the town company, and which was destroyed by fire January 2, 1882. The other two buildings were residences for himself and T. G. Palmer, in the latter of which Col. Sarpy died in 1865.

Two saw mills were built in Plattsmouth during the year—the first by Heisel & Rauth, the latter soon withdrawing from the firm, however, and a number of burrs put in by Conrad Heisel. The other mill was built by Enos Williams on the south side of block 36, the site being donated by the town company.

The earliest physicians in Plattsmouth were Drs. E. A. and W. E. Donelan, who opened an office and the first drug store in the summer

of 1856. These three with E. G. Dovey, R. C. Cushing and others constituted the directory. The Bank of Cass County was instituted January 31, 1880, by A. E. Touzalin, H. W. Yates, John Black and D. H. Wheeler, the following being the list of officers: John Black, president; E. M. Yates, cashier; A. E. Touzalin, H. W. Yates, John Black, F. R. Guthmann and E. M. Yates making up the Board of Directors.

The Hotels.

The first hotel in Plattsmouth was the Nebraska House or City Hotel, built for the town company by Wheatley Mickelwait during the summer of 1856, and destroyed by fire on January 2, 1882. It was situated on the corner of Third and Main—the present site of Hotel Plattsmouth, and at the time of its destruction was the property of Fred Goos. For many years it was the only hotel of any importance in the city. In 1869, the Saunders House was erected on upper Main street, and taking its place as a first-class hotel immediately upon its opening. This building was entirely destroyed by fire after ten years service, the conflagration occurring on January 29, 1880—the loss being \$27,000. From the time of this loss to the city, Plattsmouth was in sad need of a hotel, until the organization of a Board of Trade in 1880, the board soon after it was constituted offering the sum of \$2,500 as a bonus to anyone who would build a first-class hotel. This offer was almost immediately accepted by F. R. Guthmann and brother, commencing the erection of the building in 1881. It is standing to-day and is a substantial three-story brick building at the northeast corner of Third and Main streets, and completed at a cost of \$30,000. It was opened for business August 23, 1881, under the name of the Perkins House, being in honor of C. E. Perkins, of the B. & M. Railroad in Nebraska. Upon the destruction of the City Hotel in 1882, its owner, Fred Goos, immediately began to build a substantial three-story brick building, 44 by 70, on the old site of the City Hotel. This is now known as the Hotel Plattsmouth, and is owned and run by Peter F. Goos. In 1890 the Hotel Riley, a modern and up-to-date structure was built by J. E. Riley, of Omaha, at an expenditure of something like \$75,000. It is the leading hotel in Plattsmouth to-day, and is one of the best in the state.

Plattsmouth at Present.

The population of Plattsmouth, according to the census in 1880, was 4,180, and the census of 1900 increased it to 5,183, by the government count. At the present writing it is thought to be nearly 6,000. Its growth has been steady and substantial, as the present many brick blocks on Main and Sixth streets will fully testify. The magnificent Parmele Theatre, and Riley Hotel block are structures that would do great credit to cities three or four



CASS COUNTY'S COURT HOUSE

ing following a cold winter night, during which he had several times gotten out of the bed in which he lay, putting on coat and hat, went out into the bitter cold, and died. He said an hour before, "I will not last much longer," and his faithful nurse, who was constantly with him, helping him from place to place about—the weakness of death was upon him. His remains were buried in the old cemetery west of the High School building, and subsequently removed by relatives to St. Louis, where he originally came from, and where they now rest.

First Postoffice.

Plattsmouth was made a postoffice in the fall of 1855. Wheatley Mickelwait being the first postmaster. It is said he had no office at first and carried the mail about with him in his pockets. When incorporated the town contained a total of six houses, there being besides the two first erected by Martin, three log houses on Main street between Third and Sixth, built by T. G. Palmer, Wheatley Mickelwait and William Garrison, respectively; and a frame building (the first in the town) bearing upon its front the "Farmer's Hotel." Plattsmouth's first merchant, as before stated, Samuel Martin, who enjoyed a trade monopoly until his death, on December 15, 1854. He was succeeded in the "Old Barracks" by Slaughter & Worley, who occupied the building until the fall of 1856, when the one known as the "Old New York Store" was built, this being used, in addition for the purpose for which it was intended, for the postoffice, with John A. Worley as deputy postmaster. During the summer of this year, Garrison, Griffith & Co. put up another frame building on Main street for business purposes, where they remained for some years; the firm, however, in time, changed to Nuckolls, Garrison & Co., and then to Garrison & Jones. During the same summer Wheatley Mickelwait erected three

of 1856. J. H. Brown, attorney-at-law began business a year earlier, and A. H. Townsend, Willet Pottenger and T. M. Marquette of the same profession, came at various times during 1856. The same year saw its first school in Plattsmouth, taught by Mrs. Mary Striking on Gospel Hill.

The organizing of the city under its charter of March, 1855, was effected December 29, 1856, by the election of Wheatley Mickelwait to the mayoralty, and Enos Williams, W. M. Slaughter and Jacob Vallery, aldermen. The council met and proceeded to do business on January 29, 1857. Their first ordinance was approved by the mayor March 2, 1857, levying a tax of one-half of one percent on all taxable property within the corporate limits of Plattsmouth, the amount collected to be expended in the improvement of the streets and alleys and steamboat landings at and in the city. On December 7, 1857, the council voted each member a salary of \$100.00 a year, being something more than \$16.00 each for every session held during the year. This is a noticeable fact: In view of the action taken by the succeeding council, on December 30, 1858, in ordaining during the year the sum of 5 cents was allowed each member, payable in city script; the assessor, recorder and treasurer were paid \$25.00 each for the same time.

First Bank.

The first bank established in Plattsmouth was a private concern, and opened in 1859 by Tootle & Hanna, of St. Joseph, Mo. In 1866 John R. Clark was admitted into partnership, taking the firm name of Tootle, Hanna & Clark, until the business was bought out in 1872 by the First National bank. The next bank was the First National which was organized for business in January, 1872, with John Fitzgerald as president; C. H. Parmele, vice president, and John R. Clark cash-

times the population of Plattsmouth. The city is properly located for a city of great importance, and the day is not far distant when enterprises will not pass up such favorable locations as this community is prepared to offer for manufacturing institutions of various kinds.

The Commercial Club already has several enterprises under advancement, including inter-urban electric lines to the nearby towns, which will largely increase the population. The Commercial Club is planning for several factories to locate here, and it will not be many months until the city will assume the character of a solid, substantial and most desirable city in which to make a permanent home.

The City's Natural Advantages.

Plattsmouth is one of the most charmingly located cities in the West. All the natural elements for a great financial and commercial center are here in abundance. All that is needed is the genius of the human mind to continue and realize the means at hand. The men who have been guiding the progress of our beautiful city in past years, who filled it with magnificent business blocks and splendid residences will not let opportunities go by unutilized in the future. Commercially, Plattsmouth is prosperous, and financially, it is as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar. Our natural site and surroundings are superb. The many lovely and attractive homes, embodied in stately trees, her green lawns, her cultured society, handsome churches, splendid schools, beautiful park and fine paved streets, are tests of the spirit, character and enterprise of her people. Combining the generosity of nature with its wealth of modern improvements, Plattsmouth offers health to invalid, rest and recuperation to those worn out by toil, and recreation, contentment and hospitality to all who come within her gates. Nature has especially endowed this city with everything conducive to the health and happiness of mankind. With its dozen churches, whose spires reach heavenward, catching the first rays of the morning sun, and kissed by the last sunbeams of evening, with schools that are the especial pride of all who dwell within our borders, presided over by a competent set of instructors, under the supervision of Prof. J. W. Gamble, whose untiring energy and excellent qualifications have brought the Plattsmouth city schools to the front ranks of public schools of Nebraska. With substantial well-filled stores and a citizenship, noted far and wide for its hospitality, happy indeed is the man who calls Plattsmouth his home.

Plattsmouth's wealth and prosperity is embraced in many branches of commerce and industry, and occupies a good position, and enjoys a dignified prominence in the world of trade, challenging the respect and admiration which such conditions legitimately entitle her. The seal of enterprises and solidity is indelibly stamped upon our city. Our people have always been averse to booming, rather, that the natural resources and advantages should become known to the outside world by the town's own merits, rather than by loud acclamations of a great future. Now that its nucleus has been prepared, and its infancy passed, its foundation laid upon a solid basis, it is proposed to make our numerous advantages known to the outside world in a modest and becoming manner.



WESCOTT BUILDING



SCHLITZ BUILDING