

Platte County's Early History



Platte County is an area rich in amazing stories from many people who have helped build the community we enjoy today. Missouri and Otoe tribes (under the leadership of Chief Iatan) are said to have originally called this region home, with remnants of Native American civilizations around Parkville and Iatan. Later after treaties were negotiated between Native American leaders at Fort Leavenworth, early settlers like Zadock Martin and family (founders of Platte City) moved into the area in the hopes of discovering a brighter future.

When war erupts between Mexico and the United States in the 1840's, Platte County people like A.W. Doniphan and James Denver (with Denver, Co being named after him) would raise a number of companies to fight. A sword inscribed monument in the Platte County cemetery remembers those veterans who served and died. And despite a cholera epidemic in 1850 and extensive flooding in 1858, the Platte County region would experience dramatic growth and prosperity through farming such crops like hemp (used in bagging, clothing and rope).

During the Civil War, Platte County sent large numbers of people to serve and fight on both sides of this devastating conflict that all but left the county in ruins - and numerous lives lost. With battles at Bee Creek and Camden Point, brutal warfare waged upon civilians, and the burning of Platte City (and the first Platte County Courthouse) by Federal troops, the Platte County people struggled for some time afterwards to come together and rebuild their shattered lives. Many hoped that this time of extreme hardship and wanton loss of life would not be forgotten, and that the veterans and their families on both sides who gave everything in defense of their homes and their families would be remembered.



SWAIN'S HOTEL.
J. R. SWAIN, PROP'R., PLATTE CITY, PLATTE CO., MO.

In 1866 the cornerstone to a new Platte County Courthouse was laid, and in 1875 Park College is inaugurated with Col. Park's vision that students would, "Study the truths of God as given in the Bible and nature." In 1879 the Platte River Bridge at Farley is completed, and John R. Swain plants a number of maple trees on main street in Platte City. In the 1880's, Platte City is connected to Weston via telephone, and Governor John Marmaduke (and former Civil War general) attends a veterans meeting at the Courthouse. In 1890, the U.S. Census reveals the population of Platte County is at 16,248, and W.M Paxton and wife celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary with over 400 attendees to wish the couple well. *(text summarized from W.M. Paxton's Annals)*