

STONE IS LAID.

Corner Block of the Court House in Place.

THE CEREMONIES TODAY.

The Procession and Its Composition.

The Exercises in Court House Square.

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Music and Other Features of the Occasion.

In the presence of an assemblage as distinguished in all that composed it as has ever gathered on a notable occasion in Rock Island county's history, the solemn, significant historical act of the laying of the corner stone of the new court house was performed this afternoon.

Nature put on her most pleasing aspect and contributed her kindest offices to those who had in charge the day's demonstration by providing one of autumn's balmy days in the country's honor.



E. D. SWEENEY.

county in times when even the court house now to be abandoned was hardly considered possible—patriarchs whose very lives are history and whose existence has contributed to the transition of what is now Rock Island county from the crude, untamed state of three-quarters of a century ago to its present condition of civilization and enlightenment.

While there was a good attendance from all parts of the county, the excursion that came in from Andalusia was the largest and most creditable. It was worked up by Supervisor J. G. Britton, Ira Buffum and Charles Hayes, of Andalusia, and Supervisor William Edgington, of Buffalo Prairie.

Among others who came to the city were "Uncle" Lewis Wilson, of Rural, who served on the first board of supervisors of Rock Island county in 1857, and is today the only surviving member of that distinguished body.

John S. Kistler, W. H. Kistler and D. P. Kistler, of Buffalo Prairie; Dr. J. A. Reiter, of Joslin; J. M. Johnston and T. A. Johnston, of Reynolds; James Taylor, of Taylor Ridge; John Pence, of Buffalo Prairie; James Venable and Jacob H. Carpenter, of Edgington, and John Johnson, of Canoe Creek.

THE PROCESSION.

The procession, which was the inaugural feature of the ceremonies, formed on Third avenue and Fifteenth street at 1 o'clock and at 1:30 the command "forward march" was given by Chief Marshal E. H. Bowman, the column as it advanced being composed as follows:

- Marshal Bowman and Clerks and Aids, Moline Police and Patrol, Moline Light Guard Band, Naval Reserves, Moline, Company F, Moline, Fire Department, Moline, Moline Mayor and City Officers in Carriages, Moline Attorneys in Carriages, City Settlers, Moline, in Carriages, Rock Island Mayor and Council in Carriage, County Officers in Carriages, Board of Supervisors in Carriages, Old Settlers' Association Officers and Citizens in Carriages, Rock Island Attorneys in Carriages, Mayor's Band, Rock Island Police Department, Stone Cutters' Union, Rock Island, Rock Island Mill Carriers, Augustana College Faculty and Students, Shiloh Command, U. V. U. Annapolis's Citizens and Two Bands.

The line of march was as previously announced: East on Third avenue to Twentieth street, thence north to Second, west to Twelfth street, south to Third avenue, east to Fifteenth street, north to the platform in the court house grounds. All along the route of the procession the business houses were gaily decorated and a great number of people turned out to view the spectacle.

THE EXERCISES.

The Program, Speeches and Contents of the Box.

In the grounds and on the foundation for the new building had been erected a temporary stand under cover and with seating capacity for those conducting the ceremonies, the speakers and the guests of honor. The stand had been prettily decorated with flags and bunting, while adding to the appropriate appearance were bronze busts of Lincoln and Douglas, and lithographs or paintings of Washington, Lincoln, Grant, Sheridan and Black Hawk.

The corner stone was elevated over the portion of the foundation on which it was to rest by means of a derrick. The stone as described heretofore was in dimensions five feet long by two feet wide and one foot, eight inches deep. The only inscription was, "1895," plainly chiseled on the face.

The exercises were opened at 2:30, Fred Osborn presiding, J. G. Blythe, president of the Rock Island County Pioneers' society, being master of ceremonies. The program opened with music by Biener's band and prayer was offered by Rev. A. Harper, of Port Byron, followed by the rendition of "The Star Spangled Banner" by the Svea Male choir.

THE ORATION.

E. D. Sweeney Honored With the Delivery of the Chief Address.

The oration of the day was then delivered by E. D. Sweeney. "We celebrate today," said Mr. Sweeney, "the laying of the corner-stone for the new court house, and the occasion is an event which awakens in us emotions of the deepest interest. While it is true that this vast assemblage of citizens are of diverse nationalities, of varied political faith, and are of many religious beliefs, we all stand before this mute block of granite as before the throne of the Eternal, on equal footing—no special privilege of nobility or preference places one before the other. The significance of this great gathering is a tribute of respect to the grand temple of justice planned to rise from this corner-stone and an acknowledgment of homage to the fair Goddess of Justice, who with sightless eyes and extended hand under the law holds the balances in which causes between man and man are weighed without partiality or favor, and determined. The law-abiding people of this great county, as by one common impulse from the various pursuits of life, the farmers from their fields, the merchants from their counters, the mechanics from their shops, the bankers from their desks and the humblest toilers from their work, have come to witness the simple act of the laying of this stone. It must be that in this there is much that ought to challenge our thoughtful consideration and engage our earnest contemplation for the hour which we are permitted to spend together on this event. It is the transition moment from the old to the new; it is passing a great mile stone in the career of our county. More than fifty years of history is about to close its record today and a new book presents itself in which we are to begin to record events, yet in the bosom of the future, to be born each day and each month in the coming years. The thought which occupies every one here assembled must be in reference to the old court house, its associations of lawyers and judges, of lawsuits, of law and its administration and of officers, and this thought is the theme to which I address myself for the few minutes allotted to me."

Mr. Sweeney thereupon spoke at some length of lawyers in general

and their profession, and of law and its many definitions. And then entered into a discussion of the early beginnings of Rock Island county. He said the county of Rock Island was organized on the 8th day of July, 1833, it having been formerly a part of Jo Davies county, and the first term of the circuit court was held at the house of John Barrell, beginning on the 28th day of April, 1834. This house stood on the banks of the Sylvan waters, just west of the Cable residence, and was chosen by the county commissioners as the temporary place of holding the court and the village was called Farnamsburg. In this house was the court until abandoned at the September term, 1837, in all six terms of court. At each of these terms there was a grand jury selected and chosen, and in looking over the list which compose these grand juries, he spoke of Benjamin Goble, who laid the corner-stone today, as a grand juror at three of those terms; of Michael Hartzell as serving two terms, and of John Tindall and Charles Titterton as also serving, all these four being present, and of William Bell, now at Toledo, O., as being a grand juror at the April term, 1837. The rest who bore the illustrious names which composed these grand juries have gone to join the silent majority.

Turning to the subject of the court house, Mr. Sweeney said: "In the month of June in the year 1835, in pursuance of an act of the legislature, three commissioners, William Bennett, of Jo Davies county, Peter Butler, of Warren county, and John G. Sandborn, of Knox county, located on the northwest quarter of section 35, township 18, 2 west, the permanent seat of justice of Rock Island county, and in the year 1837 the new court house and which is now the old

but one struggling village at that time on the site of Rock Island and here and there a settler throughout the county, now there are six incorporated towns and villages full of activity and business and two large commercial cities teeming with industry, thrift, and enterprise, growing in importance and multiplying in wealth. Then the taxable property of the county was a few hundred dollars; now it is over eight million. He traced the history of the courts, their expansion and development to the present time.

Notable Criminal Proceedings.

He said: "The most remarkable criminal proceedings that ever occurred within the walls of the old court house, and which is one of the familiar reminiscences of the early settlers, was the trial of the murderers of Col. George Davenport. This trial was not remarkable so much on account of the principles of law involved in the case as it was the assertion of the law in a peaceable, quiet and orderly manner, against the three desperate men who cruelly took the life of their victim, whom they were attempting to rob. While the condemnation of these men was a foregone conclusion from the first, their arraignment, trial and sentence, and final execution on the 29th day of October, 1845, were all thrilling scenes, but furnish indisputable arguments in favor of the wisdom of allowing the law to take its course. In the sentence of the court the body of John Long, one of the defendants in the Davenport case, was given to Dr. Patrick Gregg, then the eminent physician of the county, who articulated the skeleton, which has been used twice in the old court house by lawyers in suits involving questions of surgery, and is now doing service in the High school in the study of anatomy. While it is true

Drury likewise received extended mention. Judge Arthur A. Smith, who first held court here in '79 and who resigned in the fall of 1894, and the present judges, Judge George W. Pleasants, Judge John S. Glenn and Judge Hiram Bigelow, were referred to in complimentary language.

Other County Officers.

The orator took up in review the various other county offices and their incumbents from time to time. Of the clerks of the circuit court, Joseph Conway was the first. He held the office until 1849, when he was succeeded by Frazier Wilson. Quincy McNeil succeeded the major; then came Dr. E. H. Bowman, Samuel P. Hodges, George Gould, Levi P. Hanson, E. H. Bowman, Jr., and George W. Gamble. Twenty-one different men have held the office of sheriff, those who are still living being: David Hawes, who served in 1861; Charles A. McLaughlin in 1863; William Payne in 1871; J. L. Perkins in 1877, succeeded by J. F. Ankrum, John M. Reticker, T. S. Silvis, C. D. Gordon and F. C. Hemenway. Fifteen different lawyers have served as prosecuting attorneys, Thomas Ford being the first. But four of the list now survive: E. E. Parmenter, W. J. Entriken, M. M. Sturgeon and C. J. Searle, the present official. Of the county clerks, Joseph Coniel, still here, is the oldest, while others holding the office were: Maj. J. M. Beardsley, J. V. Cook, R. A. Donaldson and H. Kohler. Of the ex-county judges, there are but two living, Capt. T. J. Robinson, who acted with John W. Spencer as judge in 1849, and J. M. Gould, who was county judge in 1854-57. The present incumbent, Judge Lucian Adams, was fittingly complimented. There have been 17 different men who have held the office of county treasurer. Dr. Patrick Gregg held

propositions for the building of the same. These resolutions were delivered to Mr. Fitzpatrick, who introduced them in the board, then in session and they were adopted. In the meantime Charles J. Searle, our young and vigorous state attorney, with his accustomed zeal and enthusiasm, took hold of the work and put the report of the committee in shape, which was presented at the next session of the board and adopted, and the cause of the new court house was squarely before the people. The press which has always been a great factor in the pushing forward of the welfare of the county in all channels, took hold and advocated the enterprise, the people with unanimity seconded the move and the board of supervisors pushed on until the building of the new court house became a fixed fact. C. J. Larkin was given the contract, with S. J. Collins as superintendent, who, with Rock Island mechanics to do the work, present to us today a foundation, apparently strong and massive enough to sustain the national capitol, from which will rise a building worthy of our county and the times in which we live. The Parthenon of Athens, built by Phidias, has never in the world's history been paralleled for refinement of design and perfection of execution. In this Pericles poured forth his eloquence and Socrates taught philosophy and became the wonder of all ages and the glory of his own. The golden days of Roman splendor were when her emperors lavished their wealth upon the forums from which Cicero delivered his orations and reached the highest excellence in the use of the Latin tongue and became the model orator of all ages. The court houses of our country are the forums of the people and for the people, and it is fitting that they should be built and adorned as become the wealth of those who build and the uses to which they are dedicated. Standing in the presence of a glorious past inspired by the enthusiasm of the hour, we look out upon the future spanned by the bow of promise in which generations unborn will rise up to bless the men who built the new court house."

The Moline Light Guard band furnished instrumental music.

STATISTICAL REVIEW.

State's Attorney C. J. Searle's Interesting Address.

State's Attorney C. J. Searle delivered the statistical address. He spoke of feeling highly flattered at the privilege accorded him of taking part in the important ceremony of laying the corner-stone for the new temple of justice, "and while," said he, "the nature of a statistical paper for permanent preservation, requires me to indulge in a greater use of statistics than is conducive to present and temporary interests, I have striven in the very limited time I have had to bestow upon the task, to cull out of the records and traditions of the county such statistical information as in my opinion would most interest those present as well as future inhabitants of the county to whose curious gaze the contents of this corner-stone will be revealed, perhaps a century from now."

"The record of the world's history discloses the rise and fall of many great and prosperous nations, but history never recorded such great, rapid and, we hope, enduring progress of a people as has been witnessed in the United States since its formation. Pre-eminently a peaceful nation, our area has grown from 827,844 square miles in 1789 to 3,608,884 square miles in 1895, and that, too, mostly by peaceful conquest. Our population has grown from 3,929,214 in 1790 to 62,622,250 in 1890. From a few scattered settlements skirting along the Atlantic seaboard, under the benign influences of the free institutions handed down to us by our illustrious forefathers, we have developed into a mighty nation; a nation not beyond the possibility of improvement, but in the main filled with a happy, prosperous people; a nation of inestimable wealth; a highly civilized nation, filled with churches, schools and libraries; a nation making unprecedented strides in industry, art, science and education; a nation that is, indeed, the land of the free and the home of the brave; a nation of the utmost possibilities of resources and development, and destined, I hope, to be during all time the greatest, grandest nation the world ever saw." Continuing he said:

"Our Own Beloved State. Illinois, our beloved state, taking its name from the Indian word 'Illini,' signifying 'superior men,' has in the short space of 77 years, from its admission in 1818, grown to be a mighty empire of 3,825,351 people. The virgin soil of her wonderful prairies, the wealth of her primitive forests and the hidden treasures of her mines have made her the gem of that great galaxy of states known as the 'great northwest,' which has no equal in fertility, resources and possibilities of development on the face of the earth. Great as our national and state development has been, Rock Island county has kept pace with our common country; and that, too, notwithstanding the fact that we came so comparatively late in the order of settlement. Marquette and Joliet were likely the first white persons to set eyes on the then wild, beautiful and romantic scenery of Rock Island county, at that time the home of the Indian and buffalo, in the year 1673. The first white settler was Col. George Davenport, who located with his family on the beautiful island in the Mississippi river between here and Davenport in 1816, a time within the

memory of quite a number of the grand old patriarchs within the sound of my voice. Little did the unbroken wilderness surrounding that solitary habitation, distant hundreds of miles from any other, forebode the marvelous development that has taken place here since its erection. The first house erected on the main shore of our county was by Col. George Davenport and Russell Farnham, in the eastern part of our present city. The first white child born in this vicinity was George Davenport, in 1817. The first lands that were entered were recorded October 19, 1829, by Col. George Davenport and Russell Farnham, the government land offices then being at Galena. The first marriage was that of James L. Burtis to Miss Angelina Beardsley in 1833. In 1835 for the first time the flag of the union proudly waved over Rock Island county's present domain; albeit its field of blue then only contained a constellation of 17 stars instead of 48, as now. The early settlement was slow, for while nature was kind and presented few obstacles to settlement, the savage and treacherous Indian did. It required the Black Hawk war of 1832, that had for battle grounds the beautiful prairies and unbroken forests of Rock Island county to drive the able and revengeful Black Hawk and his tribe beyond the Mississippi to make way for the advancing tide of settlement and civilization. It was not until 1833 that the inhabitants had increased sufficiently to justify the legislative act of that year providing for the organization of the county, and even then the total vote of the county was only 63. The first seat of justice was established in the same year at John Barrell's house, in what was then called Farnamsburg, now a part of the city of Rock Island. In 1835 the seat of justice was changed by commissioners appointed by act of the legislature to its present site, in what was then called the town of Stephenson."

Mr. Searle went into details as to the first judge, sheriff, state's attorney and other lawyers, etc., spoke of the Fifth judicial circuit comprising the counties of Rock Island, Cook, La Salle, Putnam, Peoria, Fulton, Schuyler, Adams, Hancock, McDonough, Knox, Warren, Jo Davies, Mercer and Henry as the first; the first hotel, or tavern as called, being opened in 1833 belonging to Jonah H. Case; private schools being established at an early date and free



C. J. SEARLE.

schools in 1856; the first church, Methodist Episcopal, in 1841; the first library opened in 1855; the first newspaper, the Banner and Stephenson Gazette, started in 1839.

Rock Island and Other Towns. The city of Rock Island, including the towns of Stephenson and Farnamsburg and outlying additions, he said, was organized in 1841. What was known as Rock Island Mills, was in 1843 organized into the beautiful city of Moline, "the City of Mills." Camden, afterwards Camden Mills and now Milan, was laid out in 1843, Port Byron in 1836, Andalusia in 1839, Edgington in 1843, and Reynolds in 1876. He took up the assessed valuation of the county, the population and the determination in 1835 to build a court house. The contract was let for \$10,500, the people furnishing the brick themselves at a cost of \$1,600, making a total cost of \$12,100 at the time of the acceptance of the completed building in 1838. "Humble as it now seems," said the speaker, "it was then a grand structure, one of the finest buildings in the state, and was the pride of the city and county for years. Its erection had entailed an expenditure of perhaps not less than \$10 for every man, woman and child in the county, which in view of the poverty of the people, and the scarcity of money then in circulation, was indeed an evidence of the greatest public spirit; an amount of money harder to raise than \$1,000,000 would be now by the people of this county."

The Old Building.

"Could the walls of that old building relate the scenes that they have witnessed, and re-echo the sounds they have heard, what a story they could tell. From it have issued more than 17,000 official licenses authorizing the solemn, God ordained rites of matrimony, and there we find the sad record of thousands of deaths—records of joy and happiness on the one hand and of grief and sorrow on the other. There are recorded the story of elections, the evidences of the titles of the people to their homes and their belongings; the administration of the estates of departed loved ones; the financial records of the county; the enlistment of the heroic volunteer in the preservation of our national life and his honorable discharge; in the record of the 11,697 civil causes that have been recorded on the



THE COURT HOUSE AS IT WILL APPEAR.

court house, which we are about to abandon, was erected on the spot so selected and on the same spot we lay today the corner-stone for the new court house. The first term of court held in the house so erected was begun on the 28th day of April, 1834. The officers that composed that honorable court were: Daniel Stone, judge; Joseph Conway, clerk; Edward Southwick, state's attorney; and Charles Eams, sheriff. The grand jury selected and chosen at that term was Samuel Smith, foreman, Miles Drury, Thomas Klumph, Zachues Mayhue, Isaac B. Essex, Henry Pawles, Zachariah Cook, Samuel Bowles, David Jameson, David Lamberon, Josiah Carter, Mentevell Gillett, William Brooks, Daniel Edgington, Joseph Dunlap, Jonah H. Case, A. Phillos, H. H. Beardsley, William Buck, A. P. Clapp, William Bell, Jacob Coleman and Jonathan Buffum. Of this roll of names called on that spring day 57 years ago, there is not one present to answer the call. These men were then young and vigorous, the best of the communities from which they had come to lay the foundations of society in a new country, broad and deep upon virtuous lives with purposes fixed and determined that this should be a lawabiding community; how well they succeeded the history of these 57 years is their record, and this great and prosperous county, the goodly heritage which they have bequeathed to the generation of today. As the Plymouth Rock received the fathers from the Mayflower, so the shores of the Mississippi received these early comers. They

that the delays of the law are some times wearisome and the guilty some times escape by reason of such delays, yet the maturity of judgment comes forth from the slow processes of the law to establish the right, which by haste would be perverted and destructive of the very object sought to be reached. At the June term of the circuit court 1855 David Stoddard was tried and convicted of the murder of his wife and hanged on July 13 in the same year. At the March term, 1857, Samuel Ingraham was tried and convicted for the murder of his wife and hanged on May 5, 1857. William Hellwagon, at the January term, 1852, was tried and convicted for the murder of his daughter-in-law, and hanged March 4, 1852. The people of this county, from their practices, show them to be believers in capital punishment."

the office during the construction of the old court house, and paid all the bills for the same.

To Congress.

"Three members of congress have been sent from our county," said Mr. Sweeney. "Hon. John B. Hawley, Hon. William H. Gest and Hon. Ben T. Cable. We are indebted to these gentlemen for great services in securing appropriations for the building of the national armory on the island, for the great bridge across the Mississippi, the viaduct and the new government building, now being erected, and the Hennepin canal."

Topics in General.

Mr. Sweeney spoke of the patriotic natures of the early settlers who laid the broad foundations of our institutions, and of love of country being the test of good citizenship of the men the county of Rock Island sent to the front during the war, and paid a glowing tribute to the pioneers of Illinois in general. The subject of modern inventions and the manner in which the county has kept pace and profited by the same, and the progress made in education, in science and in morality was dwelt upon.

In conclusion Mr. Sweeney said that all forces meet today in a united effort for the common weal. "At the April term, 1893, of the board of supervisors, E. M. Simmet, Esq., was elected chairman, and in his address to the board, returning thanks for the erection of a new court house, and he believed that the times were propitious for its erection. During this session of the board, Joseph Fitzpatrick, then supervisor from Black Hawk, came to the office of Sweeney & Walker and talked to the same effect, and C. L. Walker prepared resolutions setting forth that the necessity existed for a new court house and that the times were

This was alluded to as the beginning of our long court docket, and in the time that has elapsed the population of the county has grown from 350 to 45,000, and whereas there was

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