

Town of Shelby
History

Compiled by

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The Town of Shelby became a functioning unit of government at its first annual meeting, April 2, 1867. The minutes of that meeting do not reveal the whys and wherefores of the establishment of the new town, and no source explains the reasons for dividing the old Town of Greenfield. Some of the men elected to the town offices at that first meeting had previously served their community as officers of the Town of Greenfield.

Before becoming involved with the details of Shelby history, a background sketch of the nature of the area's history will, perhaps, be useful.

As Wisconsin was the last state organized from the Old Northwest Territory, and since it was governed under various succeeding territories (Michigan, Indiana, and Wisconsin), it became heir to some aspects of government that evolved in those regimes.

In 1818 the Western part of the state was set off as Crawford County, and was governed through the military establishment in Prairie du Chien. The lack of a stable white population prior to the mid-1830's not only limited the demand for government services, but also limited the tax base for financing such improvements.

Protection of the frontier necessitated a few roads for the garrisoning and provisioning of the widely scattered forts, and the few military roads tended to follow Indian trails. Most commercial traffic was carried on through the river system. In 1829 the United States Government had stopped all road building in the territories except for military roads.

The development of territorial roads was, therefore, slow. Costs were paid by the towns, and property tax was paid up in labor on the roads. An early record (1823) shows a credit on

the road tax of 62 cents for 1 day of labor. Another record (1833) shows that daylabor was paid at \$1.25 per day. (As late as 1907 the Town of Shelby granted credit for road tax at the rate of 19 cents per hour.) Since most road building was based on the self-imposed road tax on property, and the general property tax was kept to a minimum, there was little cash money available for hiring day labor.

An additional labor supply for the roads was provided by a poll tax on able-bodied men age 21 to 50 years of age. This amounted to two days of work. No individual could be forced to give more than 20 days' labor on the roads. In 1837 the Territorial Legislature set a general road tax on all real estate of up to 1% of the assessed value. Assessment was done by County Commissioners.

After 1848 the State laid out roads in less populous areas, but until 1908 was prohibited by the Constitution from doing any "internal improvements", so the costs of construction and maintenance of these "State Roads" was left entirely to the local governments, with the assistance of the counties. Both the territorial and state roads were required to be 4 rods wide.

Government in the early statehood years alternated between supervisory and county commissioner form, as a response to the origins of the people who were moving into the state. La Crosse County operated under both systems, until the present supervisory system was established in 1870.

Permanent settlers in the La Crosse area came late, in comparison to the rest of the state. Nathan Myrick established a trading business with Indians, trappers, lumbermen and riverboat men in 1841. Among the lumbermen were some Mormons from the communities in Illinois. These men returned with their families

in 1843 or 1844 and settled in the mouth of Mormon Coulee. Their total number is unknown, but apparently there were 25 to 30 families. They had set up a grist mill and lime kiln near the site on which Valentine Oehler later built his dam and mill in Section 23 or 26. They worked for Myrick, cutting fence and cordwood. In 1845 they built flatboats and planned to leave, some say, after burning their houses. Myrick made a special trip to the settlement to settle some debts, and accepted a horse and oxen in payment. Rumor and confusion accompany stories of their departure, coinciding as it did with the exodus of the Mormon Community from Illinois.

By the time of the Mormon's departure, the brothers John and Charles Nagle had taken up land between State Road and Mormon Coulees. La Crosse businessman John M. Levy arrived and set up a trading post on his farm at the foot of the bluffs in 1845. He and his partner Samuel Snow later moved the store into what was to become the village of La Crosse. They had transported their goods overland by oxen and wagon from Prairie du Chien, blazing the trail for the first road. One history of the area states that Levy and Snow came into the Mississippi Valley through Mormon Coulee and that Philip Young (Jung) and James Conley were already occupants in the coulee, Conley living at the Mormon ruins.

Levy's wife arrived by boat in 1846. According to her there were some 20 known residents in the area of the present County of La Crosse. Mrs. Levy reports that in 1847 there were 5 houses in the present city, and an Irish family (Jerry McCaulley), 8 miles out, Philip Jung 6 miles out and 2 old bachelors 3 miles out. . . then a Frenchwoman "who went by that name".

The names Conley and McCauley probably refer to the same person as the names Conlan and Coonley. Conlan, James, had filed on 40 acres in the Northwest quarter of the Southwest quarter of Section 23, in 1848. Robert Swing possesses an abstract for a parcel of land in that area bearing the name Coonley. The variations can be explained by the number of people transmitting information through handwriting and foreign accents. Though Mrs. Levy does not specify, it is possible that the 2 old bachelors were the brothers John and Charles Nagle.

In the Tract Index of U.S. Government Lands, Charles Nagle had registered a 40 acre parcel in the Southwest quarter of the Southwest quarter of Section 9 in 1848. Levy and Snow had filed on the 160 acres in the Southwest quarter of Section 10. Myrick had registered 160 acres in Section 22. These land purchases were recorded at land sales in Mineral Point in 1848. In 1851, when La Crosse County was organized, a U.S. Land Office opened in the village of La Crosse, and Philip Jung filed on his 40 acres in the Northwest quarter of the Northwest quarter of Section 34.

Also in the 1851 sales, many land speculators purchased land at auction, and ^{much of} the area was owned by absentee landlords. One interesting name that appears in the Tract Index is that of Paris Angel, whose name appears on 4 40 acre parcels in the Southeast quarter of Section 10 and the Southwest quarter of Section 11. By 1866, 3 of these parcels were in the name of J. Naigler, or J. Nagle (1861 Greenfield tax rolls).

In 1847 Levy and Snow got the contract to carry the U.S. Mail between Minneapolis and Prairie du Chien, with Philip Jung's place as the relay point. Mrs. Levy recalled that her husband had to rely on Philip Jung's assistance when he got lost while returning from a statehood meeting at Liberty Pole in what was

to become first Bad Axe and then Vernon County. A history compiled in 1881 records the arrival in 1847 of Peter Ebner and his wife, Joseph Ebner and his sister (who became Mrs. Baker), Felix Kaiser and his wife, and a "Doerflinger and family". A history by Benjamin Bryant refers to a Leo Doerflinger and "Magd" Bundru, his wife, and Joseph Doerflinger, who was "the second person on the land in the county to farm".

In 1849 the State surveyed the area for swamp land, which was to be sold by the state to finance public education. New residents in the La Crosse area by 1851 include R.C. Van Rensselaer, Abram Pruet, and a Mrs. Markle.

In 1851 the County of La Crosse was organized by act of the State Legislature. The original county included all the area of the present counties of Jackson, Monroe, Trempealeau, parts of Buffalo, Monroe, and Clark Counties. The new county was divided into 3 towns...Pine Valley, Albion, and La Crosse, the latter comprising all of the present county and part of Monroe County. The old Town of La Crosse existed until 1856, when its name was changed to Greenfield, and Sections 7 through 18 of Township 15 North, Range 6 West were taken from the Old Town of Barre and added to the newly organized Town of Greenfield.

The County Board of Supervisors minutes record that in November of 1856 the Board granted the petition of J. F. Hosmer and others to set off those Sections from Barre, add them to the Town of La Crosse and to assign the new name. There is no available record of the minutes of the Town of La Crosse or of the early years of the Town of Greenfield. *However, the clerk's ^{financial} journal (over)*

County Board proceedings and the financial journal of the Town of Greenfield--Town of La Crosse, as well as the assessment rolls of Greenfield for 1861 and 1866, however do provide us

with some idea of the business of the town, as well as some of the names of individuals involved in town government.

In 1848 this area had been opened up for land sales at Mineral Point, following a survey in 1845 and 1846. Under the provisions then in force, all land that was not pre-empted was offered at auction, with a minimum price of \$1.25 per acre. The same terms held when the Land Office was opened in La Crosse in 1851. Land that had been pre-empted was sold to the pre-emptor at the minimum price. The restrictions were that the pre-emptor had to pre-empt after the survey and before the sale. Pre-emption was accomplished by (a) marking the claim and staking the corners, (b) improving the land or a part thereof, or (c) giving proof of occupation of a parcel.

Land was surveyed in the Northwest Territory on the basis of principal meridians that were selected as population moved westward, the first being the western boundary of Pennsylvania. All of Wisconsin is surveyed on the 4th Principal Meridian, with Congressional townships of 36 square miles marked East and West of the Principal Meridian (Ranges) and North of the Base Line (Townships) which occurs at the Illinois-Wisconsin border.

The release of these lands for public auction was keyed upon the survey of 1845 and upon the removal of local remnants of Indian tribes to the Crow River Indian Reservation in 1847 and 1848. In the first year after opening, the La Crosse Land Office, operated by Cyrus K. Lord and Theodore Rodolf, was busy enough to employ 15 clerks. Both Rodolf and Lord purchased land in Shelby.

The early owner-residents of the town seem to have been law-abiding types. However, there were two murders in Mormon Coulee which must have caused a bit of excitement. None of the principals is listed on the assessment rolls of Greenfield or Shelby, though town residents were paid witness and translator fees. The first murder, that of David Darst by William Watts took place in 1852. The second took place in 1859. A La Crosse lawyer, William Denison, had trespassed on land owned by a German farm family. The family members were unable to convince him to leave their land, and, it was reported at the trial, they had been informed by a "German Justice of the Peace" that they could repel trespassers with force if need be. The accused, Martin Kneifl, had assaulted the lawyer with an axe-handle and killed him. Daniel Raymond, who owned land in the eastern part of Section 22, (160 acres in the East $\frac{1}{2}$ of the East $\frac{1}{2}$), was rewarded with \$300.00 for the apprehension of the accused. A change of venue to Juneau County was granted for the Kneifl trial, and considerable fees were paid to transport the family and witnesses. Some names mentioned as witnesses are those of Charles Negle and Mrs. Negle and James Lauderbech. (sic)

In 1853 the Pruett, Markle and Roach families arrived, as well as Hosmer and Miller, bachelors. Abraham Pruett settled in Section 24, a G. Markle in Sections 19 and 30; J. Rouch in Section 14, Christian Miller in Section 23, and J.F. "Hosmer" in Section 23. The 1855 census showed the county population as 3904, most of the people living in the area of the village of La Crosse.

The city received its special charter and went from an unincorporated area to city status by legislative act in 1856.

In 1857 the city paid \$6000.00 for land to become the "poor house farm", located in the North $\frac{1}{2}$ of the Northwest quarter of Section 15. This later ^{(by 1862, according to James Cannon, Jr.,} became a county institution but until then the city cared for indigent county residents and billed the county at a rate of 50 cents per day. Welfare payments were occasionally made by the county or the city to the Town of Greenfield or Shelby for the care of non-resident paupers. Usually it would be the supervisors who would respond at the request of a neighbor to lend aid or to authorize cash payments to resident paupers on a temporary basis. Sometimes the aid would amount to covering burial expenses or to escorting the mentally ill from other places to their homes in Shelby. The names Valentine Deininger and Frank Metz are among those listed as operators of the poor farm.

The original city limits in the area of the town of Shelby extended along Losey Boulevard, dividing Sections 4 and 9, and then followed the South line of Sections 9, 8, and 7, where Ward Avenue now runs. At one time this East-West road was known as West Losey .

By 1856 numerous settlers were moving into the area. One sizeable group came from Switzerland and settled mainly in Mormon Coulee. Some were the first to file on their land, but most found it necessary to purchase land from the original owners. By 1861 these families had established a church and church school, and were beginning to take part in local politics. Among them were John Schild and Peter Kienholz in Section 13, 18 & 19 J. Fleck in Section 7 (Township 15 North, Range 6 West), John Bernett in Section 24, Jacob Springer (Sprenger) and a Mr. Schweizer in Section 13, and Christian Schmoker in Section 24. Though these residents were of the Swiss Reformed Church (Later called German Reformed Church), they welcomed as their longtime

pastor the German Lutheran Evangelist minister William Hass. The Church survives today as the Trinity United Church of Christ. Originally located near the "Kienholz Cemetery" off Highway 14 in Section 17, the church was first moved, and then razed and replaced by a modern structure, though not without considerable effort to save the building. A Centennial history of the church and its community was written by Edwin Kunert and provides some interesting details of the life of the people of Mormon Coulee during those early years. A family history in the possession of Mrs. William (Gretchen) Winder describes in good detail the hardships of the voyage to the New World of the Reverend Hass and his large family.

William Hass settled on land in Section 12, ^{before 1866} and by 1890 his children Martin, Samuel, Reinhold, and William, Jr. had purchased land in sections 11 and 13 as well. An H. Hass may refer to his daughter, Wilhelmina Henrietta Elizabeth, ^{or Hannah} though this is conjecture. The degree to which this family was accepted in the Reformed community is visible in the extent to which the Hass family intermarried. Wilhelmina Henrietta married Christian Schmoker, Maria Cristina married Peter Kienholz, Jr., and Hannah married Caspar Schild. The wives of the male offspring of William Hass are not as easily traced by family name.

Those early Mormon Coulee residents, the Philip Jung family, had gradually acquired more land through purchase. A settler at the mouth of the coulee in 1844 or 1845, Philip pre-empted on 40 acres in 1851. His granddaughter, Elsie, lives on the original land. According to her, Philip and his wife, Marie Beckel had come to this area from Shelby, ^{Ill} Ohio in 1845, and it was that town which gave its name to the Town of Shelby. Accord-

ing to another source, ^{Lewis Kemmel, Jr} Marie's brother, Jacob Beckel came to work on the farm in 1845, left after a year, and returned to Ohio. After 11 years Beckel returned (1856) and settled in Shelby. The Greenfield tax rolls of 1861 list him with a residence and 8 acres of land in the Northeast quarter of the Northwest quarter of Section 27, and in 1866 he owned land in the North half of the Northwest quarter as well.

Missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church were sent from the Upper Iowa conference to the area around La Crosse in the 1850's. By 1860 local societies had formed to minister to the spiritual needs of the people, conducting preaching services, prayer and class meetings, Sunday Schools, et cetera. Two communities served by these missionaries were in Chipmunk and Mormon Coulees. Though the residents of Chipmunk Coulee were largely Catholic German Bohemians, they responded enthusiastically to these circuit riders, who were "ready to pray with a penit ent sinner under a tree in the woods or on the lee side of a hay stack, and administer all religious rites when necessary."

> Some surnames associated with the Chipmunk Coulee Church are: Starch, Tietze, Paudler, Bendel, Kuhnert, Hieckel, and those not current when this report was written: Uhl, Ringel, Ritschel, Lies. Early members in the Mormon Coulee Church were: Markle, Ott, Sprenger, Egler, and Bernet. The Mormon Coulee Congregation had disbanded by 1887. In that year the Chipmunk Church joined the North Side (La Crosse) Congregation, which in 1919 united with the La Crosse (Salzer) Church. Missionaries still served the Chipmunk Church in 1929, and in 1932 the congregation still owned the church lots and cemeteries in both coulees.

The church has been removed from the lot in Mormon Coulee, and stands now half hidden by trees near the La Crosse Mobile Home Court, on the North side of Mormon Coulee Road. The cemetery, on the Edwin Kunert farm South of Highway 14 in Section 19 is only partially maintained and is generally overgrown, though there is a gravestone marked as recently as _____ . The Church in Chipmunk Coulee stands below the road (South) and the cemetery is on a steep slope North of the road. It is still active and well kept.

A third mission ^{community} is referred to--located on Brinkman's Ridge. Though in Vernon County, the cemetery on Old Orchard Lane on Brinkman Ridge Road contains many names similar to those in Chipmunk Coulee. This cemetery is also active and well kept. I have made no search for a church that may have served this rural area.

In discussing cemeteries, it may be well to mention a number of small graveyards which seem to have evolved from family resting places. In Section 23 just East of County Trunk MM and across from the Pineview Mobile Home Court is the Oehler cemetery. The care of this cemetery is through a trust fund administered by the town, though the town has no records of graves or lots. East of Bean's Greenhouse, on the South side of Highway 14 there is another small cemetery, hidden by a row of tall fir trees, very overgrown, an apparently the recipient of occasional vandalism which has not been repaired. The county pays a small fee to provide for the mowing of an area containing one or two lots.

The Gabel family name and some others familiar to old-time residents of the Town appear on headstones in a cemetery

on a side hill South of Old Town Hall Road in Section 27. Cared for for 2 or 3 years by residents of the Maple Grove community, the cemetery in 1978 was overgrown, though still being visited by relatives of the deceased.

I have not visited two other cemeteries in the town of Shelby, but am referred to a private cemetery of about 30 graves--one of them occupied by the Reverend William Hass (see comments on Trinity Reformed Church). This cemetery is on the lands of D. Helke in Section 13. Another cemetery on private land contains about five graves and is located on "a hill in Breidel Coulee."

The largest cemetery--called the Kienholz cemetery is well maintained by cemetery association of which Fred and Herbert Kramer are officers. Herbert keeps the record of interments, and the book can be a good source of lost names--those in which family names are lost through marriage of daughters...at least some of the maiden names are included in this text, while most often not listed on headstones.

This cemetery is located on a small dome-shaped hill on its own road North off Highway 14 in Section 19. This was the early location of the German Reformed Church (see comments on Trinity Reformed Church) PP 5 & 9

There was no Catholic Church located in the town of Shelby, but communicants of that faith could travel to La Crosse or Saint Joseph Ridge in the present Town of Greenfield. The Catholic Cemetery on the East side of Losey Boulevard is the final resting place of many former residents. The small Jewish Cemetery, called Ansche Chesed, is located just South of the Catholic Cemetery. A large private cemetery, Woodlawn, contains an area reserved by the town for

area servicemen. The Catholic and Jewish Cemeteries and Woodlawn have been annexed to the city of La Crosse.

(to continue listing of early settlers of the town.

David Mader settled between State Road and Mormon Coulees in 1853. Other settlers during that year, according to Louis Pammel, Jr. were Daniel Raymond and Abram Pruett. In 1855 Germans Joseph Tausche, and Joseph Janel settled in Greenfield. The early settlers were not permanent and were soon replaced by Germans, who settled in State Road Coulee. During Pammel's childhood, all were German except the Whipples and the Bells in Mormon Coulee.

Frank Mader was a farmer and later a brickmaker. The Weimars, Sebastian and Valentine, were farmers and brickmakers as well, as well as Schnells.

Louis Pammel, Sr. was a candlemaker and butcher in the city in 1858., and, according to his son, built the second brick building in the city, which later became the Norge House Hotel.

According to Pammel, Jr. George Gabel arrived in the early 1860's, after the California Gold Rush. However the journal of Greenfield shows George Gabel serving a local government function in 1857.

For names of officers of the Town of Greenfield, see Appendix _____

In addition to the ^{listing of names in the appendix} other names from the Shelby appearing in the journal of Greenfield include H.W. McNeill (who was a teacher, according to Peter Kienholz papers). He served as an election clerk in 1857. In 1865 one T. Trott was reimbursed by the town for spending \$10.00 for a road scraper for road District #1. (Abridge across Mormon Creek in the same year cost the town \$125, paid to Samuel McKown, who was men-

tioned as a mill operator, but not listed in the tax rolls in the Shelby area. Henry Lauterbach was road District #2 supervisor, J. Belling, Road District # 3. In 1866 Valentine Weimar received a payment for extra road work.

A draft club organized during the Civil War, and funded by the town for \$200.00 was dispersed in 1866 with the payment of \$10.00 each to E. Muenzenberger, Jacob Kaiser, Peter Herter, Peter Kienholz, Sr., Nicholas Feyen, Charles Schmalz, Valentine and Sebastian Weimar, H. Lauterbach, M. Egger, Emil Uhl, J. Doerflinger, David Mader, John Rupp, William Meyer, John Kornick, S. McKown, John Hansen and J. Weidert. In the following year, Christian Moeller received the last \$30.00 of the bonus.

In 1867 Peter Kienholz received a payment of \$5.76 for costs of a suit for the town. but no details were given. Louis Pammel, Sr. was awarded \$22.75 for sheep killed by dogs. This money was eventually returned to the Town by the County from the dog tax fund, just as, later, bounty money was paid to the Town by the county on the basis of the number of nuisance wild animals that had been disposed of.

The county minutes record that the Town of Campbell's southern border was to run along the line between Townships 15 and 16 North. This Town was apparently named after E.D. Campbell, who became a Lieutenant-Governor of the State in 18. His residence was in the Northeast quarter of the Southeast quarter of Section 21. Leonard Gabel recalls that, *his mother's childhood friend was* Sophie, daughter of Mrs. Campbell, and that the family was living in very reduced circumstances in the 1870's or 1880's.

A County drainage fund was in operation in 1859. These funds were distributed to the towns on the four principal highways leading out of La Crosse in 1863. In 1859 \$75.00 was paid by the county to the Town of Greenfield for repairs on a bridge in Mormon Coulee on the road to Bad Ax County. In 1860 the state turned over to the county for sale certain swamp and overflow lands which had been withheld from public auction.

1861 marks the year in which the name of the Town of Buchanan was changed to the Town of Washington. 1864, Knud Knudson of Section 6 (15-6) served on the County Board of Supervisors from Greenfield.

1865 was a year in which Jacob Beckel ^{testified} in an inquest. The county paid \$100.00 to Greenfield for work on the Mormon Coulee Bridge on the State Road in Section 19 (15-6)

In 1866, December, the first mention occurs of a petition of "Jacob Beckel and others praying for a division of the Town of Greenfield". In January of 1867 the same petition and a "Remonstrance against the Same were taken up and considered and after some debate" laid over.

On February 20 the County Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted the following Order :

The County Board of Supervisors of La Crosse County do Order and determine as follows:--First

All that Portion of the Territory of the Town of Greenfield as at present constituted lying in township fifteen (15) North of Range Seven (7) West, and sections Seven (7) Eighteen (18) Nineteen (19) Thirty (30) and Thirty-one (31) of Township fifteen (15) North of Range Six (6) West together with that

portion of Territory of the Town of Barre as at present constituted lying and being included in Section Six (6) of Township fifteen (15) North of Range Six (6) West, is set off and detached from the towns of Greenfield and Barre respectively and said portions of Territory so detached and set off from said Towns are hereby created, constituted and erected into a Town to be called and Known as the Town of Shelby.

Second

The first Town meeting in the Town of Shelby shall be held in the School district now known as School District Number One (1) in said Town of Greenfield.

Third

All that portion of the Territory of the Town of Barre as heretofore constituted lying and being included in Sections one (1), Two (2) Three (3) Four (4) and Five (5) of Township fifteen (15) North of Range Six (6) West is hereby detached and set off from the Said Town of Barre and the Same is hereby annexed to and is made a part of the Town of Greenfield.

Other names from Shelby appearing in the financial journal include H.W. McNeill, some time school teacher (according to the papers of Wm. Kienholz) and frequent election clerk. In 1865 T. Trott was reimbursed for \$10.00 for purchase of a road scraper in District #1. (A bridge across Mormon Creek in the same year cost the town \$125, paid to Samuel McKown--mentioned as a mill operator but not listed in the tax rolls of the Shelby area.) Henry Lauterbach was road supervisor in District #2, J. Belling for Road District #3. Val. Weimar received payment for extra work (above and beyond poll tax and road tax) in 1866.

A Draft Club organized during the Civil War, and funded by the town for \$200.00 was dispersed in 1866 with the payment of \$10.00 each to E. Muenzenberger, Jacob Kaiser, Peter Herter, Peter Kienholz, Sr., Nicholas Feyen, Charles Schmalz, V. Weimar, H. Lauterbach, M. Egger, Emil Uhl, J. Doerflinger, David Mader, John Rupp, Wm. Meyer, John Kornick, S. McKown, John Hansen, J. Weidert, and Sebastian Weimar. In 1867 Christian Moeller received the last \$30.00 of the fund.

Also in 1867 Peter Kienholz received a payment (\$5.76) for costs he incurred in a suit for the town..no details given.

Louis Pammel, Sr. received \$22.75 from the Town for sheep killed by dogs. (This money was reimbursed to the Town by the County from the dog tax fund.)

The County minutes record that the Town of Campbell's southern border was to be along the dividing line between Townships 15 and 16 North. This Town was apparently named after E.D. Campbell, Lieutenant-Governor of the state in _____. Leonard Gabel recalls that, as a child his mother played with Sophie, the daughter of the Widow Campbell and that the family was living in very reduced circumstances (in 1880's???)

At the first annual meeting of the Town of Shelby, April 2, 1867, held at the time and place appointed by the County Board of supervisors, the citizens elected the following slate of officers:

Chairman: John F. Hosmer

Supervisors: George Gabel, Valentine Weimar

Clerk: Peter Kienholz, Jr.

Treasurer: Abraham Pruett

Assessor: E.D. Campbell

Justices of the Peace: Tallman Whipple, Frank

Birkenmeyer, Gotthelf Herold, Charles Linse

Constables: Walter Bell, Emmanuel Markle, Charles Belling

Sealer of Weights and Measures: Joseph Gautsch.

At least 61 electors participated in the election. All officers were elected for 1 year terms, except for a Justice of the Peace elected for 2 years and one Justice for 3 years.

The road supervisors were appointed by the board on April 9, 1867 and commissioned to make lists of all property owners in the respective districts and to get recommendations of the residents as to the most appropriate boundaries. The Road Book of the Town of Shelby contains a central section in which the first provisional districts and all succeeding road districts are outlined. From a beginning of 4 districts the Town reached a grand total of 9. (in 1909).

The first overseers were District#1: Martin Mader; #2: Christian Moeller; #3 Charles Linse and deputies Henry Lauterbach and Joseph Breidel; #4: Charles Belling and deputy Ignatz Reise.

A tax was voted upon at the annual meeting, but due to

an error by an "assistant clerk" was not recorded until November. The residents taxed themselves with a general property tax of \$500.00 for current expenses, and with a road tax of 4 mills on the dollar. On July 1 the Board of the Town met as a Board of Equalization to examine and correct the assessment rolls for the Town, and then met as a regular Town Board to order the construction of a bridge over Mormon Creek on the State Road near Kienholz's house, and established the boundaries of the Shelby School Districts. (See Section on Schools. The reader is referred to details on school district boundaries recorded in the rear section of the Town of Shelby Road Book. Entries date from July 1, 1867 to March 1, 1965, when all schools in the Town had been attached to the City school District (except for Section 6, attached to the West Salem School District).

In June and July the County prepared its annual apportionment of taxes, based on Acreage for the Town of 19,070.90, with a total equalized value of \$158978.50. At the County annual meeting in November the Town was apportioned a share of State tax (\$452), County tax(\$1112.84), and a School Tax (\$94.20 plus \$50.20....county school tax and superintendent's salary).

The Clerk's calculations of December indicated delinquent road taxes of \$154.90, and District School taxes of: #1 (Jt.)\$103.81, #2 \$300.00; #3 \$100.00; and #6(Jt) \$18.10. The clerk also listed dog owners for taxation, but found in January that his list was in error, making it necessary to repay the \$1.00 per animal tax.

In December the town also conducted the General Election for State Offices, including a Bank Comptroller and a State Prison Commissioner. In addition to the usual County Offices, the townspeople approved an amendment to the State

Constitution and an amendment to the State Banking Law. The electors totaled 79.

At two meetings in March, 1868 the board readied its annual report. Among the items dealt with was the "final" settlement with the Town of Greenfield on the distribution of the school district taxes of the precedent year. Division was made on the basis of $2/5$ and $3/5$, the larger amount to go to Shelby.

At the 1868 annual meeting the town voted a 5 mill road tax and \$150.00 for incidental expenses. New Road District Overseers were elected, and the town passed a resolution that for the ensuing year, "hogs shall not be allowed to run at large. Among new officers elected was Prokopp Mickschl, Sealer of Weights and Measures an office which was to disappear....._____.

Within a week the Clerk affirmed that he had posted the by-laws passed at the annual meeting at the three places judged by him to be the three most public places of the town: At the house (tavern) of Jacob Beckel, at the house (tavern) of H. Funk and on the fence on the public highway leading from the State road Cooley to the city of La Crosse near the mouth of said cooley.

In the following week the Board met to order two bridges to be built, to authorize payment to M. Bondro (Bundru) for losses of sheep to dogs. and to authorize an on the site examination of the feasibility of the road leading from the ridge through Schuhmann cooley to Oehlers Mills. The board later commissioned a survey of this road, which is recorded in the Road Book of Town of Shelby.

Names mentioned in the Board of Review meeting in June

include T. Whipple, J. Beckel, and John Bell. They were the owners of bees assessed at a combined total of \$315.00. In October the board met to make up Voting Register lists "as far as the same were known to them". Later in October the Board ran into some difficulty with a contractor, Richard de Colon, who was ^{asked} to prove that he had done work to a certain value on the State road Cooley Hill road.

Further examination of his work in 1869 was to find his work not up to specifications and he was taken off the job, not without considerable argument.

In November the town conducted another General Election, this one for the President and Vice-President (or rather, for their electors from the state of Wisconsin, who are listed in detail in the minutes), for U.S. Representative, State Senator, and Assembly for the First District of La Crosse County. The Town electors chose William Van Zandt County Board supervisor from district number 3, with a total of 58 votes. (96 voters participated in the General Election..

In 1869 the Town voted the same taxes as the previous year. The Board set up Road District #5, disallowed a road petition by Valentine Gabel, and acted as a mediator in a road dispute, and authorized ^{the sale of} licenses for Spirits for \$20.00, to be collected by Christian Moeller. In October a license was issued to Prokopp Mikschell, and by the end of the year the clerk reported that other licenses were issued to Frank Leide, & Jacob Beckel. An appendix to this History will carry some details on holders of tavern licenses in the Town's early years, as well as some information of the cost of those licenses, and the location of some of the 'saloons'.

At this point it might be well to remark on the nature and purposes of Town government. Unlike Villages and Cities, which as municipal corporations had "home rule", Towns seem to have been creatures of the State government, their main reason for existence being to collect taxes and to conduct elections. As for self-determination, they were limited to selecting officers who could help solve road disputes, plan roads to provide for safe travel, and in general, keep the peace. They had no power to pass laws, determine crimes, or even to enforce laws unless so deputized by the County. Such regulations as they were able to pass served as local ordinances and were enforced by the Justices of the Peace with financial penalties, default on which would be punishable by withholding of licenses or lawsuits.

The restrictions on the powers of the Town Board, and the nature of services they were enabled to provide, as well as the principle of local control of taxes, explains the emphasis placed on construction of roads in the town.

The Road Book of the Town of Shelby contains many entries relating to the surveys for roads planned through the town. In the first part of the book the Clerk, Peter Kienholz, Jr., recorded copies of roads commissioned by the Town of La Crosse, and the Town of Greenfield.

The following is a brief description of some of those early roads:

In 1852....Town Of La Crosse..4 rods wide beginning at the intersection of 5th and Main Streets, and running Easterly to the Section corner between Sections 5,6,31,and 32 (on North line of the present Town of Shelby) then alternately Northeast and Southeast to end inthe State Road leading from

Netcens to La Crosse (I have not been able to decipher which street and highway this refers to.)

1853 survey, 1854 lay out of a road 4 rods wide beginning at the Mississippi River at Pearl "next below Levy's store" and running Southeast to the Section corner of Sections 15, 16, 21, and 22, then continuing South, Southeast, Northeast and Southeast to the County Line with Bad Ax County at the corner of Sections 2, 3, 34, and 35, on the range line between Townships 14 and 15 North, Range 6 West. This is an original route of U. S. 14-61.

Another survey of 1853 begins at the $\frac{1}{4}$ post on the Township line between Sections 3 and 34 and running...in a general Northerly direction. This seems to be the first survey of what evolved into Highway 35. The road was ordered laid out in 1854.

1857 Town of Greenfield, survey of a section of road that seems to correspond with part of County Trunk F. It ran from the Southeast corner of Section 1 South to the old State Road that ran from La Crosse to Reedsburg, or Highway 33.

Other surveys in pre-Shelby history include routes approximating Lauterbach road, Breidel Coulee, Ebners Coulee and Leske Roads. There are alterations planned for Highway 33 and 35, as well as a fairly complete survey of the old Chipmunk Coulee road, most of which is today called County Trunk K in La Crosse and Vernon Counties. Further surveys of Mormon Coulee State Road also appear.

The first survey commissioned by the Town of Shelby was in a response to the petition by the required "six freeholders" of the Town for the alteration of a highway on the Hill in State road cooley. The description begins on

the road surveyed in 1858 (already altered from State Road from Fort Winnebago to La Crosse) near the southeast corner of Section 1 running eorth and East to the East line of Section 1, then North on the Section line, then Southwest to a point near the creek at the foot of the hill in the altered road, to be 4 rods wide. This seems to have been one of many attempts to domesticate the precipitous descent down Irish Hill. (Incidentally I have been unable to find any reference to the origin of this name for the hill. For the most part it is referred tow as the State Road Coulee Hill.

Another survey in 1868 retraces the whole of MM.

The Road book also contains release of damages signed in 1869 by Jacob Beckel, Anton Dietze (later Tietze) , Florian Heller, Henry Lauterbach, and Valentine and Gottfried Oehler, Joseph Herlitzka, George Gabel, John Huggler.

In 1871 the clerk recorded the assumption by the Town of a private road through sections 26 and 27 and the lands of E. Markle . This road

By 1870 valuation in the town had reached \$173,856 and the tax levy was \$2511.56, including State, County, School and town taxes.

In March to August of that year the town lost an action in the courts and were required to pay a settlement of \$110.00 to J. C. Moody, who had "sustained loss or damages on his team and sleds on the hill at the head of State Road Cooley. Throughout the history of the town other law suits for injuries to property and persons cost the tax-payers money which might better have been spent on improvements to roads.

Later in that year one of the constables was ordered to "marry the woman he is living with or make sufficient provision to support the offsprings of said woman".

By 1871 bids for bridge construction were being advertized in the Nordstern and the Republican. Later newspapers carrying official notices for the town were the Leader and the Liberal Democrat. In May the board resolved to "notify persons selling strong ardent or intoxicating drinks within this town to take out a license for the same or stop that their business right away". No names were mentioned but at different times over the next 10 years Henry Funk and Matthias Blumer had difficulty renewing their licenses. In 1879 August Strobel was charged with operating an illegal saloon at the mouth of State Road Cooley. There is no record that he ever took out a license. (In 1872 a similar licensing problem arose, with the warning that violators were "liable of being refused license for the running term of office of the Board. In 1874 the Board resolved to prosecute M. Blumer for "wholeselling liquor without having acquired license".

The chronic problem of controlling stray animals surfaced time and again. In addition to the county dog tax, with funds paid out to owners losing stock to dogs, the town or individuals in the town attempted to do something about the problem/ In 1872 George Gabel initiated a motion to put a collar on all dogs and to enforce the county dog laws. He would have the collars bear the name of the owner. In 1876 Charles Linse's motion failed. It would have imposed a fine on all stray cattle running at large. In 1878 Franz Riese promised in a letter to the annual meeting to restrain

his cattle and asked others to care for their own stock.

In 1877 at the annual meeting a total of 87 votes were cast for the town chairman. A budget was approved that included \$150.00 for incidentals, \$400.00 for roads and a 3 mill road tax which was to be paid in labor. The total tax levy in December amounted to \$3,143.19 on a valuation of \$174,748.00.

By 1887 the 3 mill road tax was to be paid in cash. August Heth (sic) requested help to build a flatboat ferry and footbridge to Goose Island. The town offered \$50.00 but he felt more should be forthcoming, as the Town of Bergen (Vernon County) had promised \$60.00. The Town of Shelby decided to wait until the work was done before committing more money to the project. There is no further mention of this project in the minutes.

Before that time, in 1879, the State law relating to the presence of noxious weeds in rural areas required the reading of a special notice at all annual meetings. In 1881 the quarries, lime kilns, brickyards of the town were subjected to a special reassessment. In 1882 George Gabel and other downstream residents asked the board to sue M. Blumer for deficiencies in his dam. Also in that year an overall reassessment required the hiring of 3 assessors for the town.

In 1883 the board first organized itself as a Board of Health, naming Dr. J. A. Renggly, a resident, as Health Officer. In 1885 the Board of Health began to respond to complaints about the slaughter houses, a bone factory, swineyards, cesspools and "nates" on the bank of the slough and along the public highway. In that same year the report of an epidemic of glanders (or at least an outbreak) in the Schams Brothers' stables required the attention of the Board of Health. In 1886 the town set up guideboards showing directions on the main highways out of La Crosse.

In 1897 at the annual meeting, 210 voters passed a budget of \$1000 for all purposes and 2 mills in labor. At this time a new notice was required reading at all annual meetings that of the prairie and forest fire regulations. The town at this meeting began naming a person as weed commissioner to inspect and destroy the "noxious" weeds. For some years this post was known as the "Commissioner of Canada Thistles".

In 1907, as in other years, the reading of these notices was suspended. The road district superintendents were to act as weed commissioners. The assessor, Martin Hass, was assigned to complete his duties for a salary of \$110.00. In that year the town was to collect taxes for local purposes of \$800.00 for all purposes and a 2 mill road tax to be paid in labor. 94 voters participated in the elections. By December the board discovered it would need some \$300.00 additional tax revenue to complete the fiscal year.

By 1913, with changes in the State Constitution, the town no longer had to deal with the collection of the poll tax, and the labor--road tax also disappeared.

In 1917, 116 voters of the town voted \$400.00 for current expenses, \$1000 for roads and Bridges, and \$1300 for permanent improvements, which amount was to be met by the county and state. (The 1913 constitutional changes now permitted the state to engage in permanent improvements.) The board disallowed a bill from the Town of Greenfield for work done on the Breidel Coulee Road, and resolved to appeal a County decision all the way to the Supreme Court. There is no mention that Shelby ever paid for this work. The County instilled the "Poor Farm Bridge", and the town paid $\frac{1}{2}$ the cost on the bill, forwarding to the county the money received from the state funds.

In 1927 only 71 persons voted for current expenses of \$800.00 . \$4000.00 for roads and bridges, with appropriations from that fund for special work on Lauterbach Road and South Ridge. In Dec. 1936 the bud budget set the tax levy at 15 mills for a total tax bill of \$23,509.13. In 1937, 443 citizens voted for a budget with \$600.00 for current expenses , \$1600.00 for roads and bridges , \$2000 for Chipmunk Coulee Road and \$1500.00 for Garbers Coulee Road.

By 1947 the town had begun electing ;its officers for 2 year terms, ;(in 1945 this had begun, and in 1946 only 48 persons attended the annual meeting.)

173 voters at the 1947 annual meeting passed on \$3500 for roads and b bridges, \$1500 for fire protection and \$1000 for road machinery.

The 1948 meeting drew 406 voters who , after voting \$8000 for roads and bridges, \$2000 for fire, and @500 for salaries, decided that in the future the annual meeting would be hald on the Saturdays preceding the spring elections.

By 1949 \$12000 was approved for roads and bridges. Another large budget jump in 1951 gave \$25,000 for roads, \$7000 for current expenses \$7000 for buildigns and equipment (the new machine shop behind Hillview home) .

In 1957 1138 voters turned out to vote., one of the items being the referendum on daylingt savings time, which received the approval of 711 voters.

The annual meeting passed a budget including \$34,000 for adminis- tration, #5,000 for maintenance of roads and streets, \$50,000 for new construction of roads and streets, \$7500 fpr parks , and \$6000 for fire protection. It can be seen that the period of rapid growth, the era of annexation