

VILLAGE GROWTH.

THERE were few natural advantages in this county to mark the growth of a village beyond that of the site chosen for the county-seat. Before the organization of the county, therefore, there was little attempt made in this direction. The first settlements were made, as was usually the case at that time in isolated communities, and some one generally put on foot some sort of a mercantile enterprise, and subsequently villages were founded that had a name to live, a few of which still retain the semblance of early prosperity. The earliest of these ventures was Watertown, situated on the west bank of the Fox River. The site chosen was probably the most promising in this region at that time. The trace road was the great thoroughfare from the east to the west, and the river promised a ready means of reaching the great southern markets, which was the goal of all the early surplus product of the time. This village was laid out in 1837, by Amos Bullard, and consisted of twenty-nine lots, laid off on either side of the Trace road and crossed by Fox Street. The exact location of this early metropolis was on the west half of the southeast quarter of Section 5, Township 3 north, of Range 10 east. But few improvements seem to have been made. Lots were disposed of to various persons, living all over the county, and it may be supposed that the proprietor may have had an idea that this territory would eventually be formed into an independent county, and his plat might furnish the site of the new county-seat. Whatever the truth may be in this regard, the widespread interest in this paper village came near achieving this result. In the year following its original platting, the proprietor and Moses Johnson platted an addition of some eighteen blocks, "in-lots 66 feet north and south, by $49\frac{1}{2}$ feet east and west. Main Street was 66 feet wide, Stantz, Wickersham, Butler, Bullard, Bogard, Nelson, and Grape, were $49\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide; Vine and Cherry alleys $16\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide; out-lots of all sizes." After the decision upon the site of the county-seat, Watertown languished and finally returned to its original rustic simplicity.

Olney.—Without exception, the competing points for the location of the seat of justice were only prospective villages, Watertown being ostensibly an exception, and it was not until sometime after the organization of the county, that Olney assumed the legal



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status of a village. Among the earliest acts of the new Board of Commissioners was an order directing that the county-seat should be laid off according to the plan of Lot Basden, and in the latter part of 1841 this was accomplished, the plat providing for some fifty lots besides the public square. The donation of land consisted of six acres on the north side of the old Trace road, now Main Street, and seven acres by Hiram Barney, on the south side of the street, and the whole town had a frontage on Main Street of the distance from the Commercial Hotel to Whittle Avenue. The original donation was not intended or calculated to satisfy the demands of even a small town, and considerable additions were made in 1841. The original plat shows Butler, York, Main, Market and Toledo streets, each sixty feet wide, save Main Street, which is eighty. There was not a resident on the village plat, though there were several living on the several sides. Hiram Barney lived on the site of the Commercial Hotel adjoining the plat; William Elliott lived on the Trace road east of the village, and north of the plat lived William and Thomas Ellinsworth. The lots were ordered sold at once by the Commissioners, and a good number were disposed of at prices that would bear sad comparison with the ruling rates of to-day. But at these prices, the county authorities were several years disposing of the fifty-nine lots in the donation. The object of the donors was to make the surrounding property marketable at a good price, and the county had scarcely brought their donation into market before the Reed, Elliott and Lilley additions brought some 300 lots in competition. This sufficed, however, until 1849, the village in the meanwhile gaining some inhabitants and business.

The first house after the town was laid out was erected by T. W. Lilley, for Henry Williams, who never occupied it, though he had arranged to come to Olney at the time. This building was subsequently occupied by Peter Prunty as a saloon, and still later it served as a hotel, known as the Griffin House. It stood on Whittle Avenue, and was removed in the fall of 1874. The first dwelling-house in the village, proper, was built in the following winter, and stood on the site of the Carrother's residence. John M. Wilson was constructively the first resident of the village of Olney. He was at the time of the organization of the county a resident of White County and was appointed Clerk of the Circuit Court by his uncle, the presiding Judge. His residence was supposed to be at the county-seat, though for some time he had his office in the store of H. Gunn & Sons, and boarded with Thomas W. Lilley. The new town

did not long go begging for citizens. The older towns about all had a surplus of enterprising citizens who were ready to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the establishing of a new county town. Business men from the various towns about came in, and a considerable immigration from the East came in, who by their thrift gave the village an enviable reputation far and near. This immigration came about 1843 or 1844, and settled in the western part of the village, which was locally called Lower Vermont. This colony contained the social aristocracy of the village, and by their example and influence gained for the town the name of "the painted town," from the fact that a larger part of the residences of the village were painted white, a feature in so marked contrast with the general custom of pioneer towns, that it could not fail to challenge, even the mere casual observation. The growth of population was slow, but constant until about 1855, when the opening of the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad gave it an impetus that has brought it to its present development, and a population of 4,100, by the local enumeration of this year. A daughter of Jonas Spangler, born in the fall of 1841, has the honor of being the first child born after the laying out of the village, while Mary, the daughter of Henry Spring, Esq., was the next birth, some time in the year 1842. The general development may be approximately estimated from the growth of the plat as denoted by the various additions. Up to 1849, the original plat with the various additions formed an irregular figure something after the letter Z, but at this date the coming of the railroad began to cast its shadow before, and Elliott platted a second addition, and Judge Kitchell his first. In 1853, Elliott platted his third addition and Judge Kitchell his second, including his generous donation of the school lot; in 1855, Ridgeway's and Newell Bros.' addition, in 1856, Elliott's fourth addition, and Lilley's second addition, and in 1857, Baldwin's plat of East Olney were made. From this time forward, additions were made yearly; Lilley's third, in 1857; Kitchell's third, in 1858. In 1859, A. L. Byers, Baird heirs, A. L. and R. Byers, Hannon, Kitchell and Ridgeway, each made additions. In 1861, Lilley's fourth addition was made; in 1864, Harris & Eidson's first and the Powers' heirs; in 1865, T. W. Lilley, C. C. Collins, Harris & Eidson, and J. P. Wilson made additions. In 1866, five additions were made, one in 1870, three in 1874, four in 1875, one in 1876, two in 1877, three in 1878, and one in 1880 and each year since. In the midst of all these additions the little original plat is almost buried out of sight.

With the opening of the village for settlement, business at once took a vigorous start. H. Gunn & Sons, were doing business at several points in White County, and no sooner was this town established than this enterprising firm opened up a branch store here in charge of Samuel H. Gunn, who still survives to relate the incidents of that day. Their store building was erected on the corner of Main and Fair streets, on the site now occupied by H. Stauffer's store. This was erected in the fall of 1841. Early in the following year, Henry Spring came from Albion and started his business in a temporary frame structure which stood where Norwood's store now is. There was nothing but green lumber to be had, and in attempting to dry it enough to answer the purpose for which it was intended, the rude kiln took fire and nearly wrecked the enterprise by destroying a part of the lumber. Soon after the business community was reinforced by the addition of A. L. Byers, who opened a store on the north side of the street in the same vicinity. About 1845, William Newell and Andrew Darling went into business here, purchasing Gunn's store and business, the latter clerking with the new firm for a year. Gunn then went into business on his own account, and these four firms did the principal part of the commercial transactions of the town. The country about was a rich agricultural region, and Olney, situated on the great east and west thoroughfare of this section of the State, became the business center of this region. These stores handled all lines of goods and took from the farmers all kinds of merchantable produce. About 1843 or 1845, all but Mr. Spring began to handle pork extensively, slaughtering and packing it here in the village, and shipping it in flatboats at Watertown by way of the Fox, Wabash, Ohio and Mississippi rivers to New Orleans. For some years this trade proved quite profitable, but the river became obstructed by mill-dams and the building of the railroad brought in a ruinous competition that put an end to the business, though not until the firms engaged had lost more or less heavily. There was no marked improvement in the business portion of the town, notwithstanding the prosperous trade, until about 1860. In this year the post-office block, on the north side of Main, between Whittle Avenue and Silver Street, was erected by Samuel H. Gunn at a cost of about \$10,000 for lot and building, and was the pioneer structure of the modern business part. Since then the evidence of wealth has been more displayed in the business and residence buildings, the three-story opera house building and the residence of

E. S. Wilson being the leading features of the town in this respect. In 1875, the business of the city was generally classified under the following enumeration: "Eight large dry-goods stores, six notion and millinery stores, four hardware and tin stores, six boot and shoe establishments, three job-printing offices, and four hotels." To this should be added two furniture stores, three or four drug stores, one of which combines the manufacture of cigars, and does some \$60,000 worth of business annually; two banks, furniture factory, a spring clothes-pin factory, the only one west of the Alleghenies; a hub and spoke factory, woolen factory, two large flouring mills, a pork packing establishment, a large number of groceries, a restaurant and nine saloons. Fair Street is the site of the finer residences of the town, and Church Street is the site of the majority of the places of public worship. Ten denominations are represented in the city, all of which are provided with good structures, some brick, and the rest fine wooden buildings. The court house and schoolhouse add to the fine, general appearance of the town, which bears out its early reputation for thrift and neatness. In February, 1873, the Olney Public Library Association was established, and through the efforts of T. W. Hutchinson, Fred. Beck, E. S. Wilson, J. W. Eidson, J. L. Campbell, William Bower, William Rhode, Samuel McClure, H. Marshall, J. A. Marshall, T. Edmiston and others, a library of some 1,300 well-selected volumes was founded. It is fairly patronized, and is a valuable acquisition to the community.

From 1841 to 1847 the village had no special organization. In the latter year a village organization was secured, and the earliest records recite the facts as follows: "After taking the preliminary legal steps which are filed of record, the legal voters of said town met at the court house on the 31st of August, 1847, and selected as Trustees of said town, Henry Spring, Lewis Sawyer, Peter G. Terry, William Elliott, and Benjamin F. Heap. The said Trustees met at the office of N. D. Jay, in the town of Olney, on the 18th day of September, 1847, and on motion of Lewis Sawyer, Henry Spring was elected President, who took the chair, and the Trustees proceeded to business and appointed J. M. Wilson, Clerk; P. G. Terry, Treasurer; and Hiram Barney, Constable; N. D. Jay, a Justice of the Peace, administering the legal oaths." At this meeting the first ordinances were passed as follows: "1. Be it enacted by the Trustees of the town of Olney, that the corporate limits of said town shall contain one square mile, the court house being the center thereof. 2. That the town Constable shall give bond, with sufficient secur-

ity, to be approved of and filed with the Clerk, for the faithful discharge of his duties, in the sum of \$50. 3. The Treasurer shall give bond and security, to be filed with and approved of by the Clerk, in the sum of \$200. 4. It shall be the duty of the town Constable to execute all writs, processes and precepts which may be issued against persons for a violation of the laws of the corporation, and to arrest, on view or information, all persons who may violate such laws, and to collect all fines, forfeitures and penalties which may be assessed or recovered for the use of the corporation, and that he shall have full authority to summon any number of citizens of said town that he may require to aid in the service of process, or the arrest of offenders, and any person refusing, or neglecting to lend his aid when required so to do, shall be fined \$1 for each offense, Said Constable shall receive such fees as are allowed in similar cases under the statutes of Illinois. 5. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive and disburse all the funds of the corporation that may arise either from taxation or otherwise, and to report the state of the treasury at each quarterly meeting of the Trustees, but he shall in no case pay out any money, unless on an order made by the Trustees at a meeting of that body." At the second meeting, the usual ordinances were made to abate nuisances, against running horse races in the streets, or betting on the same, against fast driving, to punish public immorality, against fighting, providing for a license for whisky vendors and peddlers, for the observance of Sunday, and to restrict each person to only one dog, and the Justices residing in the town were requested to take cognizance of the infringement of these laws. One may gather from these laws considerable information as to the general habits of the early community. They confirm the statement of the older residents as to the primitive customs of the village. Saturday afternoons were general holidays, when the farmers gathered into the county-seat, and each sought to amuse himself in his own way. Whisky was found everywhere and so cheap that even in that day, when few were well-to-do, all could use it as a luxury. While the general mass were not driven by a desperate appetite for drink, they almost universally drank on these occasions, and then repaired to some convenient place to pitch quoits, run their horses, or contend in some athletic contest. Sometimes a friendly bout of fisticuffs varied the usual programme and seldom did the day pass without a serious fight or two. The sentiment of the town people was rather opposed to these rougher western sports, and the early ordinances were intended to, and did curb

this custom. The city legislation upon the liquor traffic has generally tended toward the repression of the business, but with the coming of the railroads and the growth of the city, a high license is as near prohibition as has been found practicable.

The internal improvements of the city have made slow progress. With the organization of the Board of Trustees an attempt was made to provide sidewalks. Six feet on each side of Main Street were appropriated by the village authorities for the accommodation of foot passengers. This was thrown up and afforded a fairly dry path in most seasons, which sufficed until 1849, when board sidewalks were required. Citizens were allowed to build their own but were required to construct them at least *twenty-eight inches* wide. In February, 1853, after considering a petition asking that a sidewalk be constructed in a certain part of the town, the Board formulated the following: "Whereas, we are in a young and flourishing county, and the Ohio & Mississippi Railroad Company have made our town a point of said road, your committee believe that it is a duty we owe to ourselves and our citizens to make the town of Olney a desirable and pleasant retreat for strangers and inviting to emigrants seeking a home in our western county, the beauty and ornament and convenience of our town render it agreeable to us to give a character for neatness abroad," etc. This somewhat stilted preface to an ordinary sidewalk ordinance, though open to criticism on the score of obscurity, gives an index to the spirit with which such improvements were carried forward. About the same time and for the same reason, drinking liquor in public, on the streets or sidewalks of the town, was prohibited. In 1855, Whittle Avenue was provided with a sidewalk to the depot, and in 1868, brick sidewalks were introduced. This later improvement evoked considerable opposition on the score of expense, and its adoption by the city is probably due to the persistent efforts of J. M. Wilson and John Van Gunten. The city is now generally well supplied with sidewalks, a large proportion of which are brick. In the management of the streets the improvements have been less marked. Considerable money has been expended upon them, but the lack of road material and the character of the soil has rendered all available means but partially successful. In 1879, a sewer, built of brick and thirty inches in diameter, was laid in Main Street. This serves a valuable purpose both in draining the surplus waters of the streets and the sewerage of the property along its margin, but the problem of street improvement still remains unsolved and will probably remain so for years to come, or until the city finds sufficient

funds to transport stone from a distance. Street lamps were introduced in 1869. These are located at the corners, number some forty or more, and are supplied with coal oil.

The first attempt to provide against fires was in 1856, when "fire hooks and ladders" were procured. There was no special place to keep them, or if there was they soon became scattered over the town and were practically useless when needed. In 1867, these were collected and an appointed place to keep them provided. In 1879, "two dozen pails and an axe" was added to the outfit of the volunteer company, and in June, of the same year, a "No. 5, Two Wheeled Champion Chemical Fire Engine" was purchased by the city at a cost of \$1,800. This machine is constructed on the general principle of a fire extinguisher. The machine has a hundred gallon cylinder, covered with brass, in which soda and sulphuric acid are held in separate receptacles. When needed for service the cylinder is turned over, revolving upon trunions, and the two chemicals thus being brought together an expansive gas is formed that forces the fluid through the attached hose to a distance of seventy-five feet from the end of the nozzle. In thirty seconds the engine is ready for action. The department has not yet had an opportunity to fully test the availability and capacity of the machine, but it is questionable whether a steam fire engine would be practicable at present. In certain seasons a steamer could scarcely be got to the scene of danger, and once there the supply of water would be very uncertain. The only source of supply is probably from surface drainage, retained in a large public cistern. An attempt was made in 1880, to sink a drill to obtain water. Some 2,300 feet of earth and rock was penetrated, at a cost of about \$10,000, without securing the desired water. Some "fault finders" suggest that the desire to find a vein of coal acted unfavorably on the ostensible object of finding water, but whatever the fact may be, neither coal nor water was found in "paying quantities," and the city seems to be dependent entirely upon the surface supplies for fires. The subject of public buildings was agitated, in 1880, and is still held in abeyance. The engine is stored in a shabby, one-story building, and the council meets in a room rented at \$60 per year. There is certainly need enough for something better, but the tax payer seems just now to be jealous of his prerogative, and the improvement waits.

In 1854, the limits of the corporation were extended so as to include the north half of Section 3, in Township 3 north, and south half of Section 34, of Township 4 north, both in Range 10 east. At

this time the highest vote for Trustee was sixty-seven, and the financial transactions of the village government amounted to \$389.44. By an act of the General Assembly of the State, approved March 18, 1867, the village was incorporated as a city, with the following limits: All that territory included within the following limits, and described as follows, to wit: The west half of Section 2, Section 3, and the east half of Section 4, in Township 3 north, Range 10 east; and the east half of Section 33, Section 34, and the west half of Section 35, in Township 4 north, Range 10 east, of the third Principal Meridian. The city was divided into three wards and a code of ordinances adopted, which, if strictly enforced, would make Olney one of the most progressive cities in southern Illinois. As is usually the case a compromise was patched up between the spirit of the city laws and the sentiment of the community, and the police force, consisting of the City Marshal and three patrolmen, keep the city in very good order. The restrictions against stock running at large are not up to the standard of excellence manifested in other features of the city administration. But little effort was made to restrain animals from running at large in the city until 1854. The liberty of the hog was then assailed, an action that evoked a spirited resistance, and eventually gained the repeal of the obnoxious ordinance. Three years later the sentiment of the community reached the point superior to the equality of the hog, and it was forbidden the freedom of the city. The ordinances framed under the city charter took still higher grounds and excluded all animals running at large, save, by inference, a docile cow. As a matter of fact this class of animals is the greatest nuisance to-day. Inspired by the luxuriance of the well-kept lawn of the court house yard, these animals have become adepts in finding a passage way through the imperfectly latched gates of the inclosure, and the janitor is kept on the alert to protect the court yard from their intrusion. Wagons in the street are more or less the objects of their attack and it would seem that the enterprise of the city must soon restrict their freedom. On the whole, however, Olney is an attractive little city. It is pleasantly situated on high rolling ground; the streets are broad, regularly laid out and well shaded. An unusually large number of fine residences betoken the wealth and culture of its people, and the business enterprise added to its railroad facilities is certain to give this city still greater prominence among the business centers of this part of the State.

Noble.—There is no room in Richland County for any consider-



A. Randenborg

able town other than the county-seat. It possesses the advantages of the public business, a central location, the best railroad facilities and equal manufacturing advantages with any other point in the county. It is, therefore, likely to maintain its position without fear of a rival within this limited area. The location of the Ohio & Mississippi Railroad, however, stimulated the enterprise of land owners, and wherever opportunity offered, a town was platted along its line. Of these, in Richland County, Noble has proven the most successful. This was laid out in Noble Township, on the west half of the northwest quarter of Section 16, and the northeast quarter of Section 17, both in Township 3 north, Range 9 east. This was projected by Alfred Kitchell, Esq., and was laid out parallel with the railroad which at this point runs in a southwesterly direction. It originally consisted of twenty-one blocks, of sixteen lots each, and this has been found sufficient to accommodate its growth to date. It has a population of some 600 inhabitants and was incorporated under the general law, in 1862. A dozen business houses, besides the hotels and various shops, constitute the business of the town. A large flouring mill did a good business at one time, but it is now doing a limited custom work. A considerable business is done in buying and shipping grain, and the local merchants find considerable trade in the surrounding country. The village is located in the midst of a fine agricultural region, and from 1865 to 1875, did a very large grain business. Since then business interests have flagged until the recent agitation in regard to the location of the Terre Haute & Western Railway through the village. It is hoped, in the event of the building of this road, that business will again take on its old prosperity. The past two years have been remarkable for the amount of apples marketed here. During this year more than one hundred car loads have been shipped from this station. Two churches, the Methodist and Union, are found here. The first was built in 1861, and is a frame building 32x40 feet, and cost about \$1,000. The other church known now as the Baptist Church, was commenced in 1866, as a Union Church, the Baptist and Christian denominations contributing to its erection. It was completed about 1870, and is an ordinary structure erected at a cost of some \$600. A good, two story, brick school-house was erected in 1865, at a cost of some \$5,000. The school consists of three departments. Noble Lodge of F. & A. M., and Noble Lodge of the I. O. O. F. are located here.

Claremont.—This village is another railroad town, laid out in 1853, by Jacob May. The original town consisted of fifty-five lots,

and was situated on the Trace road, on Section 4, Township 3, Range 14, and Section 34, Township 4, Range 14. A small addition was made by W. Schifferstein, on the north side of the road, in the same year, but the railroad eventually being located considerably to the south of this location, the proprietor made two additions in 1854, to reach the road. It at first did considerable business. A large flouring mill was built, a hotel and several stores; but of late years, it has lost much of its early thrift, and is only a small village of some 200 inhabitants. The mill is idle, though there is still some trade in grain and in the few stores gathered here.

Parkersburg.—In the southeastern part of Madison Township is the village of Parkersburg. This was laid out in 1859, by John D. Parker, on the line of the Peoria, Decatur & Evansville Railroad. For a time it was the terminus of this road and for a time it did a large business for its size. Business houses of good dimensions were erected, but with the completion of the road its glory departed and it is now chiefly conspicuous for the evidences of the business that once existed. It first consisted of some seventeen lots, but it has been extended by additions, from time to time by the proprietor, until it now numbers some sixty or seventy-five lots.

Fairview, in the northeast corner of the same township and on the same line of road, was laid out by Shadrach Ruark, quite early, but no record was made of the plat, and in 1848 it was replatted. It contained some sixty-five lots and assumed considerable proportions upon paper, but it is little more than a post-office with the usual mercantile attachment. The post-office is known as Calhoun.

Wakefield was laid out by Pleasant M. Stanley and Thomas Wakefield, in 1853, in the northwest corner of Denver Township. It consisted originally of forty-eight lots, but it has since been vacated. *Wilsonburg*, on the line between Denver and Noble Townships, *Stringtown*, in the northern part of German Township, and *Fransonia*, in the northeastern part of Decker Township, have not been platted and are merely post-offices.

Dundas, is eight miles north of Olney, in Preston Township, on the Danville, Olney & Ohio River Railroad, and the P., D. & E. road, the two lines running parallel through the county to Olney. This little village was laid out by Alexander Stewart, James Kin-kade and W. W. Kermicle, in 1877. The original plat consisted of sixty-four lots, and quite a little village has gathered at this point. A church, several stores, and shops and several members of the professions make up the business and social show of the place.

Glenwood was simply a paper town. It was laid out by W. B. Crouch, a real estate agent of Cincinnati, in 1874. It was situated on the Ohio & Mississippi Railroad, in Section 13, Township 3 north, Range 8 east, just west of Noble village, in the township. It consisted of sixteen blocks and 200 or 300 lots. These were sold under misrepresentation and resulted in the death of one of the proprietors, who was shot by one of the victims of the swindle.

The editor desires in closing this sketch to express his indebtedness to those who have aided him in procuring the data for it, and to especially acknowledge the time and care bestowed on the sketch of the Masonic Fraternity by Sir Knight G. H. B. Tolle, and to Reverends H. Schlencher, E. Schwartz, Father J. W. Merscher, Capt. William Rhode, J. Von Gunten, Gen. Eli Bowyer and G. W. Fritchey for the notes on their respective church organizations.

