

HISTORY OF PLATTE COUNTY, MISSOURI.

PLATTE COUNTY is comparatively a new county, the territory out of which it was formed being Indian territory up to the year 1837, and not embraced in the original boundaries of the state of Missouri.

After the Western boundary of Missouri was established by a line north and south from Iowa to Arkansas, crossing the Missouri river at the mouth of the Kansas river, it was discovered that our state was not complete and could not be without the addition of what was called "The Platte Country," consequently the minds of our statesmen and citizens generally were directed toward the acquisition of this coveted territory, and which was finally accomplished in the year 1837 with great difficulty. The Indian owners were greatly attached to the country because it was their favorite winter residence, and were therefore loth to surrender it.

It was also contended that the addition of this territory to the state of Missouri was a violation of the "Missouri Compromise," under which Missouri was admitted into the Union, and that a large district of country then free soil would thereby become slave soil. The Legislature of Missouri had taken the preliminary steps to extend the borders of the state to the Missouri river, west of the original western boundary; and our representatives in Congress had to meet the old Missouri question of creating a territory north of what was called "Mason's and Dixon's Line;" but fortunately for us we were represented in both Houses of Congress by able men. The principal objection arose in the Senate in the ratification of the treaty with the Indians, Col. Thomas H. Benton and Dr. Lewis F. Linn were Missouri's able and faithful Senators, and, as Col. Benton remarked while on a visit to our country in 1840, our success was mainly attributable to Dr. Linn on account of his great influence with Northern Senators who entertained Anti-Slavery views. However, success attended their efforts, and territory sufficient to form six of the best counties of this great state was added, viz.: Platte, Buchanan, Andrew, Nodaway, Holt and Atchison.

As remarked, long anterior to 1837, and immediately after our western boundary had been run, the attention of the people of the "Boon's Lick Country," then Howard county, was particularly directed to (as they called it) a strip of country lying west of our boundary line and east of the Missouri river. Trappers and explorers brought the most glowing descriptions of the Platte country, and remarking that in point of fertility of soil it far surpassed the older portions of the state.

At the time of the admission of Missouri into the Union, St. Charles and Howard were the only organized counties on the Missouri river above St. Louis. Prior to the admission of Missouri was great, and the "Boon's Lick Country" which was the center of attraction, in the territory now embraced in the counties of Howard, Boone and Cooper, was first settled, principally by persons emigrating from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia and North Carolina, and some few from the New England States.

After the admission of our state, new counties were organized out of the territory of Howard county—Boone and Cooper, the former east and the latter south of Howard proper. Soon after other counties were organized west on the Missouri river—Chariton, Carroll, Ray and Clay north of the river, and Saline, Lafayette and Jackson south of the river.

Many of the old pioneers who had first settled in Howard county emigrated to what they called Upper Missouri, intending, ultimately, to settle in the country which had been their dream for many years. Among these were the Todds, Browns, Woods, Higgins, Fords, Greggs, Deans, Fugitts, Thorpe, Jacks, Roupes, Harringtons, Robert Cains, David Hunt and his father-in-law, David Boggs, Malotts, Minnes, Connellys, Barnetts, Coopers, Andersons, and many others whose names we cannot now recall. In the foregoing list may be recognized many who were "Forsters" either in Fort Hemsted or Cooper's Fort in Howard county, during the war of 1812. With their rifles they defended themselves and families against the Indians whose depredations were frequent. They were the intelligent, hardy pioneers of the West, and were contemporary with and intimate friends of Linsey Carson, father of the famous Kit Carson, and Captain Cooper who was killed by the Indians at Cooper's Fort. Carson survived the war, and was killed near Fort Hemsted in 1819, by the falling of a tree.

We name these circumstances merely for the purpose of giving an idea of the character, hardihood and enterprise of these early settlers of Platte county.

As remarked, Platte county was Indian territory up to early in 1837, when the Indian title was extinguished and the country made a part of the state of Missouri, and declared open for settlement. Prior to the admission, the country had been explored by the Indians, and the future locations selected. Jacks, Lafayette, and other counties, and the future locations selected. Jacks, in advance, erected their cabins to hold their claims, and these had been destroyed by the United States troops from Fort Leavenworth under orders from the War Department. The destruction, however, was not vindictive, but merely to satisfy the Indians, who were weary of the policy of ceding their lands to the Government, which treaty was concluded at Fort Leavenworth in the year 1836. General Andrew S. Hughes, who was then agent for the Indians who owned the Platte country, in conjunction with commissioners sent from Washington, concluded the treaty, which was ratified, as before remarked, with much reluctance, by the Indian Council.

The Legislature of the state of Missouri had previously provided that, in the event of the ratification of the treaty, all that portion of the territory lying west of Clay county should be attached to Clay county for civil and military purposes; and all that portion of said territory north of the territory attached to Clay county, should be for the same purposes attached to Clinton county.

The line dividing the territory of Clay and Clinton counties, running from the northwest corner of Clay county west to the Missouri river, passed not far from the present village of New Market, then called Jacksonville.

Such was the reputation of the country throughout the West that immigration was unprecedented, and by the latter part of the spring of 1837, almost every half-mile square in Platte county was claimed and settled. Those who resided in the counties contiguous having the advantage, obtained the choice locations.

Industry, characteristic of the pioneer husbandman, was visible in all parts of the country. These pioneers were busily engaged in erecting cabins to shelter their families, and clearing and fencing land for cultivation to produce subsistence; consequently they knew but little of each other out of their immediate neighborhoods. They had no broils or contentions, and every man's neighbor was his brother whether he was of kin or not. Log rollings and cabin raisings were their only gatherings until they had made their families comfortable and matured their crops. Then they could afford to ride around, as was said, and see who had settled in other portions of the country and what had been going on while they were at home. The latch-string was always hanging out to welcome the neighbor or him who, by chance, might be passing that way. They were a happy and contented community, envying "how wide the different land" (twice a splendid and a happy land).

Being a territory of Clay county, all the legal business (which was very little) was transacted at Liberty, the county-seat of Clay county, and only a few cases were reported from the territory. In 1838 they commenced to know more of each other, having extended the range of their acquaintances, and a few "J. P.'s," or Justices of the Peace, were appointed by the County-court of Clay county, and some few suits of forcible entry and detainer were instituted by men who imagined their claims were intruded upon by subsequent settlers.

When the county was first settled the Indians to whom the country originally belonged resided among them, and were subsisted by the Government until their emigration, a portion of them resided on what was called "Pottawatomie Prairie," some fifteen miles north of Platte city; some near the Agency Fort on Platte river, and another portion in the Todd settlement and opposite Fort Leavenworth. The station from which they received their rations was located opposite the Fort, on the land now owned by Abner Whiteley, but at that time was on the claim of Col. John Boulware. The station was called the "Issue House," and was a place of general resort.

The Indians removed in the summer of 1837, locating on their lands given in exchange for the Platte country. A portion of the Pottawatomies who had not previously emigrated from their old homes east, passed through our country in 1838 on their way to new homes on the Kansas river. West. The old "Issue House" was converted into a trading or mercantile establishment, and was occupied by David D. Moore, Merchant, and was one of the first mercantile establishments in the territory of Clay county, except one Indian trading post at what was called "Pensons Landing," afterwards occupied by Henry Underhill, and now known as Rioita.

The year of 1838 was the year for the election for State Senators, Representatives and County Officers, and, as usual, political parties, Democrats and Whigs, commenced to marshal their forces for the contest. Clay county proper being Whig, great anxiety was felt to know the political status of the new comers to the territory. David R. Atchison, James M. Hughes, and Jesse

Morin were selected as the Democratic candidates—three to be elected. The Whigs selected as their standard-bearers Col. William T. Wood (now Judge of the Lafayette Judicial Circuit) from Clay county proper, and David D. Moore from the territory, leaving one vacancy. The result was that Atchison, Hughes, and Morin were elected. The elections at that time came on the first Monday in August. At the same election James T. V. Thompson, from Clay county, and Cornelius Gilham, from the territory of Clinton county, were elected Senators. This was the first vote given after settling in the territory of Clay county. They then voted *en masse*. Each man came to the polls, and in an audible voice announced the names of the men for whom he voted, un-influenced only by argument publicly made by the candidates or their champions at the hustings. Voters judged for themselves of the qualifications of aspirants and of the policy they advocated.

After the election the parties were satisfied that all had been conducted honorably, and that those elected would faithfully discharge their duties. The Democrats generally were successful, and Platte county was called the "Tenth Legion" of the Democracy. The Legislature at that time convened on the third Monday in November.

The people of Clay and Clinton petitioned for the organization of two counties, and their petitions were granted by the organization of the counties of Platte and Buchanan, on the 31st day of December, 1838. The bill for the organization of the counties provided that each county should contain four hundred square miles and no more, which was the Constitutional minimum size of counties.

Having emerged from pupillage as a territory, Platte assumed the attitude of one of the sovereign counties of the state, and commenced business as such. Under the law it was the duty of the Governor of the State to appoint a Sheriff, and three County Clerks. James H. Owen was appointed Sheriff, and Michael Byrnes, Hugh McAfferty and John B. Collier were appointed Clerks. Platte and Buchanan were made by law a part of the Fifth Judicial Circuit. Hon. Austin A. King presiding, who held his first court at the Falls of Platte river, (the place designated by law for the holding of the first court) in the house rented of Michael D. Faylor, in the town of Martinsville, commencing on the 25th day of March, 1839. Jesse Morin, Clerk, James H. Owen, Sheriff, and William T. Wood, Circuit Attorney. It being the first court, very little business was transacted.

The first County-court was held at the same place by Judges Byrd, McCallery, and Collier, on the 11th day of March, 1839. Their first business was to appoint a Clerk, who was Hall L. Wilkerson, who was afterwards elected a member of the Legislature, and was finally killed at his residence on Bee creek, near the Weston road. The men who killed him were sent to the penitentiary and never returned. Their next business was to divide the county into municipal townships, resulting in the establishment of six townships—Carroll, Green, Preston, Pettis, Marshall and Lee. The townships of Carroll and Green were in Marshall, and subsequently Weston township was organized as a township, taken from Lee and Marshall.

Platte county being organized, the offices of the old Justices of the Peace expired, and an election was ordered by the County-court to be held in the respective townships, on the 23d of June, 1839, and that the law was that each municipal township should have four Justices of the Peace. The result was the election in Carroll township of Matthias Mastin, Daniel Clary, Dr. Isaac W. Gibson, and James Flannery; in Preston township, Peter Crockett, Archibald Hill, William Banta, and Henry D. Olin; in Pettis township, Josiah Higgins, Squire B. Thorpe, Andrew Campbell, William A. Fox, and Robert Stone; in Lee township, Charles Wells, Jeremiah H. Spratt, Robert Patton, and T. E. Jordan; in Marshall township, Milton J. Byram, Thomas J. Lovelady, John R. Bonds, and John P. Smith; in Green township, Henry Brooks, John C. Bywaters, Jacob Adamson, and James M. Fulkerson.

The boundaries of Platte county were as yet undefined. Matthew M. Hughes was appointed and commissioned to survey and mark out the boundaries of the county, which he did by commencing at a point at the high-water mark, on the old state line, opposite the mouth of the Kansas river, and running thence north and west for about fifty miles to a point running thence east to the Clinton county line, as to the line of the Missouri river, and four hundred sections of land. The survey of the county made prior to the Government surveys, the line of the county and the lines of the Government survey being run on different variations, do not agree, and all along the north-line men who own land, outside the line, have a portion of their land in Platte county, and a portion in Buchanan. Several attempts have been made to rectify this state of affairs, but neither Platte nor Buchanan can afford to be reduced, as it will reduce their territorial limits below that of a Constitutional county.

Immediately after settlement and prior to the Government survey, settlers were anxious to ascertain, as nearly as possible, what would be the lines of their claims, and surveyors were employed to determine the boundaries. Major James Brasfield, father of Judge John S. Brasfield, and Hon. Solomon L. Leonard, were frequently engaged, at the solicitation of the citizens, to run the lines and satisfy the anxious. It would be almost incredulous at this time to say they made no charge for their services. Strange claims were published corners on the line of Clay county, and running west, their surveys varied very little from the subsequent Government survey which was commenced in the spring of 1839 by Lisbon Applegate, Government surveyor. The work progressed rapidly, and the people were not long in suspense. Applegate was a resident of Clinton county, and a Missourian, and his work in a manner creditable to himself and the Government. He died a few years since, honored by all who knew him, and left a family honored and respected. He furnished to Platte county the field-notes now in the hands of the county surveyor, in all of which not one error has been discovered.

That the boundaries of Platte county were as yet undefined, each man knowing his own and his neighbor's rights under the pre-emption law, there was very little trouble or litigation. Sometimes a pettifogging lawyer (of whom there was but few in those days) would, for a small fee, commence a suit for forcible entry and detainer, but that was about the extent of litigation. They were indeed a happy and prosperous people, and each man attended to his own business exclusively. In the Platte Purchase they found at the Falls of Platte river, Zadok Martin, sometimes called "Zed," or "Uncle Zed." He had emigrated to that place from Clay county in the year 1828, under a permit and by request of the Government, for the purpose of keeping a ferry at the Falls of Platte river. His family consisted of himself and wife (who was a sister of old Judge Roland Brown), five sons—Green T., Franklin R., Gill, Hardin D., William and James B., and three daughters—Josephine, Milly and Elizabeth. He also owned several slaves. Martin was a man of many eccentricities, a bitter enemy and a warm friend, possessed of a good, uncalculated intellect, and very popular with the aborigines, or Indians, and the military officers at Fort Leavenworth, who spent many days of recreation with "Uncle Zed."

He built the first mill at the Falls of Platte river in the year 1839-40. The water-power at the Falls was, and is yet, considered a very valuable property. A party came in the year 1838 from Clay county with what they called a "Spanish grant." Martin, true to his nature, told them they could not nor "Spaniards" grant, or look through the rights of a compass in the Platte Purchase. They believed he meant what he said, and compromised, agreeing that if the claim was confirmed, he should pay them for the land instead of the Government. They were permitted to survey, and that was the end of a Spanish grant, and Martin entered his land under the pre-emption act of 1835.

Soon after settled business men came in search of favorable locations, and the Falls of Platte was selected by several. Martin was induced to lay out and sell lots to parties wishing to locate at that point. He called his town Martinsville, and several stores were opened by J. H. & S. Johnston, Adkins & White, Burnett & Behrens, George P. Morris, and Compton & Morin. Irvin and Hope opened a saddler's shop, and Michael D. Faylor built and opened a hotel. The physician was Dr. Frederick Marshall. They considered the locations only temporary, and when the county-seat was established Martinsville was abandoned, and its occupants, except Martin, settled in Platte city.

The location of the county-seat was made in the fall of 1839 by Samuel Hadley, of Clay county, Samuel D. Lucas, of Jackson county, and John H. Morehead, of Ray county, they having been appointed commissioners for that purpose in the bill organizing the counties of Platte and Buchanan. Immediately after the location was made the County Court proceeded to have the land laid out and disposed of at public sale. Solomon L. Leonard was the surveyor, and Stephen Johnston was the commissioner to sell and convey the lots. The first sale was in the spring or latter part of the winter of 1840. A square of three lots on Main street (lots number 10, 11, and 12 in

Block 25) was set apart for county buildings, and the contiguous lots sold at high prices, some selling for as high as \$500, \$600 and \$700. The proceeds of this and subsequent sales amounted to nearly twenty thousand dollars, more than sufficient to erect a Court House and Jail, which were built in the year 1840. Prior to that time the Courts were held in small, rented houses, and one term, the July Court of 1840, was held under an arbor of brush. By the fall term of court the Court House was completed at a cost of about \$15,000. It was commodious and ornamental, and answered every useful purpose, until destroyed by fire, on the night of the 16th of December, 1861, together with other buildings.

At the time the lots were surveyed a heavy and dense forest covered the land. Very soon, however, the forest disappeared, and commodious business houses and dwellings occupied its place. In less than a year there was a population of five hundred, with six dry goods stores, and all other business houses in proportion.

In Platte city the first newspaper was printed in the country. It was edited and printed by E. Sankston Wilkerson, and was called *The Platte Eagle*. It afterwards changed editors and was called *The Platte Argus*, and was edited by Allen McLane, subsequently *The Platte Argus* was edited by General J. W. Denver, who was a resident lawyer of the county until 1850, when he emigrated to California.

Platte city being the county-seat, the legal fraternity settled here in preference to other towns in the county, and among the resident lawyers of that day are recognized some of the most able jurists of the state. Those who stood at the head of the Platte county Bar, in Platte city, were John Wilson, James H. Baldwin, E. H. Norton and Peter H. Burnett. There were other prominent attorneys whose names will be mentioned subsequently.

Platte city continued to improve and prosper more than any other town in the county, except Weston, until 1861, her population increasing to about one thousand. Business men were all prosperous, merchants, mechanics and all others. The casualties from 1861 to the close of the rebellion reduced her population greatly, her houses having been burned and her business men robbed and compelled to leave.

After the war was over Platte city again commenced to improve, and is to-day, as she has been in the past, the second town in Platte county, Weston barely outnumbering her in population.

Platte city has two newspapers, *The Landmark*, edited and published by T. W. Park and C. J. Nesbitt, which was originally published at Weston before its consolidation with Platte, and the *Reveille*, established by Mr. Park, and who is the *Platte County Advocate*, edited by T. C. Thurston, which was formerly the *Platte County Democrat*, edited by Lycyrus Sheppard.

The Court House is one of the best in the state, built at a cost of \$120,000, and our citizens can to-day boast of one of the most prosperous and thriving towns in the state. The educational facilities here are excellent.

Daughters' College, then known as Platte city Female Academy, was founded by Prof. Hugh B. Todd, in October, 1857, who was succeeded by Prof. A. B. Jones in 1861, and by Prof. F. G. Gaylord in 1865, under whose administration it still continues one of the most flourishing and thorough educational seminaries in the state. The College buildings are situated one half mile south of Platte city, in the midst of a beautiful woodland campus, eleven acres in extent and unrivaled for beauty and healthfulness of location.

There is also a public school, with one hundred and twenty-five pupils, taught by Prof. John D. Brown and a full corps of assistants. It is in a highly prosperous condition, and fully equal to the public demands. The public school building is large, commodious, and ornamental, built at a cost of about \$12,000.

The next town in point of time after Martinsville was Jacksonville, laid off by Jacob Adamson, who came to Platte from Ray county. Being a Tennesseean and a devoted admirer of General Jackson, he insisted that Jacksonville must be the name of his town, but when a post-office was about to be established it was found that some other admirer of the hero of the Hermitage had his Jacksonville, and Adamson was compelled, very reluctantly, to change the name of his town, and he called it New Market, a name it has ever since borne.

It is situated on Bee creek, twelve miles north of Platte city, and ten miles northeast of Weston, and three miles south of the line dividing the counties of Platte and Buchanan. It is in the midst of a country unsurpassed in fertility of soil by this or any other county, and being surrounded by the best population, it has always been a first-class business place. The community is moral and intelligent, and one of the most religious denominations are well attended and liberally supported, and schools of a good class are maintained. Her population is about two hundred.

Ridgely was early laid out by Christopher Black, Preston Akers, Samuel Phillips, and Theodorick Fitzgerald, but prior to the establishment of Ridgely as a town site, and being the first settler his claim was respected, and he commenced to lay out a town and sell lots at a low price in order to give his town a start. Sashel Fugitt was the first settler after Moore, and he built a log house for the purpose of keeping a hotel. Soon after business houses were built by men from all parts of the country. Thornburg & Lucas, from Indiana, built the first store-house in Weston, and the logs from which it was built were taken from a heavy cottonwood bottom which then stood where the main channel of the Missouri river now runs.

In the winter of 1837-8 Weston had become the centre of attraction for business men. Many of the leading business and commercial men of upper Missouri had settled there, and by July, 1838, Weston could boast of being the most prosperous and populous city on the Missouri river. The surrounding country kept pace with the town, and in a few years she was a city, not in name but in fact. Her trading men, mechanics and all, were enterprising and industrious, purchasing and shipping by the river all kinds of produce brought to market.

Many citizens being from the hemp-growing regions of other states, very early turned their attention to its cultivation, and in a few years Platte became the first hemp-growing county in the state. Large quantities were shipped from Parkville and Latah, but notwithstanding the statistics of Weston showed a larger shipment than any other shipping point on the Missouri river, Lexington, in Licking county, was her competitor, but was some tons short. In a few years the enterprise of the business men of Weston had increased her population to about three thousand, and it was with difficulty, owing to her immense traffic, that wagons could pass each other on the streets. She had a large trade from Fort Leavenworth and the Indian country opposite—the Kickapoos, Delaware, and other tribes, and her liberal traders directed to Weston some of the outgoing business to Santa Fe.

Among the first "outfits" to Salt Lake city started from Weston, and among the first men who started in that trade were the celebrated Ben Holladay, Theo. F. Warner, Abel Gilbert, C. A. Perry, and others of note. Holladay also conceived the idea and started the first "Pony Express," and afterwards the "Overland Mail Route" to California. He married a daughter of Smith Calvert, Esq., of this county, prior to engaging in his enterprises on the Plains. The original proprietor (Moore) of Weston sold out his interest to a company, and the land was entered under an act of Congress for the benefit of the inhabitants.

She maintained her rank as the largest and most populous town in the state except St. Louis up to 1858, when she was brought in competition with Leavenworth and St. Joseph, since which time, like all other towns similarly situated, a decline is visible. However, it is still a place occupied by many first-class business men doing a thriving business. Her churches and schools are an honor to the town, having Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian and Christian churches built in fine style, and her school-houses, for both white and colored children, are commodious and well conducted. Weston also has a Court of Common Pleas, of which

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war of 1812, and possessed all those qualities which go to make up a representative man. He achieved deserved distinction in the battles fought, by the command of his relative, Col. Richard M. Johnson, under whom he served.

This year was rather the year of jubilee with the people, a Land Office having been established at Plattsburg at which they could enter and pay for their lands and obtain their titles, which they did very promptly. There were very few contests among the settlers, most of the conflicting claims being compromised at home. In 1840 the County Court ordered the sale of the sixteenth sections, and the settlers were allowed in all instances to buy their quarter section at the Government minimum price. One citizen was not disposed to bid against another for his land, because he was unfortunately located on a sixteenth section. But for that spirit of liberality and justice most of the sixteenth sections could have been sold for quadruple the prices paid. This sale was an additional evidence of the liberality and honesty of the early pioneers of Platte.

While speaking of the sale and purchase of lands it may be proper to remark that about the time the Land Office was established at Plattsburg, the selection of Missouri's quota of land for educational purposes was ordered to be made, and Solomon L. Leonard was appointed in this land district to make the selection and cause to be set apart lands in Platte and other counties of the Platte Purchase. This was bitterly opposed by the land officers at Plattsburg, and a warm controversy ensued, Leonard, who was a good lawyer, contending that the State had the right to select, and the officers, Messrs. Birch and Samuel, contending that they were the only agents authorized to give titles to the lands. Leonard prevailed, and many tracts of land were held from sale at Plattsburg, and entered at a State established at Savannah in Andrew county, State Legislature having granted to settlers the same pre-emption rights under the States that they could have under the general government. Having entered and paid for the lands, (most of the settlers having the money) they became land-holders, and immigrants began to come in to purchase. Many of the first settlers sold out to the new comers and emigrated to the western counties of Andrew, Nodaway, Holt and Atchison. The towns increased in population, as did also the county, and this became the second county in the State in population, and so continued until the rich prairie counties attracted emigration with their six hundred to eight hundred sections, Platte county only containing four hundred.

Prosperity prevailed in 1843. The farmer was well rewarded for his labor, and merchants and mechanics did an active and profitable business.

1844 was a very rainy season, the streams overflowing their banks and doing much damage to the crops on the bottom lands, notwithstanding which an abundance for home consumption was produced and a surplus for shipment.

This was the year for our State election, and it is memorable as the year of what was called the "Hard" and "Soft" campaign, and Platte county having obtained the title of the Tenth Legion of the Democracy, the contest here was very exciting. The Whigs declining to run candidates of their own, supported independent candidates taken from the Democratic party. The result was that the "Hards" succeeded, and Bela M. Hughes and Achilles Jasper were chosen representatives. Hughes was the son of Gen. Andrew S. Hughes and nephew of Governor Metcalf of Kentucky. He was a lawyer and a young man of promise, which has since been verified. He now resides in Denver, Colorado, and stands at the head of his profession in that city.

Capt. Jasper was elected one of the officers of the State Land Office at Savannah, and subsequently moved to Texas and died. He was a farmer, and naturally a very shrewd man, he was a good legislator and made this county an excellent representative. James Kuykendall was elected Sheriff and made a fine officer.

Having received from the partial drawback on account of the excessive rains and overflows of 1844, the close of 1845 found the county with an abundance of supplies for consumption and a large surplus for shipment.

Our government having declared war against Mexico in 1846, and Fort Leavenworth being the outfitting point for troops to New Mexico, a great demand was created for the means of transportation, and there was a ready sale at fair prices for the surplus which had been accumulating for years. Wagons, horses, mules, oxen, and meats and breadstuffs found a ready market, and business men were busily engaged in furnishing supplies. Gallant young men had their minds turned in the direction of Mexico, and were anxiously awaiting an opportunity to volunteer in the service of their country. This opportunity was soon offered.

Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan, then of Clay county, raised and organized the first regiment of volunteers for the New Mexican service, and left Fort Leavenworth with Col. Kearney, of the regular army, in command, in June, 1846. A company from Platte, mostly from the neighborhood of Weston, under the command of Capt. William S. Murphy, joined Col. Doniphan's command. Col. Sterling Price, then a member of Congress, resigned to take part in the war. His regiment was immediately raised and assembled at Fort Leavenworth, the latter part of July. Col. Price also had attached to his command a separate battalion under the immediate command of Lieutenant-Colonel David Wilcox. Platte county also furnished a company for the command of Col. Price, commanded by Jesse Morin, Captain; James H. Owen, 1st Lieutenant; Isaac W. Gibson, 2d Lieutenant, and John Larkin, 3d Lieutenant, —rank and file hundred and fifteen men, from various parts of the county. The advance of Col. Price's command, under Captains Jesse Morin and Napoleon Giddings, left Fort Leavenworth on the 20th of August.

Gen. J. W. Denver, then a citizen of Platte county, after the departure of the commands of Cols. Doniphan and Price organized a company (mostly from Platte), and as Captain went with it to Old Mexico. Many of Platte county's citizens not being able to attach themselves to a company from their own county, on account of the small number, full, joined other commands. Arnold Chance and many others were among the number. Platte county has never been behind when her country demanded the services of her gallant sons. To mention all the state, county, and township officers in detail, with even a short biographical sketch, would swell this narrative to an unreasonable length; consequently we propose to give the names only of the most of them, with this general truthful remark, that Platte county, with very few exceptions, has been represented in the persons of her Legislative, Judicial, and Ministerial officers, by men of ability and honesty.

CIRCUIT COURT JUDGES.

Austin A. King, who has already been mentioned, was the first Judge. In the year 1840, the Legislature created other judicial circuits, making the Platte county the Twelfth Circuit. David R. Atchison was appointed Judge by the Governor, and continued to discharge the duties of the office with marked ability until October, 1845, when he was appointed by Governor Thomas Reynolds a United States Senator to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Dr. Lewis F. Linn. Henderson Young was appointed to fill the vacancy of Atchison, and continued to act giving general satisfaction, until the 1st of May, 1845, when he also resigned. Solomon L. Leonard was appointed to fill the vacancy and continued to discharge his duties with great ability until June, 1851.

The Legislature and people having changed the mode from an appointed judiciary to an elective one, William R. Almond was elected Judge, and after performing the duties of the office until 1852, resigned, and E. H. Norton became his successor. Norton retained the office until 1860, when becoming a candidate for Congress, he resigned.

Silas Woodson succeeded Norton, and tried to do his duty, but such was the anarchy at the commencement of the rebellion, little business could be done. Judge William Herren became his successor, and held a few courts, when the Legislature changed the circuit and it became attached to a circuit composed of the counties of Platte, Clay, Clinton, and Ray. Judge William Herren was Judge for a time, but Philander Lucas soon became his successor. George W. Dunn, our present most excellent and very able Judge, was elected to succeed Lucas, and now presides with unsurpassed dignity, ability and fairness.

COUNTY COURT JUDGES.

We have already mentioned the names of the first County Court Judges, Bird, McCafferty, and Collier. Their successors have been Daniel P. Lewis; James Kuykendall; Matthew M. Hughes; H. B. Mayo; John Freeland; James H. Layton; James R. Martin; Thompson Ward; William D. Barnett; Edward P. Duncan; Peter Rogers; Lewis Wood; John Broadhurst; Preston Dunlap; Samuel M. Hays; Noah Beery; A. G. Brown; Jacob Hamm; Benj. R. Morton; Thomas H. Talbot; Henry M. Allen; John S. Brasfield; Wm. E. Cunningham; Geo. W. Noland; and the present Judge, James S. Owen.

* Dr. Ware S. May, one of Platte county's most prominent physicians, and a graduate of Transylvania Medical College, at Lexington, Kentucky, was appointed by Col. Price, Surgeon of his regiment, and after performing his duties until the return of the troops with great labor and medical skill, returned with the discharged portion of Col. Price's command, and soon after unfortunately for his country and the medical profession, he died, honored and respected by all who knew him. He was the father of Dr. Ben. L. May, now a respected fellow-citizen.

CIRCUIT CLERKS.

Jesse Morin; Ira Norris; Wm. C. Remington; Geo. W. Belt; F. M. Tuffs; Richard L. Walker, (present Clerk).

COUNTY CLERKS.

Hall L. Wilkerson; James H. Johnston; Daniel P. Lewis; Peyton R. Waggener; Daniel P. Lewis; Thos. W. Park; James H. Chinn; (one D. W. Moore, held the office for a while).

PROBATE COURT.

Up to March, 1849, the County court had Probate Jurisdiction, when, by Act of the Legislature, the system was changed and a Probate Court established. James Kuykendall was first Judge; James G. Spratt, second; Robert P. Clark, third; H. Clay Cockrell, fourth; Samuel A. Gilbert, fifth; William P. Chiles, sixth and present Judge.

REPRESENTATIVES IN THE SENATE.

James T. V. Thompson, of Clay county.
Capt. Andrew Johnson, of Platte " "
Col. Lewis Barnes, " "
Dr. A. M. Robinson, " "
Jesse Morin, " "
John Doniphan, " "
George S. Park, " "
James H. Birch, Jun'r., of Clinton " "
Capt. Thomas McCarty, " Clay " "
John R. Keller, " "
R. P. C. Wilson, " "
present Senator.

REPRESENTATIVES IN THE LOWER HOUSE.

Dr. David R. Holt; Col. D. A. Sutton; Bela M. Hughes; Achilles Jasper; Bethel Allen; John A. White; Thompson Ward; James B. Martin; Hall L. Wilkerson; Dr. M. Robinson; D. D. James; E. P. Duncan; C. A. Perry; L. M. Lawson; Geo. W. Morris; John E. Alden; Thos. Stone; John W. Jack; John W. Forbes; John Wilson; John Doniphan; H. J. Wolf; R. D. Johnston; Addison Burge; Thos. Quinn; Wm. H. Ballard; R. P. C. Wilson; James Adkins; Wm. C. Wells.

SHERIFFS.

James H. Owen; Mosby N. Owen; Wm. H. Spratt; W. T. Woods; Geo. W. Belt; James Kuykendall; Lycurgus Sheppard; Wm. K. Bryant; N. P. Ogden; E. McDuff; W. H. Hunt, present Sheriff.

The first courts were attended by a bar which would compare favorably with that of any portion of the state. They were A. W. Doniphan; Peter H. Burnett; Wm. T. Wood; Russell Hicks; Amos Reese; W. B. Almond; John Gordon; John Wilson; Robert Ewing; Solomon L. Leonard; and others of equal note.

Soon after the first courts many prominent lawyers came to Platte and became resident practitioners, to wit: James S. Thomas; Isaac N. Jones; William Claude Jones; A. E. Cannon; G. A. Evert; Columbia Lancaster; Nathaniel Burrows; Christopher C. Brown; Rash Martin; James G. Spratt; S. P. S. McCarty; James Hendley; Thomas Hendley; W. B. Smith; R. P. Clark; James H. Baldwin; Amos Reese; A. Sidney Tebb; P. T. Abel; J. W. Ross; John Doniphan; J. N. Burnes; Genl. B. F. Stringfellow; L. D. Bird; L. M. Lawson; and those eminent lawyers now residing in Platte city, viz: J. E. Merriman; James E. Pitt; W. M. Paxton; W. C. Baker; Wm. Forman; Norton B. Anderson; John L. Carmack, County Attorney; R. P. C. Wilson; W. C. Wattle; and S. C. Woodson. And residing in Weston: James Colburn; John T. Reynolds and James J. Hitt. In Parkville: F. M. McDonald. And in Waldron: H. T. Pittilo.

In the early part of the year 1854 the territories of Kansas and Nebraska were organized, and many citizens emigrated thither, which lessened the population, but the products were not diminished, and the country maintained its former prosperity up to the year 1861, when the war of rebellion commenced.

We pass over the events of the war, leaving them for others to chronicle. They are fresh in the minds of all our readers and we do not wish to harass their minds with unpleasant thoughts.

Since the close of the war peace and prosperity have prevailed, and the people have devoted their time and attention to improving their farms and inaugurating new industries. In addition to the reputation as an agricultural county, it is fast achieving a celebrity for stock raising. Among the prominent breeders of thoroughbred short-horns we mention Capt. Wm. Chestnut, A. D. Blythe, R. F. Duncan, James C. Alderson, Thos. Stone, John W. Jack, Clinton Cockrell, J. W. McAdoo, David Stallard, W. G. Cox, Elliott J. Miller, Philip Robertson, Thomas Cockrell, B. F. Risk, Sidney Risk, Simpson Park, Jefferson J. Park, M. C. Park, James W. Hardesty, Robert Hardesty, James Adkins, Dr. A. T. Guthrie, E. Dillingham, Oliver Swaney, William Tatum and W. J. Miller.

We close this history of Platte county with the passing remark that much of it has necessarily been written from memory. If we have omitted much that should have been written it has been unintentional.

Every one that claims Platte county for his birth-place, or abode, may speak with honest pride of the progress it has made from the time of its organization till now, not only in the rapid growth of population, and in the development of its great resources, but in everything that pertains to the highest civilization. It starts the imagination to think what the people of this county may become in a few years, if they accord the great improvements already made in agriculture and mechanics, and keep pace with those that may be developed in the future.

The county affords as good a field to work upon, as was ever opened to the industry of man. It possesses a delightful climate, and a soil of unbounded fertility; everything, in short, to make the people great, prosperous and happy.

It is the fervent wish of every friend of his county, that it may still move onward and upward with the energy which freedom alone can inspire, aided by the highest science in making the most of its natural advantages, so that ere many years, the people of Platte county may attain that noble position that meets the highest hopes of the human race.

We append a description of the county prepared by a committee of the Congress of Patrons of Husbandry, which is in all respects, truthful, succinct, and in no wise over-wrought:

PLATTE COUNTY.

is the most southerly of the six counties of Northwest Missouri, known as the "Platte Purchase." It is bounded on the north by Buchanan county, of which the city of St. Joseph, with a population of forty thousand inhabitants, is the chief commercial town; and on the east by the counties of Clinton and Clay; while on the west and south it has for boundary the Missouri river. It lies inside the triangle formed by the Missouri river, where it is deflected from its southern course and flows easterly. Therefore its entire western and southern boundaries are swept by this noble stream.

By virtue of its geographical location, the character of its soil, which in the bottom is entirely alluvial and in the uplands the richest marl underlaid by a clayey formation, by its favorable topography and its climate, it is justly known as the "Garden of Missouri."

GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION.

Platte county is nearly immediate between Arkansas on the south and Iowa on the north, and lies between those parallels of latitude which constitute the greatest route of travel from East to West. It is in fact the most delightful halting-place on our international highway. By reference to the map, it will be observed that the belt between the 38th and 42d degrees of North latitude, tracing it from the Atlantic to the Pacific, embraces within its limits more wealth, more population, more enterprise and more large cities and towns than any other corresponding geographical division of the American continent. Along this highway flows the emigration of the whole country, reaching the great Platte Purchase, must find the centre to which it gravitates.

CLIMATE.

Occupying the intermediate geographical position north and south that it does, Platte county naturally enjoys the equal climate peculiar to its location. It is exempt from the rigor of Iowa and Nebraska winters which make agricultural pursuits unremunerative and extremely uncertain. It likewise experiences none of the parching suns and winds of the less favored States South. We are therefore exempt in a remarkable degree from the epidemic diseases that prevail in the extremes of climate, and no equal area on the habitable globe can truthfully be said to be more healthful. Such a consideration should have no little weight with those who are seeking homes and fortunes in the Great West.

SOIL.

The soil of Platte county is peculiarly adapted to the growth of the cereals and grasses. Its depth and durability of soil are well nigh unlimited, and cannot

become exhausted or barren for hundreds of years to come. The extensive bottom lands of the Missouri and Platte rivers, it is safe to say, produce more corn per acre than can be produced on any other equal area on the globe. The uplands and prairies are scarcely inferior in their adaptability to the growth of wheat, oats, barley and rye. All the nutritious grasses flourish and do well all the year around, and especially is the blue grass as much at home here as in the famous Blue Grass region of Kentucky. It readily usurps the place of our native grasses and furnishes excellent grazing even during the winter months.

We believe that with equal care and attention our blue grass will not only rival that in Kentucky, but will excel it in the luxuriance of its growth. Timothly yields throughout the country not less than two tons of hay per acre. Our soil appears to be the native home of the clover. Under the most unfavorable circumstances its yield is wonderful. Millet, Hungarian, orchard grass and "red top," as well as all other varieties, flourish finely. In a brief word, Platte county defies competition in respect to all the desirable grasses.

FRUIT.

All kinds of fruits peculiar to the climate flourish without a rival. In fact, fruit growing is rapidly becoming one of the chief industries of the county. The apple crop never fails. And the perfection this fruit has attained in Platte county has fully demonstrated in the year 1872, when our apples successfully competed with the far-famed California fruit region, and were awarded the first premium at the California State Fair for the same year. Not only are all the standard varieties of this fruit successfully cultivated, but many new varieties already world-renowned, have had their origin in this county.

Peaches, being less hardy, do not thrive so well, but still they are a successful crop under ordinary circumstances, and attain a remarkable size and rare flavor.

Grape raising is destined at no distant day to become one of our principal industries and one of our best paying crops. Quite a goodly number of vineyards are already noted, and their profits are encouraging. All the varieties do well, but the Concord appears to be the most hardy and prolific. All the native fruits grow spontaneously, and our nut-bearing trees comprise all those that are peculiar to our latitude.

Platte county has a diversity of timber and prairie, timber predominating largely. We have here in their stunted development almost all the varieties of white oak, burr oak, pine oak, hickory, maple, lynn or basswood, hackberry, pecan, sycamore and the finest walnuts on the continent. Of the latter thousands of feet are annually exported to Eastern markets and manufactured into an endless variety of furniture and shipped back for us for sale. In a word, as regards our timber for purposes of manufacture we defy the world to successfully compete with us.

BUILDING STONES.

The principal of our building-stones is the limestone and sandstone, extensive quarries of which are almost everywhere accessible.

CATTLE AND SHEEP.

Our extensive pastures make this a county peculiarly well adapted to the raising of cattle and sheep. Especially is this capacity being raised almost unlimited, and from this source is derived a great part of the wealth of the county. Our breeds of cattle, horses, sheep and hogs, are yearly being improved, until we already enjoy a reputation for such stock equal to the older counties of Kentucky, Ohio and Illinois. Large numbers of cattle are annually fattened on our extensive pastures and shipped to the eastern markets.

HEMP.

Formerly Platte county was the greatest hemp growing county in the State, and according to the census of the United States and its capacities bearing thereon for the year 1860, it produced more hemp than any other equal area on the globe.

WATER POWER.

This county is highly favored with water courses, furnishing an unlimited amount of water power and superficial drainage. Little Platte river flows almost directly through the centre of the county from north to south, furnishing an absolutely unlimited water power for purposes of manufacture.

No county in the world offers better inducements to the employment of capital in manufactures. To those who desire to engage in such enterprise the amplest encouragement and pecuniary inducements will be extended.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENTS.

At present, aside from flouring mills at Weston, Platte City, Waldron, Parkville, Iatan and on Bee creek and a pork packing establishment and furniture factory at Weston, there are no extensive manufacturing establishments in the county. We believe that there are open and inviting to the employment of capital in this direction. The falls of Platte river, at Platte City, is without question naturally the most desirable site for manufacturing establishments in the State of Missouri. The water power is inexhaustible and sufficient to supply large quantities of machinery. Especially would a woolen manufactory and a manufactory of agricultural implements be vastly profitable and meet with strong encouragement from the people. Likewise, would an establishment for the canning of fruits and vegetables be highly remunerative to those who would engage in such an enterprise. A pork packing establishment would be a mine of wealth to those embarking in it, and would be backed by the capital of the county.

RAILROADS.

The Kansas City, St. Joseph, and Council Bluffs railroad runs along the entire southern and western boundaries of the county, passing through the towns of Parkville, Waldron, Farley, East Leavenworth, Weston, Iatan and Shivelton, connecting those towns with Kansas City, Leavenworth, Atchison and St. Joseph. The Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific railroad bisects the county from the northeast to the southwest, passing through the towns of Edgerton, near Ridgely, Camden Point and Platte City. The Atchison Branch of the same road runs east and west through the northern part of the county, passing through the flourishing village of New Market and connecting with the main line at Edgerton Junction. The projected Parkville and Grand River railroad, yet in an incipient condition, will at no distant day be completed, the road bed being already graded, and will furnish ample facilities for transportation for all the eastern part of the county.

THE POPULATION.

According to the census of 1870, the population of the county was about 18,000. The population is cosmopolitan, being made up of emigrants from every State and foreign government. The bulk of the population, however, originally emigrated from Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee. Several flourishing German settlements are notable features, and have added materially to the wealth of the county.

SOCIAL ADVANTAGES.

Our society is in all respects equal to that of any county in the State. Nearly every religious denomination boasts its churches, which are well sustained. Public schools flourish in every school district in the county.

There are four banking establishments—two at Platte City—the Farmers' Savings Association, and the banking house of Cockrell & Co., and two at Weston—the Weston Savings Bank and the banking house of Messrs. Bailey & Bro.

PRICES OF LANDS.

Many of our largest land owners are desirous of selling their surplus lands, and to the thrifty immigrant they will be sure to sell at a low price ranging from \$10 to \$35 an acre, depending upon location and improvement. The industrious farmer can actually pay for his lands from the products thereof in from three to five years; therefore we offer unparalleled inducements to this class.

MARKETS.

Aside from the Chicago and St. Louis markets, with which we are directly connected by rail, we have also the ready markets of Kansas City on our southern and Leavenworth and Atchison on our western and St. Joseph on our northern boundaries. The markets of these cities furnish a ready sale for everything grown in our county, and besides these markets and the railroad lines running through the county, we have within easy access the Atlantic and Pacific, Central Branch, Atchison & Nebraska, Leavenworth, Narrow Gauge, Kansas Pacific, St. Louis, Kansas City & Northern, Hannibal & St. Joseph and the St. Joseph and St. Louis railroads so near our doors that the whistles of their locomotives almost reach our ears.

In conclusion we can only say to the immigrant that no county in Missouri boasts a better soil, more healthful climate, more favorable society, more accessible markets and more natural advantages than Platte county.

And especially would we cordially invite those desiring to engage in manufactures to examine our natural facilities, convinced that they will then be anxious to avail themselves of the opportunity and the favorable condition for investing capital in enterprises that will meet with ample pecuniary rewards, as we are to have them come.