

The Making of Pepin County
by
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Pepin County was created by a special act of the Wisconsin Legislature on February 25, 1858. The act was special in that all legislative actions of the day not related to taxing or spending were called "special acts" of the legislature. However, the act to create Pepin County was also special in that it prompted a surprising political stir in the state legislature in Madison, especially in the Assembly Town and County Organization Committee, which was uncommonly divided on the action to create this new county.

Pepin County became the smallest county in the state of Wisconsin and the most unusually shaped, resembling a square root sign with a tail: $\sqrt{\quad}$. Its curious shape and small size have been sources of wonder throughout the county's history. Skeptical legislators in 1858 pointed to the proposed county's size and shape as evidence of the improper intentions of the petitioners who were requesting its creation.¹ Since then, discontented local citizens and critics have claimed taxpayers would be better off if Pepin dissolved as a county and be reattached to Dunn County, from which it was severed, or be divided among neighboring Dunn, Pierce, Eau Claire and Buffalo Counties.

Pepin County was born onto a land with a long history of contention. The fertile river valleys from ancient times had abundant and diverse flora and fauna. The expansive sand loam prairies and the thick hardwood forests were filled with resources. Prehistoric peoples coveted the resources of the lower Chippewa River and upper Mississippi River valleys. Various Indian tribes relied on the abundant hunting, fishing, foraging, etc. and regularly fought with each other for access to these resources.

The early Europeans were first attracted to the abundant wildlife in the Big Woods of Western Wisconsin and added to the already high demand for its resources. By the early nineteenth century, white settlers from the eastern United States were less interested in the wildlife and native plant foods and simply wanted the Big Woods. Wealthy individuals and corporations came to cut down the great white pine forests to fill the demand of a growing population in the middle of the North American continent. Speculators soon followed to get a share in the commerce and development that came with milling lumber, clearing fields, constructing houses and buildings, and selling goods needed by the people in the burgeoning new towns and cities.

Many early settlers, eastern Americans and European immigrants, came here with dreams of establishing farms, building homes, settling towns, developing new communities, and helping them grow and prosper. Any one of those new communities with the right amount of hard work and luck might become the next St. Louis or Detroit and bring wealth and prosperity to its founding fathers.

Such were the circumstances in the early 1850s, when William Boyd Newcomb surveyed and platted the Village of North Pepin on 40 acres of land he had homesteaded and received from the United States government.² Within a couple years, his village had become a bustling hub of commerce, the most important port on Lake Pepin, a 30-mile long lake-like widening of the Mississippi River. With its location near the mouth of the Chippewa River, the village was a gateway to the great pineries to the north.

The "Father of the Village of Pepin," Newcomb can also be regarded as the "Father of Dunn County," created in 1854, and the "Father of Pepin County," created in 1858. Newcomb was chief among many citizens who signed petitions requesting the creations of both Dunn and Pepin

counties. He was the driving force behind each effort, and, his is the only name still linked to the petitions, which have been lost to history.

William Boyd Newcomb . . . one of the most picturesque characters in the history of Pepin village and county, and who may, indeed, be called the father of the village, was born in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, Nov. 24, 1822. . . . He acquired a good common school education, and in 1843, having attained his majority, came west to Fort Madison, Iowa, where he engaged in teaching school. . . . In 1846, he came to Pepin.... He went to Menomonie, Wis., in 1847 and worked as a lumberman and pilot. On June 19, 1849, he married Hester Foster. . . . In 1850, Mr. Newcomb came to Pepin township to live, and in the following year made a claim to the southwest quarter of Section 25, township 23, range 15, and built a house on what is now lot 2 block 9, which was the first house in the village. . . . He always took an interest in public enterprises. At one time he purchased the outfit of Pepin Independent [a local newspaper published 1856-58]. . . . He joined the Republican Party soon after its formation and was ever afterward one of its active members in Pepin. Among the various public positions he held were those of justice of the peace, postmaster, township treasurer, county treasurer, and he was the first county recorder.³

Newcomb and the other petitioners were unhappy with the delivery of services in civil and criminal matters in their remote section of then Chippewa County. Chippewa Falls, the

county seat, was more than 50 miles (about two days ride by horse) away. The petitioners may have felt taxes were inequitably levied and public moneys unfairly distributed throughout the large county. As Wisconsin's population grew, so did the pressures on elected officials of geographically large counties to provide expected services quickly and efficiently. Petitions for dividing counties into more manageable sizes were being introduced in the Wisconsin legislature on a regular basis by the mid-1800s and the state senate and assembly both had standing Town and County Organization Committees.

Newcomb's petition to create the new Dunn County in 1854 was readily approved at the state Capitol, and he and his co-petitioners quickly accomplished their mission. The new Dunn County would be a 24-mile wide strip of land stretching 54 miles north-to-south; its southwestern boundary the Mississippi River.

That the state legislature in the 1850s was accustomed to creating new counties seems to have been lost on historians, who, less than 50 years later, wondered at how quickly Dunn County was created.

The present generation may never know the log-rolling that brought all this about. But note the celerity of action. . . .

The Journal of the Assembly shows that William M. Torbert, then representing the counties of La Pointe, St. Croix, Pierce and Polk in the assembly, presented to that body . . . on January 21, 1854, a petition of William B. Newcomb and others for the organization of a new county. . . . on January 24, the committee of which Mr. [W.J.] Gibson was chairman acting on the petition of Mr. Newcomb reported a bill for the organization

of . . . [Dunn County]. . . . On January 27, this bill was considered in committee of the whole and reported back without amendment. On January 28, it was reported as correctly engrossed [sic], and on the same day read a third time and passed.

The Senate Journal shows that this bill was, on January 30, reported to that body as having been passed by the Assembly; that on the thirty-first the Senate heard the bill read a third time and passed it.

. . . on February 1, the bill was reported back [to the Assembly] . . . on February 2, it was reported as properly enrolled. . . . [the bill] was approved by Governor William A. Barstow on the third day of February, 1854. . . .

The petition was presented January 21 and . . . 13 days later, was signed and approved by the Governor. . . .

Records state that William Boyd Newcomb and others petitioned the legislature to act. But, why did they petition and, who were the others who joined in the petition? The petition itself was doubtless cast aside as it cannot now be found in the state archives.⁴

Dunn County was set off from Chippewa County on February 19, 1854, by Chapter 7, General Laws of 1854.⁵ The county seat was to be located in Dunnville on Amos Coburn's property at or near the ferry crossing of the Red Cedar River near its mouth.⁶

The Wisconsin Legislature called for a general election of county officers for November, 1854. The officers elected included: William Cady, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors and

Register of Deeds; Henry Eaton, Treasurer; Thomas B. Wilson, Surveyor; Alex Hamel, Coroner; and Willard Holbrook, Sheriff.⁷ Four years later, Holbrook would play a pivotal role in the first organizational meeting of the county board of supervisors in the newly created Pepin County.

Newly created counties often had problems organizing, and one of many obstacles they faced was finding candidates qualified to serve in elected offices.

An old appointment book . . . shows William B. Newcomb of North Pepin was appointed register of deeds for Dunn County on May 3, 1855. North Pepin was then in Dunn County. . . . The appointment of Mr. Newcomb presupposes a vacancy in the office of register of deeds. . . . It is possible that William Cady, elected register of deeds in November of 1854 did not qualify as such officer.⁸

Dunn County struggled seriously enough with its organization efforts that the state legislature intervened and called for a special election of new county officers to be held in November, 1855. Samuel B. French was elected Register of Deeds. The need for a special election in 1855 indicates others elected in 1854 may not have been qualified to hold office. Not only was Samuel French elected Register of Deeds, but voters also elected a new Treasurer, Surveyor and Coroner in November, 1855.⁹

The election of 1855, being an odd year, indicates that it was a special election. . . . Mr. French, having been elected register of deeds at such special election, would, if he qualified, take the office and supplant Mr.

Newcomb, the appointed officer, for the remainder of the regular term of two years to which William Cady had been elected in 1854. . . .¹⁰

Mr. Newcomb very likely questioned:

. . . whether an appointee to fill a vacancy held [the office] for the remainder of the full term or only until a successor should be elected at a special election to fill such vacancy. . . . [Receiving no satisfactory legal ruling] Mr. Newcomb refused to turn the books pertaining to his office over to him [French] . . . [who] hired a young attorney-at-law, who came to Menomonie to locate, to go to North Pepin and get the books. Mr. French stated that the attorney got the books but he was under the impression that they were procured by tact and force rather than by writ and due process of law.¹¹

That Dunn County continued to struggle during its initial attempts to organize its government was further indicated when the State Legislature, in the spring of 1856, ordered still another general election for the following November and specified those elected would take office January 1, 1857.¹²

By 1856, no organized townships had yet been created in the now two-year-old county, so the whole territory of Dunn County was declared a single township and its citizens were authorized to elect town supervisors, who were empowered by statute to act as supervisors of the county. Apparently, during the spring of 1856, voters elected three town supervisors: Thomas

Wilson, William Carson and John McCain¹³ (a neighbor and first cousin of William Boyd Newcomb). These three men met as Dunn County Supervisors in August, 1856, and created seven new townships and slated town elections for April, 1857. The seven town chairmen elected would constitute the new county board of supervisors. The townships of Bear Creek and Pepin, which comprised all of what is now Pepin County, were among the seven new townships created. In the town elections in spring of 1857, L. C. Wood was elected to represent Bear Creek and M. M. Davis was elected to represent Pepin.¹⁴

Dunn County's early organizational floundering and the controversy surrounding Samuel French's displacement of William Boyd Newcomb as Register of Deeds likely did not set well with Newcomb. His dissatisfaction and frustration with delivery of county services and lack of representation while part of Chippewa County he now directed toward Dunn County. By spring of 1857, Newcomb and other citizens in the southern-most reaches of Dunn County were plotting their next attempt at creating a new county.

A fire in the fall of 1858 destroyed the building in Dunnville, which Dunn County was using as the county courthouse.¹⁵ Most county records were also destroyed. Whether the Dunn County Board of Supervisors was aware of Newcomb's intentions prior to the state legislature's severing of Bear Creek and Pepin Townships into their own county is unknown. A bigger question may be who he knew and how much individual influence he wielded in Madison to be able to set in motion the legislative process to create a new county for the second time in less than four years. The "log-rolling" that precipitated the creation of Dunn County paled by comparison to that which led to the subsequent creation of Pepin County. William Boyd Newcomb led both efforts.

Newcomb owned considerable land within the new village of North Pepin, which he had surveyed and platted.¹⁶ He and others were convinced Pepin was destined to become the most important port city on Lake Pepin, perhaps along the entire upper Mississippi River. A building boom occurred in North Pepin during its first few years.

In 1857, the North Pepin Independent, the first newspaper in Pepin County, published a description of the village, extolling its growth and potential.

North Pepin, in Dunn County, is beautifully located on the north bank of Lake Pepin, about two miles above the mouth of the Chippewa River, and the foot of the Lake. It is but a little more than one year since the plot of this village was surveyed and recorded. It now contains a population of nearly six hundred, and is rapidly increasing in population, wealth, and commercial importance.

The Village has doubled in population during the last six months, and bids fair to increase in the same ratio for many years to come. It is easily accessible by any of the steamboats running on the upper Mississippi. Choice farms can be obtained in the immediate neighborhood of the village at government price.

The country around North Pepin is rich in its agricultural resources; and from its proximity to the great pineries on the Chippewa, Menomonee or Red Cedar, Eau Claire, and Eau Galle Rivers, will ever afford a good home market. At present, the home demand far exceeds the supply. The wants of this market offer great inducements for stock raising.

The best locations for stock farms can be had within fifteen miles of town at Government prices.

North Pepin will eventually become the shipping mart for the entire Chippewa Valley; and already commands the trade of a larger region of country than any other village on the Wisconsin side of the Mississippi, between La Crosse and Prescott.

Village property, though fast rising in value, is not yet held at an exorbitant rate. The location of the village, near the foot of Lake Pepin, and commanding a view of its southern shore for many miles, which shore is rife with the most imposing and beautiful scenery on the western waters and surrounded by a country rich in its varied resources, is such as to make sure of its finally becoming a wealthy, commercial city. It is now the largest and most important commercial town in Dunn County, and the same on Lake Pepin. The Village of North Pepin and country around offer superior inducements to men of all classes, who desire to secure a home and paying business in the western country.¹⁷

The author of this article was the editor/owner, Ulysses B. Shaver, who also sold real estate (among other enterprises) and had personal interest in a continuing boom. Shaver's paper carried advertisements promoting his own and others' businesses. He knew Newcomb, who advertised his lots for sale and his notary public business in Shaver's paper. Shaver would also be instrumental in the future organization of the Pepin County Board of Supervisors.

Generally, the *Independent* suffered a lack of local news. The paper mostly contained numerous display and classified ads, some national and international news, occasional stories from other newspapers in the region, human-interest articles, and public notices. The *Independent's* pages had no information related to the brewing controversy that precipitated the creation of Pepin County.

Involvement in government interested few citizens, most of whom were trying to scratch their livings out of the wilderness and had little time to devote to local or county governance. An article in the March 11, 1857, edition of the *Independent* reflected that disinterest and attempted to call readers' attention to the upcoming spring election at which citizens would choose officers for the newly created Town of Pepin, Dunn County. The article reads:

Shall We have a Caucus? On the seventh of next month there is to be an election in the several towns composing the county of Dunn, for the purpose of electing town officers. . . . Now the question arises, shall we wait until the day of election, and then each elector cast his vote as choice dictates, and after much confusion elect a set of officers, some of which, perchance, will not accept the honor conferred upon them, neglect to qualify, and thus compel our citizens to submit to the inconveniences of a vacant town office? Some of our citizens, we think, have learned by this time, (after having been repeatedly sent on a goose-chase to Dunnville) that the annoyance of the several town offices, is nothing compared with the inconvenience of not having them. . . . We have been told, and sorry would we be to give credence to the statement, that there are no competent

men in our town, who have the prosperity of our village at heart, sufficiently to be willing to accept any of the petty, bothersome offices pertaining to the town. . . . If any of our citizens will call a caucus [for the purpose of putting in nomination good and competent men who are willing], they will be welcome to our columns as a medium, through which to make it known.¹⁸

Subsequent editions of the Independent revealed no use of its columns for such political activism. The author's comments about some citizens having been sent on "goose-chases to Dunnville" echo the complaints about lack of services to remote parts of the county, which drove the creation of Dunn County just three years earlier. One of those citizens to go goose-chasing to Dunnville was likely William Boyd Newcomb.

In 1854, the speed at which the bill to create Dunn County breezed through the Assembly and Senate to the Governor's desk was probably typical of the creation of most new counties at the time. Such would not be the case when a new petition from William Newcomb and his contingent of Pepin businessmen was introduced to the legislature on January 19, 1858, by Senator Daniel Mears, a Democrat from Osceola Mills, who represented the 28th Senate District of which Dunn County was a part.

According to the Journal of the Senate of Wisconsin, 1858, Bill No. 26 S, "A bill to divide the county of Dunn, and create the county of Pepin," received its first two readings in the Senate the day it was introduced and was referred to the Committee on Town and County Organization.¹⁹ On January 30, the bill was reported back to the Senate from Committee with a recommendation for its passage.²⁰ Five days later, on Feb. 4, Bill No. 26 S was reviewed by the

Senate Committee of the Whole and recommended for passage without amendment. Later that day it was read a third time, passed, and sent to the Assembly.²¹

According to the Journal of the Assembly of Wisconsin, 1858, the bill was introduced to the Assembly on February 5, read the first and second times, and referred to the Assembly Committee on Town and County Organization. The bill stalled in Committee for more than two weeks before it was finally taken up again by the full Assembly on February 23. By this time, the bill had developed serious opposition from at least two members of the Committee on Town and County Organization.²²

Representatives A. D. Cornwell and A. W. Van Wie opposed the division of Dunn County and submitted a written report, which they demanded be entered into the Journal of the Assembly. Such an entry was unusual for legislative proceedings recorded in the Journal, which typically included only a brief statement of the motion or resolution, who made it, and what action was taken. Mr. Cornwell read the following statement from the floor of the Assembly:

MINORITY REPORT:

The committee on town and county organization, to whom was referred No. 26 S, a bill providing for the division of Dunn county, Have considered the same; but th undersigned, not being able to agree with a majority in the propriety or justice of a division of Dunn county must dissent therefrom. To justify the position taken by them, without more extended communication, state the following:

1st. That in the division of old and the establishing of new counties. regard should be had to the present and also the future effects that

necessarily follow such act. In the matter of convenience of the people, and the amount of taxation to be imposed for the support of county government; taxation should never be made a burden upon any people when it can be avoided. The less area a county has, the more heavily falls taxation upon the inhabitants thereof. No one can fail to see the fact, that the new county proposed to be organized out of a part of Dunn county will be so small, that in a few years taxation must be oppressive.

2d. The shape or form of the new county is such as necessarily, at first look, must strike every one of the impropriety of a division; an eye upon the map will speak a loud language.

3d. If the convenience of the inhabitants be considered, and division follows as a consequence, it will be seen that a new county should also be established from the north half of Dunn county. Those who inhabit the northern part of the county have much farther to go to the county seat, and therefor greater reason to complain on this score than the inhabitants of Pepin and its vicinity. By the proposed division the equilibrium of justice and convenience is not maintained but destroyed.

4th. The people in majority are opposed to the division, so far as can be ascertained from the petitions for and remonstrances against division.

The undersigned recommend that the bill in question be indefinitely postponed. A. D. CORNWELL, A. W. VAN WIE²³

A motion to table the bill and print the Minority Report was made, but was defeated. Following a few more attempts to stall the bill, the main question on the passage of No. 26 S was called for and passed by a vote of 44 to 31. A last ditch effort, a motion to reconsider the vote by which No. 26 S had passed, was eventually tabled and the bill was returned to the Senate.

The following day, Feb. 24, the Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills found No. 26 S properly enrolled and the Assembly had concurred.²⁴ On Feb. 25, opponents mounted one last effort to derail the bill by proposing a resolution instructing the Select Committee on Enrolled Bills to return No. 26 S to the Senate for further consideration.²⁵ The resolution failed by a vote of 12 ayes to 16 noes.²⁶ Later that day, the Joint Committee on Enrolled Bills presented No. 26 S to Governor Alexander William Randall for his signature.²⁷

Start to finish it took 38 days for the legislature to create Pepin County; nearly three times longer than to create Dunn County. For the citizens of Pepin County, the controversy did not end with the governor's signature.

The birth of Pepin County was not greeted with enthusiastic support by everyone back home. Its complicated progression through the state Assembly had been provoked by the considerable objections from residents living in the northern tier of the new county in and around the village of Durand. Durand was located just a few miles south of the Dunn County seat at Dunnville, so inconvenience and delivery of services were not at issue. Citizens in the northern part of the county were irritated because they had not been adequately consulted about the creation of the new county and were even more upset when they had been unable to stop the state Legislature's action.

The first organizational meeting of the new Pepin County was held March 15, 1858, in the office of Ulysses B. Shaver in the village of Pepin.²⁸ Shaver had been appointed County Clerk by the state legislature and Pepin had been designated the county seat.

Shaver called the meeting to order with L. G. Wood of the Town of Bear Creek and L. C. Davis of the Town of Pepin present. Also present was Willard F. Holbrook, who operated a mill in the unincorporated village of Arkansaw in the northern part of the Town of Pepin. The first order of business was to select a board chair. Wood nominated Davis and the two voted unanimously to approve. Davis then took the chair. Following approval of the bonds provided by the Clerk and the Treasurer, the Board adjourned for lunch.

Upon reconvening, Wood presented a resolution to divide the Town of Bear Creek to create two additional towns to be known as Lima and Albany; and to create two additional towns from the Town of Pepin to be known as Waubeek and Frankfort. This motion also established the places for holding the first elections of the new towns. Following Wood's introduction of the resolution, Willard Holbrook made the motion to accept. However, Chairman Davis refused to recognize Holbrook as a member of the board and chastised him for breaking in and disturbing the proceedings. The motion to adopt was then made by Wood, but the motion failed on a one-to-one tie with Wood voting in favor and Davis voting against. The meeting then adjourned.²⁹

Despite this failed action by the county board, local citizens throughout the northern half of the county proceeded to organize themselves into the towns named in the failed resolution. They also continued to voice their objections to creation of the county. On April 6, 1858, at the second town meeting of the Town of Bear Creek following creation of Pepin County, the Town adopted the following resolution:

Whereas the recent division of Dunn County was brought about by a few town proprietors of the Village of Pepin, by unfair means and through selfish motives, and without consulting the people interested, and in opposition to the known wishes and interests of a large majority of the inhabitants of the new County of Pepin, and whereas said County contains only about seven townships of land, and full one-half unfit for settlements, and to support County Government would subject the people to heavy and burdensome taxation,

therefore resolved, First, that while the County of Pepin remains as it now is, we will pay no tax to support County organization.

Second, that the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors of the Town be and is hereby instructed to oppose the levying of any tax by the County Board except for school and state purposes.

Third, that the Chairman of the Town may present his account for services in the County Board to the Town Board to be audited and receive his pay from the Town Treasurer.

Fourth, that the above Preamble and Resolutions be recorded by the Town Clerk as a part of the proceedings of this Town Meeting and preserved as a part of the records of this Town. Nathan Plummer, Town Clerk³⁰

A second meeting of the county board was called at the request of Mr. Wood and was scheduled for July 10, 1858.³¹ During the interim between these first two meetings, the Town of

Pepin held elections; W. D. Barron was elected chair and appeared along with U. B. Shaver at the July meeting. However, Wood failed to show for the meeting, which could not convene for a lack of quorum. Another meeting was then scheduled for September, 1858, during which the Board of County Equalization would determine how the taxes were to be assessed between the two townships.³²

On September 20, the Board of Equalization, consisting of V. W. Dorwin, assessor for the Town of Bear Creek, and P. M. McNery, assessor for the Town of Pepin, and County Clerk U. B. Shaver, met in Shaver's office at Pepin. Two others, Emerson W. Crandall and Charles Owiss, showed up to this meeting claiming to be assessors for the Towns of Albany and Lima respectively. Shaver refused to admit Crandall and Owiss as members not only because they lacked proper credentials, but also because neither of these towns had yet been created. In defiance, Dorwin moved to nominate Charles Owiss to act as chair of the Board of Equalization. Shaver called Dorwin to order. Crandall then seconded Dorwin's motion and Shaver called him to order. Dorwin then stated he "...would not act as a member of this Board if Mr. Crandall and Mr. Owiss were precluded a seat therein, even without credentials legal or illegal, and thereupon put his motion to a vote which was adopted by said Crandall and Owiss...."³³

Mr. McNery refused to take part in the vote and "...immediately and unceremoniously. Mr. Dorwin, Mr. Crandall, and Mr. Owiss retired." McNery, with the consent of the clerk (these two still made a quorum), assumed the chair and immediately adjourned the meeting until the following day. McNery and Shaver met on September 21 to finish the tax equalization. In the minutes of the meeting, Shaver recorded, "On motion of Mr. McNery, returns of the so-called Towns of Albany and Lima were added in with those of Town of Bear Creek."³⁴

The next time the Pepin County Board convened was for its first Annual Meeting on November 9, 1858. Meetings had been called prior to that on October 29 and again on October 30, but quorum was not achieved for either of these meetings.³⁵ It is safe to assume considerable behind-the-scenes politicking and deal-making occurred between September and November because Shaver, the acting chair at the Annual Meeting, recognized without objection the presence of representatives of Albany, Lima and Waubeek in addition to Bear Creek and Pepin. These new towns had taken initiative to hold local board elections the previous spring and had now sent their chairs to this meeting. A transcript of the minutes of the proceedings states:

. . . the following named persons appeared and took seats, the board being first called to order by the Clerk, to wit:

Albany ----- Hiram Turner

Bear Creek --- L. G. Wood

Frankfort----- None

Lima----- Edward Campbell

Pepin ----- Henry D. Barron

Waubeek----- S. B. Washburn³⁶

Henry D. Barron of the Town of Pepin then introduced a resolution rejecting any notion that the Towns of Albany, Lima, Frankfort and Waubeek had actually been created at the March meeting. The minutes state:

Mr. Barron offered the following: Whereas, it is claimed by individuals purporting to be members of this Board that a legal and legitimate session of this Board of Supervisors of the County of Pepin, was held on the fifteenth day of March last, and that then and there Resolutions were in due and legal form adopted, dividing the County of Pepin into towns claiming that those Towns known by the names of Albany, Frankfort, Lima, and Waubeek were created, be it Resolved: that this Board does not regard said meeting, or the proceedings thereof as parliamentary legal, regular, or in conformity with the Revised Statutes and Laws of our State; that we consider said meeting and said proceedings in violation of said Statutes and Laws; that consequently no such Towns as Albany, Frankfort, Lima, or Waubeek, do now exist and that persons claiming to be entitled to seats and membership in this Board therefrom are not entitled to such seats or membership.

Mr. Wood moved to lay the same upon the table, and the ayes and the no's being called for, the motion lay upon the table and was adopted by the following votes:

Ayes -----Campbell, Turner, Washburn, and Wood

No's -----Barron³⁷

Barron, though vastly outnumbered, continued his objections through two more votes. He voted no while the others voted in favor of naming Samuel B. Washburn board chair and then again as the others took action to correct the official record of the March 15 meeting.

Simply stating the March 15 meeting was a legitimate meeting and four additional towns did now exist would not be adequate to establish the necessary legal trail. The new county board amended the minutes of the March meeting to: 1. show that Willard Holbrook had been present and a formal member of the Board at the meeting; 2. strike all words calling Holbrook out-of order and chastising him for his disruption of the meeting; and, 3. insert his name among the "Ayes" for the motion to create the four new towns. The motion to approve the March 15 meeting minutes as amended was passed four-to-one.³⁸

Though Barron voted against amending the minutes, he apparently resolved to cooperate with his new colleagues during the remainder of the meeting. Barron offered a resolution to authorize the county board chair to meet and negotiate with the chair of the Pierce County Board of Supervisors "...to bring about if possible an adjustment and settlement of the dispute and difference of opinion existing in the Counties of Pierce and Pepin as to the boundary line between said Counties...." He also offered a resolution which was approved to further divide the Town of Pepin to create the Town of Stockholm.³⁹

Subsequent meetings of the Pepin County Board during 1859 and 1860 would resolve the boundary issue with Pierce County, divide the Town of Waubeek to create the Town of Waterville, defeat attempts to further divide the Towns of Bear Creek and Pepin, and resolve a boundary dispute between the Towns of Waterville and Frankfort.⁴⁰

The "take over" of the county board by the four northern towns during the early stages of organizing the new county was a harbinger of things to come. The tensions between the northeastern and southwestern parts of the county continued. Shaver's optimistic prediction of the growth of the village of Pepin into the largest port on Lake Pepin soon fizzled with the coming of larger, heavier riverboats which could not access Pepin's too shallow bay. It would

not become the “shipping mart for the entire Chippewa Valley....” The population explosion of 0-to-600 in the village’s first two years would not be repeated. The number of village residents declined for a while, but then showed slow, steady growth which matched the rest of Pepin County.

Meanwhile, the population of Durand and environs, which already held a majority in the 1860’s, would experience steady growth during the next hundred years. The people in the majority would eventually remove the county seat from Pepin to Durand.

At the end of 1861, U. B. Shaver stepped aside as county clerk and was replaced by John Halverson of Durand. Since the county did not yet have a permanent building in which to house its records, pertinent documents would follow from one to the next individual citizen who held an office and would be kept in his home or a rented office. When Shaver was county clerk, records were kept and board meetings were held in his office at Pepin. However, once Halverson became clerk he received approval from the board to rent space for his office in Durand. The county board, which had generally convened in the office of the clerk, began to meet in Durand. Though Pepin was still officially the county seat, most county business began informally shifting to Durand. Eventually, a majority of the county officers lived in or near Durand. By 1868, the majority of voters in Pepin County had formally moved its seat of government to Durand.

Notes

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- ¹ *Journal of the Assembly of Wisconsin – 1858* (Madison, WI: Calkins & Webb), 314-15.
- ² A. W. Miller, surveyor, *Plat of North Pepin – 1855*, Pepin County Register of Deeds Office, Durand, WI, plat cabinet A, 55A and B.
- ³ Franklin Curtiss-Wedge, compiler, *History of Buffalo and Pepin Counties* (Winona, MN: H.C. Cooper, Jr., 1919, 659-60.
- ⁴ Franklin Curtiss-Wedge and George D. Jones, compilers. *History of Dunn County, Wisconsin* (Minneapolis-Winona, MN: H.C. Cooper, Jr., 1925, 28-29.
- ⁵ Curtiss-Wedge and Jones, 28.
- ⁶ Curtiss-Wedge and Jones, 28.
- ⁷ Curtiss-Wedge and Jones, 31.
- ⁸ Curtiss-Wedge and Jones, 32.
- ⁹ Curtiss-Wedge and Jones, 32.
- ¹⁰ Curtiss-Wedge and Jones, 32.
- ¹¹ Curtiss-Wedge and Jones, 32.
- ¹² Curtiss-Wedge and Jones, 31.
- ¹³ Curtiss-Wedge and Jones, 31.
- ¹⁴ Curtiss-Wedge and Jones, 31.
- ¹⁵ Curtiss-Wedge and Jones, 32.
- ¹⁶ A. W. Miller, *Plat of North Pepin – 1855*.
- ¹⁷ Ulysses B. Shaver, “North Pepin,” *North Pepin Independent*, January, 1857, 2.
- ¹⁸ Ulysses B. Shaver, “Should we have a caucus?” *North Pepin Independent*, March 11, 1857, 2.
- ¹⁹ *Journal of the Senate of Wisconsin – 1858* (Madison, WI: Atwood & Rublee), 81.
- ²⁰ *Journal of the Senate of Wisconsin – 1858*, 199.

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- ²¹ *Journal of the Senate of Wisconsin – 1858*, 260.
- ²² *Journal of the Assembly of Wisconsin – 1858*, 513.
- ²³ *Journal of the Assembly of Wisconsin – 1858*, 514-15.
- ²⁴ *Journal of the Senate of Wisconsin – 1858*, 429.
- ²⁵ *Journal of the Senate of Wisconsin – 1858*, 454.
- ²⁶ *Journal of the Senate of Wisconsin – 1858*, 438-39.
- ²⁷ *Journal of the Senate of Wisconsin – 1858*, 448.
- ²⁸ Ulysses B. Shaver, clerk, “Minutes of the County Board – March 15, 1858” in *Proceedings of the Pepin County Board of Supervisors*, transcribed by Historical Records Survey (Madison, WI: Wisconsin State Historical Society, 1939), 1:1.
- ²⁹ Shaver, “Minutes of the County Board – March 15, 1858” in *Proceedings of [...]*,1:2-3.
- ³⁰ Durand Historical Committee, *Historical Sketchbook for the Durand Centennial – 1856-1956* (Durand, WI: 1956), 5-6.
- ³¹ Shaver, “Minutes of the County Board – July 10, 1858” in *Proceedings of [...]*,1:4.
- ³² Shaver, “Minutes of the Board of Equalization – September 20-21, 1858” in *Proceedings of [...]*,1:4
- ³³ Shaver, “Minutes of the Board of Equalization – September 20-21, 1858” in *Proceedings of [...]*,1:4-6.
- ³⁴ Shaver, “Minutes of the Board of Equalization – September 20-21, 1858” in *Proceedings of Proceedings of [...]*,1:4.
- ³⁵ Shaver, “Minutes of the County Board – October 29 and 30, 1858” in *Proceedings of [...]*,1:6.
- ³⁶ Shaver, “Minutes of the County Board – October 29 and 30, 1858” in *Proceedings of [...]*,1:7.
- ³⁷ Shaver, “Minutes of the County Board – October 29 and 30, 1858” in *Proceedings of [...]*,1:8.
- ³⁸ Shaver, “Minutes of the County Board – October 29 and 30, 1858” in *Proceedings of [...]*,1:9.
- ³⁹ Shaver, “Minutes of the County Board – October 29 and 30, 1858” in *Proceedings of [...]*,1:15-16.

⁴⁰ Shaver, “Minutes of the County Board – July 26, 1859, and March 20, 1860” in *Proceedings of [...]*, 1:various.

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