

OSSEO'S EARLY TIMES

From 1917 History of Trempealeau County

Osseo is a thriving village on the Mondovi line of the Omaha. Its business section parallels the Beef River and a dam provides a pretty artificial lake for bathing and boating. The residences are slightly and commodious and reflect in their architecture and surroundings the New England country from which many of the pioneers hailed.

The principal municipal improvement is the beautiful and thoroughly modern high school completed in the spring of 1917 for a cost of about \$35,000. Electric lights have been furnished for several years by the Lee & Son mill. The old schoolhouse has been refurnished and refitted as a village hall.

The chief industries consist of the mill at the village, the mill a short distance away, a cheese factory and a creamery. Two banks and a newspaper are in a flourishing condition.

Osseo was not materially affected by the arrival of the railroad. Started in the 1850's, the village, on June 20, 1887, when the railroad was completed, was already a flourishing hamlet, and the business houses were but little changed by the introduction of railroad transportation.

Among the business industries at the time were the Osseo and Sumner mills, the general stores operated by F E Field & Co and C H Shores & Co., drug stores operated by Dr. A L Wooster and Hotchkiss & Bewell: blacksmith and wagon shop operated by John O Christenson & Co and blacksmith and machine works by Erick Nelson & Co.

To this list, D L Remington adds: J H McKenney, hotel and meat market, Fred Smith Harness Shop, Valorus Campbell, livery, Montgomery Reynolds, photographer, J Huntingdon, hardware, and Matt Johnson, shoemaker. E J Matchett adds to the original list-Anderson Brothers General Store, Hewett & Foster, hardware, William Henry, Cheese factory, Hiram Ffield, dealer in stock and horses, Arthur Gates, dealer in machinery, and the Osseo Creamery Co.

An important part of the business section was destroyed by fire on May 29, 1891 but was at once rebuilt with larger and better buildings. Osseo was platted in September, 1857, by J E Irish, county surveyor of Richland County, on land of W A Woodward, A McCorkle, Caroline Sexton and Willard Thomas. It embraced 116 blocks of 8 lots each, many of which have since been abandoned.

The village was incorporated in 1893. A survey having been made Feb. 23, 1893 by Thomas G Cox, a census taken July 3, 1893 by A C Gates and E A Olson resulting in a numbering of 305 persons. The first election of officers was held Nov. 2, 1893, and resulted as follows; President, Dr E A Olson, Trustees-W K Lewis, J H LBarron, C H Shores, F M Smith, Thomas Fox and James McIntyre. Treasurer-George Newell; clerk-J W Smith, supervisor E J Matchett (J H McKenney, who was tied, lost on a drawing of cuts); constable A H Rogers; police justice A C Gates.

About the year 1859 the first school in Osseo was held in the house now occupied by Eric Nelson; at that time it was owned by W H Thomas, who used the front part of the building as a general store, and in the

rear were rooms used as a dwelling and occupied by Mrs Buckley, later better known as Mrs Barber. In one of these rooms school was held and taught by her. There were only four pupils at that time, consisting of the two daughters of W H Thomas, now Mrs Della Field, and Julia Shores, Kate and Fannie, daughters of Dennis Lawler.

Later school was held in the barroom of a hotel erected by Mr Thomas on the spot where Bert Humes' blacksmith shop now stands, and still later in an old building located just north of the church where Mr Horgan's house has since been erected.

As the children grew in number it was deemed necessary to build a schoolhouse which was done in 1860. It was a one room building and located on the site as the present graded school building.

As years passed the number of pupils outgrew the capacity of this building and it was moved across the street where it still stands and is known as the Town Hall, being occupied by the Sixth and Seventh grades, taught by Miss Mabel Hagan. A two story frame building was erected in its place in 1881. Miss Nettie Tracy was the first teacher and for six weeks had charge of all the pupils in the district, then numbering 59, as the upper room was not completed.

In October 1881, the people voted to have a graded school and admit tuition pupils from outside the district. The result was that the number of pupils increased so rapidly that again the rooms were overcrowded and in the fall of 1892 there were 83 pupils seated in what is the lower north room of the present building, taught by Agnes Hyslop, now Mrs A McKenney. At Christmas time it was decided to hire another teacher and use the Town Hall. Lottie Field taught during the two months winter term and in the spring it was decided to use the recitation room instead of the Town Hall. Agnes Walsh was hired as assistant, Frank Robinson was principal at that time.

In 1894 an addition was annexed to the south side of the schoolhouse to correspond with that on the north. In 1916 the people voted to have a High School and to build a new building which is now, 1917, completed, and is a beautiful, modern one story brick building known as Lincoln High School, located in the northeastern part of the village on a slightly spot known as Lincoln Hill.