

Redwood Falls, Minnesota.



The nature of this work precludes the possibility of giving more than a brief sketch of the early history of this section. It is our design to show the city and surrounding country both by pen and picture as it is today. In mentioning the various business industries we have endeavored to state only facts without embellishment; in speaking of the business and professional men, to give only a bare sketch has been our intent.

For most of the facts concerning the early history of the city we have had recourse to the files of the Gazette, to the publishers of which, Messrs. Alken & Schmahl, we are under special obligations for courtesies extended, and kindness shown, and enabling us to embellish this souvenir with cuts of such a large number of familiar faces and scenes.

Redwood Falls, the county seat of Redwood county, is located on the Redwood river, about two miles from its conjunction with the Minnesota. The city has a population of about 2,000, has quite a number of handsome stores and business houses, beautiful homes, well kept streets, artificial stone sidewalks in the business section, many natural and acquired advantages, together with some of the most beautiful scenery to be found anywhere, which all combine to make it one of the most attractive little cities to be found in the state.

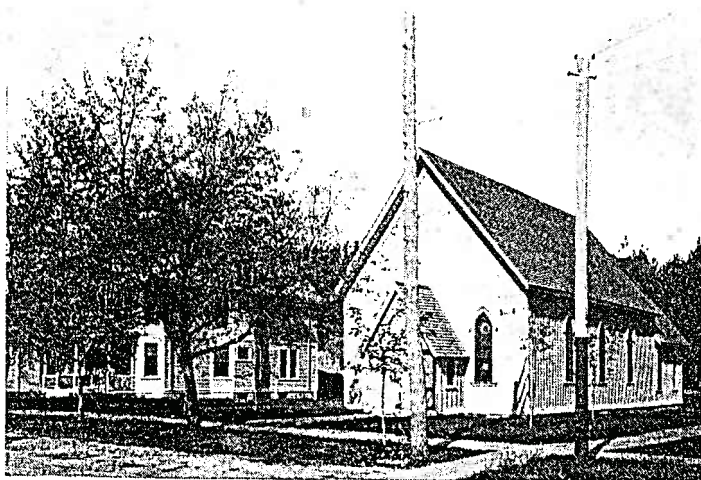
The city was founded during the Civil War, the site having been selected by soldiers during the Indian troubles, co-extant with the struggle between the two sections of the United States. The site selected was on the south side of the Redwood river, and at first comprised only a section of land. It is a natural site, on the banks of the river, including the falls of the Redwood, and gives the city one of the finest drainage systems to be found in any town in the west. On the land back of the present Syndicate Block, on Washington street, the stockade was built in the spring of 1865, and here the hardy pioneers, headed by Col. Samuel McPhail, pitched their tents. Those associated with him were: John Riley Thomp-

son, Jacob Tppary, O. C. Martin, Barney Flinn, Jas. Harkness, Sr., Jas. Harkness, Jr., David Watson, T. Honnah, C. W. Castor and Chas. Folsom; all of whom, with the exception of the venerable Col. McPhail, have passed over to the great beyond. In those days, all supplies were teamed across wilderness and woodland from St. Peter and Mankato, and the necessary provisions were costly, and luxuries out of the question. From Mr. John H. Thomas, who came here in 1866, we learn that there was nothing here but Indians, musk rats, prairie wolves and mosquitoes; pork sold for 25 cents per pound; sugar, three pounds for a dollar; flour, \$10 per 100 pounds; salt, 5 cents per pound; dried apples, three pounds for \$1; tea, \$1 to \$2.50 per pound; oats, 75 cents per bushel; corn, \$1 per bushel; beans, \$6 per bushel, and clothing about twice the figures now paid.

The colony of white settlers increased slowly, and passed through all the hardships of early frontier life. Crude frame buildings were erected, and one or two persons intent on business found sites for stores. But the primitive system of exchange predominated among the early inhabitants, the modern system of money being abolished by the scarcity of the article. As the country around became settled to a small extent, two flouring mills were constructed on the Redwood river in the city limits, and the town presented a more active appearance. Later the Northwestern railroad laid its track directly into the city. The Minneapolis & St. Louis railroad runs two miles north of the city. As the population increased more territory was annexed, until, at the present time it comprises four square miles in extent. The city stands on a high elevation, from which everything slopes towards the river, affording a superb drainage system. It was founded by Col. Sam McPhail, and was one of the first towns to be established west of New Ulm. It derived its name from the many red cedar trees standing on the banks of the Redwood river and the falls located within the city, having a fall of thirty or forty feet. The city is



METHODIST CHURCH, REDWOOD FALLS.



EPISCOPAL CHURCH.



CATHOLIC CHURCH.

the result of a steady growth, hardly keeping pace with the magnificent farming country surrounding it. The population is almost entirely American. The people are progressive and thrifty, but are opposed to anything tending to give the city an unhealthy or unwarranted population.

Redwood Falls has a public school building costing \$30,000, in which is located a high school of the second class of the state. There are eleven different departments in the school, presided over by an efficient corps of teachers.

The city has an excellent water works system with a pumping station of the most improved machinery, and a fire protection system, including two hose carts, chemicals, hook and ladder outfits, etc. In addition to this it has a sewer system laid on the principal streets of the city, and this system, as well as the water main system is gradually being extended into the residence district from year to year. It also has electric lights and an extensive system of cement sidewalks.

Redwood county owns a court house costing \$40,000, in the city of Redwood Falls. It was planned for an agricultural county, and is said to be one of the finest court houses in Minnesota. The court room on the second floor will accommodate from 800 to 1,000 people. The court house has all of the latest improvements, city water, sewer connections, lighted by electricity, and has safe vaults. The county also owns a \$15,000 jail and sheriff's residence within half a block of the court house.

In secret societies, Redwood Falls has three Masonic bodies, two of Odd Fellows, K. P., A. O. U. W., M. W. A., Independent and Catholic Order of Foresters, G. A. R. post, W. R. C., O. E. S. and Degree of Rebekah. There are six churches, all with most creditable edifices; about sixty business houses, most of them of brick; a large flouring mill, five elevators, two newspapers and an extensive creamery, with innumerable shops of various kinds.

Redwood county has many rich acres of land still awaiting settlement. Railroad lands are now on the market and can be purchased at reasonable prices, ranging from \$10 to \$20 an acre. The population of the county is mixed, Americans predominating, but with a good sprinkling of German and Norwegian settlers.

The surface of the county is rolling prairie, diversified by lakes and streams, adding to the beauty of the country and largely enhancing its value for agricultural purposes. The principal streams are the Minnesota, the Redwood and Cottonwood rivers.

Timber can be found along the Redwood and Minnesota rivers, the total acreage being about 12,000 acres. There is abundance of fuel, and it is sold at moderate prices. The climate is dry and healthy, there being a total absence of the dampness often felt in other localities. Numerous groves scattered all over the county show the ease with which trees can be grown.

This is the time to come to Redwood county. Land is constantly advancing in price. You can get it cheap now—cheaper than you

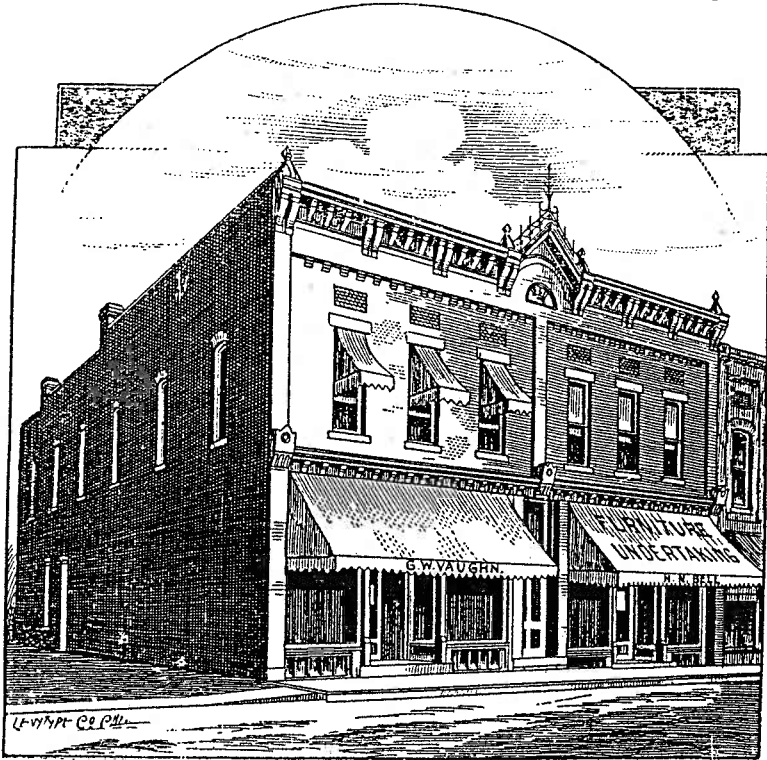
will ever be able to get it again. You can get the best land in the West. You can get it improved or unimproved. You can get it on long time and easy payments, and you will be more than satisfied with your bargain.

City Officers—Mayor, William Smith; Aldermen 1st ward, J. H. Melges, H. M. Aune; Aldermen, 2d ward, W. R. Caswell, E. C. Green; City Recorder, Geo. L. Evans; City Treasurer, H. A. Baldwin; Municipal Judge, Joseph Chadderdon; City Attorney, E. E. Harriott; Superintendent of Water Works, G. L. Parkhill.

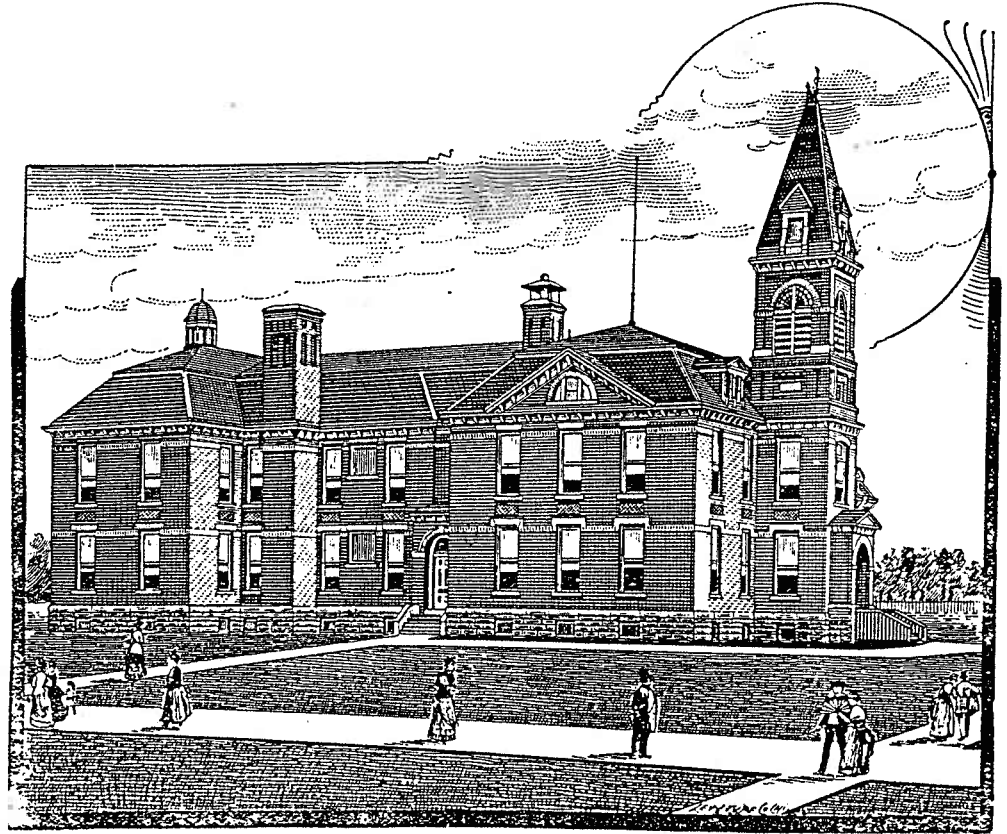
A history of Redwood Falls would be incomplete without mentioning their incomparable system of waterworks and sewers. The water plant was installed in 1892, and consisted of four miles of 4, 6, 8 and 10-inch mains, a water tower with a capacity of 92,000 gallons, giving a gravity pressure of 47 pounds; a power building, 40x80, in which are installed one Duplex, non-condensing Gordon pump, 2,000,000 gallons capacity, one 80 horsepower Springfield boiler, with foundation and piped for a duplicate set of boiler and pumps, should necessity arise for more power. The station is 175 feet lower and one-half mile west of tower, on one of the most beautiful reaches of the Redwood River. The source of supply is a number of springs that are collected in a gallery and are conducted to a receiving reservoir, from whence it is pumped to the tower as needed for fire purposes. Water is taken from the river and forced direct into mains, the tower being shut off by a combination electric and air valve. The spring water is strongly impregnated with magnesia with a trace of iron; it is certainly the most wholesome water to be found anywhere in this part of the state as no case of contagious disease has ever occurred where the people have used city water exclusively. It is absolutely free from all animal life. In the spring of 1896 the city secured the services of G. L. Parkhill, a practical expert of wide experience, to manage the plant and under his wise and energetic administration the expenses have been reduced over one-third; nearly two miles of new mains have been laid, the number of consumers has been more than quadrupled and the city has never had to pay out a penny for breaks or freezing; the whole system has practically been made frost proof.

The sewer system was started in 1894, and covered the retail district; in 1897, under the direction of Superintendent Parkhill, the system was extended into the residence district, and tapped the jail, courthouse and public schools. Plumbers are busy putting in all modern sanitary appliances, for nothing is too good for the people here, and they are bound to have everything modern and up to date.

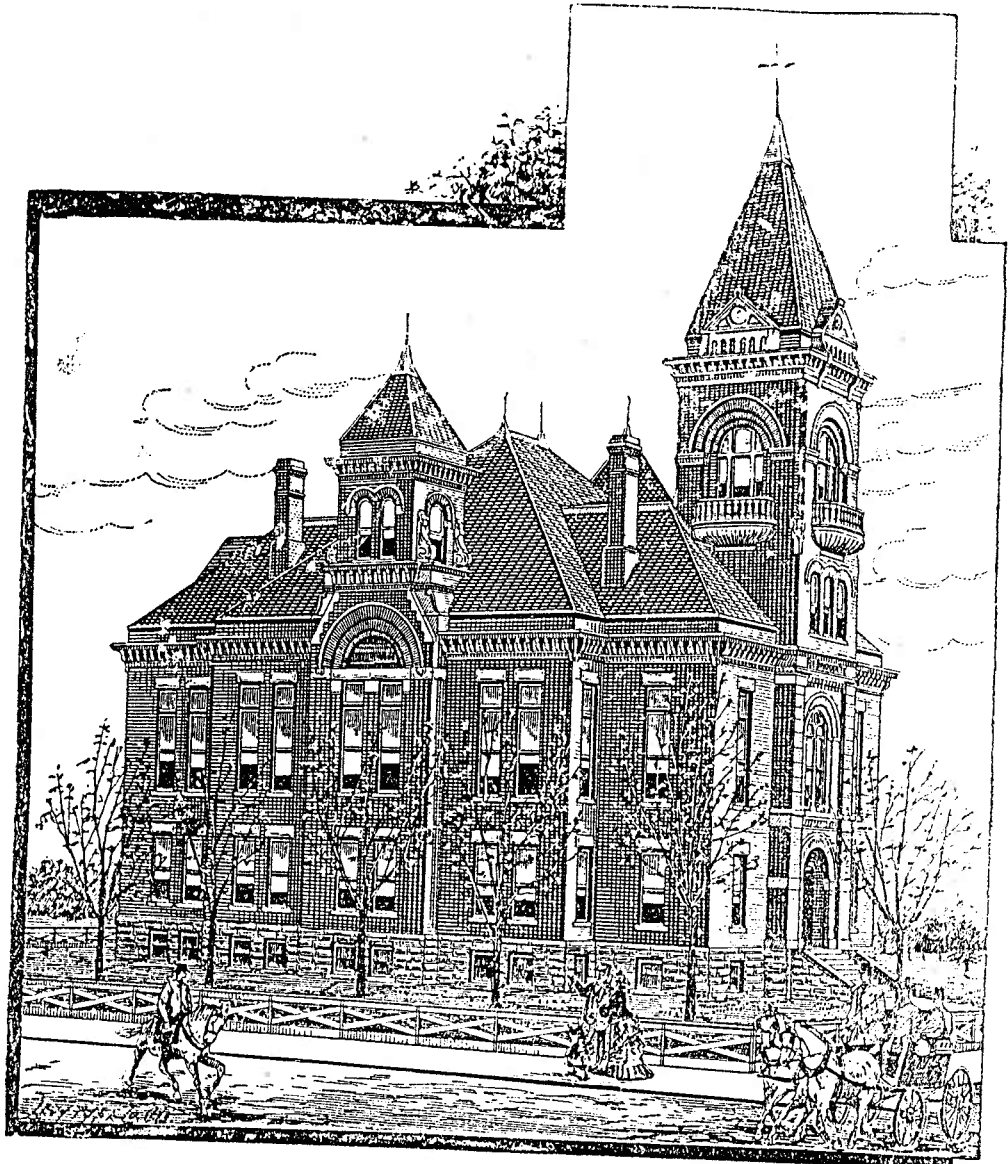
Superintendent Parkhill is ably assisted in his work by C. W. Lake as assistant superintendent.



BELL & PERSON'S BUILDING.



REDWOOD FALLS HIGH SCHOOL.



COURT HOUSE, REDWOOD COUNTY.

Public Schools.

There is nothing in which the people of Redwood Falls take more pride than their public schools. Beginning with a common school they have steadily increased and have more than kept pace with the growth of the city. The number of pupils now enrolled is one-fourth of the entire population.

The first school house erected in the city was a log house, built in 1866. Other houses were subsequently used and in 1873 the district was changed to an independent district with two teachers engaged. The first class in High School was formed in 1882 under Supt. F. V. Hubbard, now of Red Wing, Minn. The school was then occupying buildings which are now used as dwelling houses.

In 1884 and 1885 it became necessary to have a larger building, and the west portion of the present building was built.

In 1886 the first class, consisting of five members, was graduated from the High School. At about this time the school was placed on the High School list and ever since has drawn the regular state aid. Since this time a class has graduated from the High School every year but one.

The needs of the school growing with the increase of pupils, an addition was found necessary and the east portion of the present building was erected in 1892.

We now have a substantial brick building consisting of ten rooms in addition to a recitation room, and the office of the superintendent, which is also used as a library. The seating capacity of the building is 470; that of the High School alone, 56.

During the past two years the Board of Education has expended over \$2,500 in repairs and improvements. Water closets were put in the basement, the walls of the rooms were kalsomined and tinted, and additional slate blackboards ordered.

The schools are graded high and take their place among the best schools of the state. A library consisting of over 700 volumes affords both reference and general library facilities.

The members of the Board of Education are: A. E. King, president; H. M. Hitchcock, clerk; W. F. Dickinson, treasurer; C. T. Howard; N. V. R. Hunter, J. H. Bowers.

Eleven teachers in addition to the superintendent are employed. The following corps were elected for this year: Arthur J. Jones, Superintendent; Jessie G. Wilcox, H. S. principal; Georgena F. Kennedy, H. S. assistant; Helen Regan, 8th grade; Della G. Huntington, 7th grade; Selma Tinwell, 6th grade; Malvine Tinwell, 5th grade; Lena Theiring, 4th grade; Frances Everett, 3rd grade; Margaret Larkin, 2d grade; Abbie Moses, A 1st; Lucy Rowe,

B 1st. The corps is efficient and enthusiastic and the prospects for the future are very bright.

Fire Department.

Redwood Falls has one of the most efficient volunteer fire departments in the state. The chief, A. W. Bager, has spared no pains or expense in bringing the department up to its present high standard. A fire never gets away from them, no matter what the weather is, or the nature of the fire. They have a fire pressure of 150 pounds and no water shortage to fear, as they have a large river to draw from with "men behind the pumps" that know how to use it. The equipment consists of two hose carts with 750 feet of hose on each; one hook and ladder truck and one 70-gallon chemical, with 38 men to handle the apparatus. They have two engine houses, with tower and bell on each, equipped with all the appliances for the comfort and safety of the men.

Churches.

The first service of the Episcopal Church was held by Bishop Whipple July 10th, 1869, while en route to the Sisseton and Wahpeton Sioux Indians. On his return trip he preached Sunday, July 25th. At this time there were no communicants of the church at Redwood Falls. A few years later an effort was made to organize a Sunday School, and with excellent success. Services were held at different times by various missionaries. June 1st, 1876, a class of six was confirmed by the bishop.

August 6, 1876, the Rev. E. T. Hunter entered upon charge of the work and during his ministry the church edifice was built. The consecration of the church took place May 12, 1889, under the name of the Church of the Holy Communion. The Rev. S. B. Purves was rector from 1889 to 1892. The Rev. Henry Beer followed, remaining in charge till 1896. The Rev. W. H. Knowlton was rector from 1896 to February 13, 1900, and under his ministrations the parish built the rectory at a cost of \$3,000—one of the most beautiful homes in Redwood Falls.

The Rev. William Mitchell was elected rector of the parish and entered upon his duties September 23, 1900.

The parish numbers one hundred communicants, fifty families and three hundred individuals.

Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1868 by Rev. Nathaniel Swift, and the present edifice was completed in 1893.

