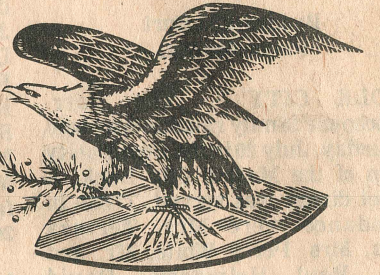


MADRID

AREA

BICENTENNIAL

1776-1976



"Remembrances of Days Gone By"

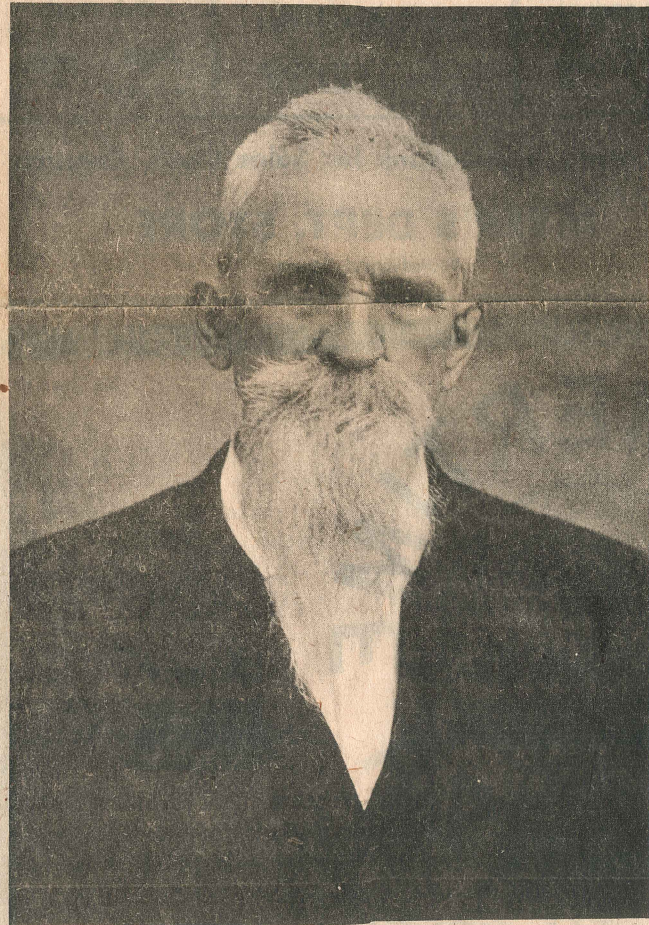
TOWN HAD NO GOVERNMENT FOR ALMOST 40 YEARS —

Madrid's City Government Organized in 1882

Although the town of Madrid was established back in the late 1840's, there was no city government organized until 1882. Why the organization was delayed until this late date, no one really knows, but perhaps its reason was that the community was so well behaved that perhaps peace officers and improvements were so minor in character that a municipal government was deemed unnecessary.

It should be remembered in this connection that the town for almost 20 years before 1882 promised no glowing future. The records disclosed instead that a population decrease was very prevalent. Maybe this was the reason for the long organization delay.

But, with the coming of the railroads in the 1880's, the town took on a new life, and security was promised to the citizens. Then for a year or two there was a casual discussion of the need for a legalized municipality.



C. L. LUCAS

C. L. Lucas was the first chosen mayor while the council was comprised of William Johnson, G. A. Young, C. J. Cassel, August Peterson, A. Rutherford, and S. W. Edwards. The recorder, now known as city clerk was Ashiel Rutherford and Daniel Roberts was the marshal. Today, there are only five councilmen, but the reason for the change is not clearly known. It should also be noted that no treasurer was elected in these early times. Evidently the taxing problem was not then a vexation like it is today. It is also presumed that the first officials did not figure very heavily upon their salaries or they would have provided an official to pay them.

The first council, plus several of the following ones, had no city hall or other place to meet and were forced to the necessity of meeting any place they could. There was no jail, even though they did have a marshal. Records of that period do not tell what happened to arrested prisoners.

Early city council records were quite interesting to read and learn of the major problems our ancestors faced shortly after the government was organized in 1883. The vote for the incorporation took place on June 9, 1883 and passed by a 99-23 majority. D. B. Davidson became treasurer of the newly incorporated town and the following area became a part of the town. The N.E. corner of Stearns first addition to Madrid—then north 80 rods, west 240 rods, south 240 rods, east 80 rods, south 80 rods except small corner occupied as garden by J. F. Hopkins. Then east along south line of Hopkins addition to town of Madrid to township line then with 80 rods then east to Garden Township 40 rods then north 160 rods then west 40 rods to place of beginning. As mentioned, the council had no chamber like it does today, so they first met in the Hutton Company store, renting the room at \$75 per year.

The council met twice a week back then, holding regular sessions every Monday and Wednesday or



Horse and wagon was once a common sight in the town of Madrid around the turn of the century as this picture dates back to 1907. This photo shows a section of Main Street as it appeared back then with the dirt roads and hitching posts in front of the establishments. These buildings shown above are today the section of town occupied by Foodland, Gayer Pharmacy, Lawrence Hardware and Appliance and Shepard Furniture. The wagon on the left side of the photo was a cart used by W. L. Brown to haul pianos and organs from his business in Madrid.

Thursday evenings. C. L. Lucas was the first mayor and the first council consisted of A. Rutherford, Wm. Johnson, D. W. Edwards, G. Young, August Peterson, and C. J. Cassel.

Back in the minutes of the March 24, 1884 meeting, the town council voted to provide free collars for all dogs if the \$2 tax was paid and a \$5 tax was levied on the bitches. All dogs not wearing collars were shot by the town marshal.

Early residents were also forced to pay the poll tax, just as many Southern residents still do today. The price was \$3 in 1922, for all male residents between the ages of 21 and 45, but no price was listed in the early minutes. Instead, all of the qualified voters, which included only the males until the passage of the 19th amendment, were obligated to work for two days for the city between the first day of April and the first day of September, if they could not pay their fee. This practice dated back to around 1884.

By 1887, the council held their meetings in the office of J. W. Near. In the minutes of the December 12, 1887 meeting, a bill was included for 75 cents made payable to William Casper for keeping a tramp in his home overnight. According to information received, this was a customary way of raising extra money for many of these visitors worked in the coal mines.

In the meeting held two weeks after, a petition was presented by C. L. Lucas in regards to repealing the ordinance of allowing cows to run at large.

Interestingly enough, the first council and those up through May 28, 1910, had 6 members. Why this was set up in this manner was not found out, or the exact reason for the change in number. This too is not known.

Early wages were meager in comparison to what

they are today, as the pay for the marshal in 1890 was \$25 a year, while the pay of the mayor and council was also set at \$25 dollars in 1894.

It wasn't until 1889 that the council was able to meet in their own room and they have continued to meet in chambers ever since. The Second Street bridge or viaduct was proposed to the council on June 15, 1891 and construction work began shortly after.

Bills to be paid in the May 30, 1892 minutes included: George Heath, 50 cents for making a step ladder, A. J. Spence, 50 cents for setting out trees and 75 cents was given to a local citizen for burning a dead hog.

By March 6, 1893, the city elections were held in the city hall with voting hours from 8 a.m. through 6 p.m. This was also the first time that the Australian Ballot system was used. May 1, 1893 marked the initial meeting in the new city hall and on May 29 of that same year, the council was authorized to buy the fire alarm bell for the fire department. A bill in the July 10 minutes was for \$5.50 for selling grass in the city park.

A liquor ordinance was put into effect on July 26 and it was stated in the following manner: "But it is fully understood that if either of the above parties sell or give away beverages stronger than they now keep for sale that then and in that case this resolution be null and void." Businesses were forced to close by 11 p.m. and no restaurant could be open on Sunday back in 1893. Salaries for the recorder and treasurer were set at \$20 and \$10 respectively.

As mentioned earlier, it was on May 28, 1910 that the council was reduced from six to five. Members of this council were F. Graves, A. E. Skortman, C. G. Johnson, Bert Vilas, and J. O. Wilson. The mayor at this time was G. W. Crank.

In 1927 an ordinance was passed forbidding a train

from going through town at a speed exceeding six miles per hour.

Some of the other ordinances passed through the years were as follows: September 13, 1920—Dr. Shaw reported to the council that a smallpox epidemic was spreading in Madrid and the council acted upon this by issuing quarantine notices to those having the disease and not allowing those with it to enter or leave town and if you had the sickness and were passing on a train, it was all right as long as you didn't get off the vehicle or it didn't stop in town.

Another one passed in the early 1900's was stated like this: "Be it ordained by the town Council of the Incorporated Town of Madrid, Ia. Any snow or ice may be removed from the sidewalks of the town at any time without notice to the owner of the property in front of which said sidewalk is located, provided said snow or ice shall have remained upon said sidewalk at least ten hours. The removal of said snow or ice shall be done under the town marshal or under his direction. The cost of removing the snow or ice shall be reported to the marshal who reports it to the council who in turn notifies the owner of the cost and he is forced to pay it."

Ordinance No. 18 deals with a curfew in the town which was from October to April from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and from April to October from 9 a.m. through 5 p.m. Any boy or girl violating this provision was guilty of a misdemeanor and was subject to arrest and upon the first offense, the child was just taken home and returned to their parents, but after that, a stiffer punishment was enforced.

Ordinances were also passed describing misdemeanors, loud noises, disorderly conduct, disturbing the peace, discharging firearms, speeding, playing any type of game of chance, playing ball or any kind on the Sabbath and using offensive language or being in a condition of drunkenness. The exhibiting of a jackass, bull or stallion was also forbidden and appearing nude or in dress not belonging to his or her sex was considered indecent exposure. It also was against the law to have disorderly gatherings, collecting on the streets, sidewalks or bridges, and keeping someone from passing was also considered a misdemeanor as well as congregating around any church or meeting house.

March 2, 1925 is an important date in the history of Madrid as this was the day that the bill for paving the streets was presented to the council. Action was taken on the bill on May 16 and the cost of the project amounted to \$163,046.

A year from the above mentioned date, the street area between First and N. Water and North Main was reopened to traffic during school hours. Before this time, the area was closed off to traffic because it ran in front of the schoolhouse.

April 1926—The town of Madrid was made into one voting precinct, doing away with the three wards previously used.

Sept. 12, 1927—The speed limit in the business district was set at 15 miles per hour and the residential district was 25 m.p.h.

June 4, 1930—The clerk's salary was raised to \$30 a month.

There was one man in the history of the Madrid city government who is well worth mentioning. This man is C. S. Adams, who served as city clerk for a period of 48 years, from 1886 to 1936. He was succeeded by Z. W. Dalander.

June 3, 1935—State Beer Laws went into effect as compiled by the Iowa League of Municipalities.

March 15, 1948—Mayor's salary was increased to \$300.

December 6, 1909—An ordinance was established for the setting up of the local fire department. It was to be headed by an elected fire chief and could not have more than 15 volunteers. No one on the force could be under the age of 18.

In 1905 a bicycle ordinance was passed stating that bicycles couldn't be ridden on the sidewalks and if it was ridden after dark, a lantern had to be put on the vehicle, that could be seen up to one block away. You couldn't ride any faster than the ordinary or moderate gait.

Ordinance 48 stated that no person shall expectorate or spit on the floor, stairway or hall of a public building, railway depot or sidewalk. Fine for this misdemeanor was set at not more than \$100 or 30 days in jail.

The town seal was established in an ordinance passed in the year 1905.

Ordinance 87 provided for the establishment of the library, a five member board and a board of trustees to oversee the process. This was passed in July of 1935.

Up through the 1960's, all the previous city clerks had been men. But in that year, Mrs. Betty Paul succeeded Otha Darby and remained in this position for the next 12 years. She in turn was followed by Erma Steinick and Jo Hampton took her place in 1974.

(Continued on next page)



This photo showed the Main Street of Madrid as it looked approximately 30 years later. Sidewalks had been installed and the street was paved as the photo shows. The Ford garage is now Howard's IGA and the Shearman building housing Fowler Fabrix and Al Sorenson Insurance is also shown. In this photo you are looking towards the west down the Main Street of town.