Boone County Local History

"Historical accounts of the "Great American Desert" indicate that stolen horses may have led to the formation of Boone County. According to reports from the 1800s, no white man other than government surveyors had explored the 687-square-mile area prior to 1860. The area was primarily a bountiful hunting ground for the Pawnee and Sioux Indians.

But in the late 1860s, Sam Smith of Columbus ventured into the area in search of a stolen herd of horses. In 1871 Smith returned to this thriving prairie area along Beaver Creek as leader of a six-man exploration party. The party was unconvinced, however, that the land was of value. One member of the party, S.D. Avery, decided to try his fortunes again. Avery led three exploration parties to the area that same year and on the third visit began work on a sod house along Beaver Creek, marking the first white settlement.

Avery began the settlement just one month after the Legislature, on March 28, 1871, defined the boundaries and organized the county, naming it in honor of Kentucky pioneer and hunter Daniel Boone. The government of Boone County officially went into operation on July 28, 1871 when three commissioners were sworn into office. It was decided by these new representatives that the first county election would be conducted on the first Tuesday in January 1872.

A difference of opinion arose over where the county seat should be located and a struggle developed between Albion and Boone, the only two locations with post offices. An election was held and Albion was the victor. Until the first courthouse was completed in 1897, commissioners met in an Albion hotel. The present courthouse was dedicated in 1976.

The community that today serves as the county seat actually had its name selected through a game of chance. Two factions argued for several weeks about what the town should be named. They agreed to settle the argument with game of euchre. Two men played for the name Albion; two for the name Manchester."

Events of interest:

1871 - First white men visited Boone County looking for land. Until then, surveyors and trappers had been through the area, but none stayed.

1872 - First post office established, "Hammond Post Office" with Albert Dresser, Postmaster. Mail carrier was Michael Welch who delivered on horseback.

1873 - Post office moved to Albion.

1873 - First white child born in county--Clara Boone Mattison.

1873 - First death, child of Elias Awood Sr.

1873 - Easter Blizzard

1874 - Summer Grasshopper plague

1875 - Good crops

Many Civil War veterns settled in Nebraska, as found on the Pensioner's List here: [Military Pension Project](#).

[History of Loretto](#), Nebraska by Mabel Durand

Source:

http://www.co.boone.ne.us/webpages/history/history.html:

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