

CHAPTER II.

1831.

The snow lay upon the ground until about the first of April; meantime the few inhabitants of the county lived as best they could, trusting the good time would yet come.

In the spring of this year James M. Campbell, Esq., came to the county, and was cordially received. He had, in December previous, received the appointment of Clerk of the Circuit Court from the Hon. Richard M. Young, Circuit Judge, and came to enter upon the duties of his office. Like most of the settlers living in the county at that time, Mr. Campbell was from the State of Kentucky. This fact was not discovered at first, and Mr. Campbell was regarded as a Yankee, and, consequently, looked upon with suspicion. John Baker resigned the office of Clerk of the County Commissioners' Court; a new man was to be appointed, and who it should be was a question. Mr. Campbell was suggested. One of the Commissioners replied most emphatically that no Yankee should ever be Clerk of that Court. Mr. Campbell was asked if he was really and truly a Yankee. "Well, gentlemen," replied Mr. C., "if to be born in the city of Frankfort, State of Kentucky, living there until six years of age, coming to the State of Illinois and remaining for six years, then returning to Kentucky and living there for twelve years, and again returning to Illinois, constitutes a Yankee, then I am one." It is unnecessary to add that the explanation was satisfactory, and the appointment made. Being of an energetic turn of mind, and something of an enthusiast, he at once took a leading part in the affairs of the county, and has ever since been in active life, having many times been honored by the citizens of the county with the highest offices within their gift.

Strict economy governed the Commissioners in all the affairs pertaining to the welfare of the county. Every bill presented was carefully scrutinized, and value received was invariably required before payment. We may here remark that such has always been the action of every Board of County Commissioners, or Supervisors, since the organization of the county, which will account for the good credit always enjoyed. Very few bills of doubtful propriety have ever been smuggled through.

At the March term of the County Commissioners' Court James Clarke was allowed the sum of three dollars for going to Springfield and entering the land upon which the original town of Macomb was located. As remarked in a preceding chapter, the money was well earned, for while returning home he was overtaken by the big snow storm, and was several days in making the trip. We have heard him remark that often times while on the journey he thought he would be compelled to give up and lie down and die. The snow in many places had drifted so much that his horse could not get through, and he would be compelled to effect a passage by raking it away with his hands.

In payment for the use of his house for court purposes John Baker was granted the fee simple right to two lots in the town of Macomb, which was then to be laid out. John J. Keaton was employed to make the survey, for which he was allowed the sum of thirty-five dollars. David Clarke and John Baker were employed to carry the chain, for which they each received fifty cents a day. William McDonald received sixty-two and a half cents per day for driving the stakes, the work being more arduous than that of carrying the chain. It appears from bills allowed by the County Commissioners' Court the wages paid laborers at this time were from fifty cents to one dollar per day.

Many laughable anecdotes are related of this survey. Mr. Keaton was not a regular surveyor, and is said to have known less about surveying than those who carried the chain. He had great difficulty in making the corners—in fact never did make them, and they have never been straightened to this day. Another man being wanted to assist in the work, several were approached for this purpose, but all had an excuse to make, one man replying that he would not give the pleasure of his day's drunk for the two best lots in the town. It should be remembered there were few teetotalers in the county at that time. The first plat of the town not

proving satisfactory, the citizens petitioned the County Commissioners to change it, which was done, although one of the members of the board, Hon. James Vance, entered upon the records of the court his protest against the action.

At a meeting of the Board of County Commissioners, held April 12, 1831, the question of building a Court House was discussed, and the following order made :

Ordered, That the building of a house, to be used as a Court House, be let to the lowest bidder, of the following description, to-wit : To be built of logs, hewed on both sides, to face from nine to twelve inches ; to be built eighteen feet by twenty, with a white oak plank floor above and below, laid loose ; nine feet between the joist and sleepers, the sleepers laid two feet apart, laid on the sills ; joists not more than two feet apart, of good white oak, hewed, or sawed four inches thick by nine inches wide ; to be chinked and daubed on the outside ; one door six and one-half feet high and three feet wide, well faced and cased : a good batten door, hung on good iron hinges ; one window, to have twelve panes of glass, and one window of six panes of glass ; to be placed in said building by the instruction of James M. Campbell ; each window to have a good strong batten shutter, hung with butt hinges, covered with boards four feet long, of good width, and what is called double covered, with good gutters and eaves. The said building when completed and finished to be done in workmanlike manner. The said building to be on a lot in the town of Macomb, (on a lot) to be in due time, that is within two weeks, made known to the undertaker. The undertaker will be required to give bonds, with sufficient security, for the faithful performance of his undertaking in the penal sum of double the amount of his bid, made payable to the County Commissioners, or their successors in office, for the use of the county, that the said house shall be finished on or before the first day of September inst.

It is further ordered, That the weight poles are to be of sufficient weight to be of service ; that the undertaker furnish everything necessary for the above building, except the glass for the windows.

On the same day the above propositions were made the contract was let to William Southward for the sum of sixty-nine dollars and fifty cents. As will be observed, there is a considerable difference between the first and last buildings erected for court purposes.

At this same meeting John Baker applied for a license to keep a tavern, which request was ordered on his paying into the County Treasury the sum of six dollars and fifty cents, together with the Clerk's fees for issuing the license. The board then adopted the following scale of prices to govern inn-keepers in the county :

For each meal of victuals.	\$0 25
For each night's lodgings.	0 12½
For each horse feed per night.	0 25
For each horse feed	0 12½
For each half pint of whisky.	0 12½
For each half pint French brandy.	0 25
For each half pint Holland gin or wine.	0 25
For each half pint peach brandy.	0 18¾

It will doubtless seem strange to our young readers to know that this John Baker, to whom a license was granted to keep a tavern, which was but another name for a grocery and whisky shop, was a Baptist preacher, but such was the fact. He figured for several years in the county as a minister of the gospel and a retailer of the ardent. He, a few days after obtaining his license, took as a partner Samuel Bogart, a Methodist preacher, and, under the name of Bogart, Baker & Co., the firm engaged in the sale of dry goods, groceries, whisky, tobacco, etc. That no preacher is now allowed to drink, much less sell ardent spirits, is certainly proof sufficient to show that the temperance cause is advancing.

By an examination of the records of the Board of County Commissioners, we find that four licenses were granted during this year (1831) to keep tavern in Macomb, from which it may be supposed that liquor was in demand. We can scarcely imagine who their customers were, and can only solve the problem by supposing that they carried on business after the manner of the old man and his wife, who, owning a barrel of cider between them, and only a sixpence to spend, tapped the barrel at both ends, and sold to each other.

On the twenty-sixth day of April the first public sale of lots was made in the town of Macomb, William Edmondston acting as auctioneer, he having previously been appointed by the board as commissioner for the sale of all lots. But few were sold, and the amount realized was quite small.

On the sixth day of June John Baker resigned the position of Clerk of the County Commissioners' Court, and James M. Campbell was appointed in his stead "during good behavior." We conclude his behavior must have been good, for he held the position for many years. He was required to give bond in the sum of \$1,000 to "faithfully, fairly and impartially do and perform the duties of Clerk of the County Commissioners' Court to the best of his understanding and abilities."

License was required at this time for the sale of all kinds of merchandise, and we find applications made by James M. Campbell, Henton & Robinson, and Bogart, Baker & Co. to keep a "dry goods and retail store," which were granted on the payment of the sum of five dollars per year, together with the Clerk's fees. These firms all transacted business in Macomb.

At this meeting of the board the various magistrate districts were made election precincts for the Congressional election, to be held the first Monday in August. For this election the clerks were each allowed one dollar and twelve and a half cents, and the judges one dollar per day. We suppose the clerk's duties were more laborious, hence the difference in price.

By an act of Congress the sixteenth section of land in every township was set apart, and the proceeds of its sale used, for common school purposes. Commissioners were appointed in each county to superintend its sale and take charge of the proceeds. In September of this year James Vance received the appointment as Commissioner of School Lands, and was instructed by the board to loan all money received therefor for not less than twelve per cent. per annum. Trustees for each township were also appointed for the school lands.

The assessment of taxes then and now will bear no comparison, as we learn from the records that Resin Naylor was only allowed fifteen dollars for assessing the taxes of the whole county.

The Court House was finished according to contract, and Circuit Court convened therein for its second term on the twenty-first day of October. There were present the Hon. Richard M. Young, Circuit Judge; Hon. Thomas Ford, State's Attorney; William Southward, Sheriff, and James M. Campbell, Clerk. At this session considerable business was transacted, the most important being the trial of David Morgan for murder. This was a case from Schuyler county. After a patient hearing, the jury rendered its verdict, finding him guilty, as charged in the indictment. For some cause the verdict was set aside, the indictment quashed, and the prisoner discharged.

An indictment was found by the grand jury against Thomas Morgan, a brother of David, for murder, after which he was arrested, and obtained a continuance of his case until the next term of court. There being no jail in the county, he was remanded by the Judge to the Schuyler county jail. At the next session of the court he obtained a farther continuance, and ere another term he broke jail, and was never afterward heard from.

Quite a number settled in the county this year, among whom was J. W. Brattle, for many years surveyor for the county, and a man well and universally esteemed. Mr. Brattle has probably done more surveying in McDonough county than all others combined since the organization of the county.

John Huston resigned the office of County Treasurer on the seventeenth day of March, 1831. Resin Naylor was appointed to succeed him, and was placed under bonds to the amount of \$800. Quite a difference between his bond and that of the present Treasurer of the county, who is held in the sum of \$530,000. Mr. Naylor continued to hold the office a number of years, receiving his appointment each year from the Board of County Commissioners.

Twelve couples were united in the holy bonds of matrimony this year.

At the time Mr. Campbell came to the county there was no postoffice within its limits, citizens obtaining their mail from Rushville, the nearest office. He at once made arrangements with the Postmaster at that place to send him the mail belonging to citizens of this county, he becoming personally responsible for the payment of the postage, which at that time was scarcely ever prepaid, the price being twenty-five cents per letter. It is said of Mr. Campbell that on receiving the letters he placed them in his hat in order that he might accommodate the people as he met them on the streets or elsewhere. A petition was sent to the Postmaster General for the establishment of an office at Macomb, and for the appointment of Mr. Campbell as Postmaster, which was granted, and his commission was received December 1, 1831. He held the office for some fifteen years, save for a period of three months, in 1841, when George W. Damron was appointed in his stead.