

WEST JEFFERSON IN DAYS GONE BY

By Charlie Miller

Series 27

BOOZE & BUILDING: In 1855 Council passed the first ordinance against intoxication.

SECTION 1- Be it ordained by the Council of the Village of Jefferson that if anyone should be found intoxicated, they shall upon conviction be fined \$5.00 and cost. For the second conviction shall be fined \$10.00 and five days in the county jail to be fed bread and water, and in all shall stand convicted until the fine and costs are paid. Provided that if the convicted person gives such information as to the person who furnished him the liquor if, within the limits of the Village of Jefferson, the mayor shall remit the penalty or any part of it.

In 1854 the village was ready for a new town hall to replace the old Market House which had been built in 1835. On March 6, 1854, the following agreement was made- "An agreement between the Mayor and Council and Thomas Timmons, Abraham Johnson and John Hunter, Trustees of Jefferson Township. In consideration of \$300.00, the village is to lease a hall about to be built on the lot known as the Public Square of Jefferson. Said Hall to be used by the Village and Township. The building is to be 45 feet long and 20 feet wide and is to be of brick. The lower story is not less than 12 feet high and the second story is not less than 10 feet high. Said Hall to be completed by the first day of March A.D. 1855." On May 20, 1854, four bids were received. On May 27th H. Putnam & Co. was awarded the contract.

October 6, 1854, it was moved, "That the roof of the Town Hall be made of cement or gravel and that there be two columns in the upper story to be at least 6" square in diameter and that there be at least one bolt and washer in each column, and the joist that the bolt goes into is to be 3" thick." The cost of the Town Hall was \$450.00. The first meeting in the new Town Hall was held on April 13, 1855.

On April 3, 1857, on motion of B. F. Fickey, Geo. W. Lewis be employed to haul 100 yards of dirt and gravel to be filled in around the Hall, for which we grant an order of \$25.00 for which we will pay the same." Motion carried.

The upper floor of the Hall was rented to the Independent Order of Good Templars in 1858 for \$36.00 a year. (The Templars were a fraternal organization founded in 1851 that encouraged people to refrain from the use of alcohol or other drugs. In 1979 there were 700,000 members internationally and only 2,000 in the U.S The headquarters are now in Sweden)

May 12, 1858, On motion the Village Recorder is hereby to give notice for a proposal for the erection of a fence around the Public Square comprised of boards similar to Mrs. Pennington's. Mr. Ezekial Arnett and J. C. Olney received the job of building the fence.