

CITY OF TUSCOLA

Why would Tuscola be established on this barren prairie and marshland with seemingly little to recommend it? There is just one answer – the railroad. The railroads seemed to be the key to development of great promise in the Midwest at the midpoint of the 19th century, but they cost tremendous sums to build, and such sums were not available. Congress granted the State of Illinois, passing the Land Grant Bill in 1851, to build a railroad from Galena, Illinois in the north to Cairo, Illinois in the South. They gave the grant to the newly incorporated Illinois Central railroad. The lands granted were in alternating one-mile sections along the right-of-way of the railroad. The U. S. Government land was to be sold first and then the railway could sell their land. The Illinois Central railroad badly needed towns along the line to help finance their venture.

The Chicago-Mattoon branch of the Illinois Central railroad was completed June 25, 1855. The United States lands had been selling for \$1.25 an acre. The price of the remaining land immediately doubled and some are said to have been sold as high as \$5.00 and \$6.00 an acre. It was also the prospect of a second railroad that resulted in speculators getting busy at Tuscola. Town site promoters formed a company at Tuscola when charters were issued for the Indiana and Illinois Central Railroad in 1855.

The original town was laid off by Elias C. Terry, Danville, Illinois (Wife, Elizabeth B.), J. B. Mulhullen, Rockville, Indiana (wife, Mary), and Pembroke Cornelius, Rockville, Indiana (wife, Eliza I.). These three made up the “Town Company”.

What manner of men these gentlemen were is not known. Some speculate whether they were “cold-blooded and designing speculators or men who, looking beyond the present, desired to see a growing City...” It would seem these true founding fathers must have had a fair share of good qualities. They had to, in order to complete arrangements with the railroads, with business, professional, and service people they sought to attract into the then prairie wasteland.



ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD COMPANY
OFFER FOR SALE
ONE MILLION ACRES OF SUPERIOR FARMING LANDS,
IN FARMS OF
40, 80 & 160 acres and upwards at from \$8 to \$12 per acre.
THESE LANDS ARE
NOT SURPASSED BY ANY IN THE WORLD.
THEY LIE ALONG
THE WHOLE LINE OF THE CENTRAL ILLINOIS RAILROAD.
For Sale on **LONG CREDIT, SHORT CREDIT** and for **CASH**, they are situated near **TOWNS, VILLAGES, SCHOOLS** and **CHURCHES.**

For all Purposes of Agriculture.
The lands offered for sale by the Illinois Central Railroad Company are equal to any in the world. A healthy climate, a rich soil, and railroads to convey to market the fullness of the earth—all combine to place in the hands of the enterprising workman the means of independence.

Illinois.
Extending 200 miles from North to South, has all the diversity of climate to be found between Massachusetts and Virginia, and varieties of soil adapted to the products of New England and those of the Middle States. The black soil in the central portions of the State is the richest known, and produces the finest corn, wheat, sorghum and hay, which latter crop, during the past year, has been highly remunerative. The seedling of these prolific lands is taken across, for pasturage, often to farmers with capital the most profitable results. The smaller portions, interspersed with timber, in the more southern portion of the State, produce the best of winter wheat, tobacco, flax, hemp and fruit. The lands with further south are heavily timbered, and here the raising of fruit, tobacco, cotton and the manufacture of lumber yield large returns. The health of Illinois is hardly surpassed by any State in the Union.

Grain and Stock Raising.
In the list of corn and wheat producing States, Illinois stands pre-eminently first. Its advantages for raising cattle and hogs are too well known to require comment here. For sheep raising, the lands in every part of the State are well adapted, and Illinois can now boast of many of the largest flocks in the country. No branch of industry offers greater inducements for investment.

Hemp, Flax and Tobacco.
Hemp and flax can be produced of as good quality as any grown in Europe. Tobacco of the finest quality is raised upon lands purchased of this Company, and it promises to be one of the most important crops of the State. Cotton, too, is raised, to a considerable extent, in the southern portion. The making of sugar from the beet is receiving considerable attention, and experiments upon a large scale have been made during the past season. The cultivation of sorghum is rapidly increasing, and there are numerous indications that ere many years Illinois will produce a large surplus of sugar and molasses for exportation.

Fruit.
The central and southern parts of the State are peculiarly adapted to fruit raising; and peaches, pears and strawberries, together with early vegetables, are sent to Chicago, St. Louis and Cincinnati, as well as other markets, and always command a ready sale.

Coal and Minerals.
The immense coal deposits of Illinois are worked at different points near the Railroad, and the great resources of the State in iron, lead, zinc, limestone, potter's clay, &c., &c., are yet barely touched, will eventually be the source of great wealth.

To Actual Settlers
The inducements offered are so great that the Company has already sold 1,500,000 acres, and the acres during the past year have been to a larger number of purchasers than ever before. The advantages to a man of small means, settling in Illinois, where his children may grow up with all the benefits of education and the best of public schools, can hardly be over-estimated. No State in the Union is increasing more rapidly in population, which has tripled in ten years along the line of this Railroad.

PRICES AND TERMS OF PAYMENT.
The price of land varies from \$7 to \$12 and upward per acre, and they are sold on long credit, on short credit, or for cash. A reduction of ten per cent. from the long credit price is made to those who make a payment of one-fourth of the principal down, and the balance in one, two, and three years. A deduction of twenty per cent. is made to those who purchase for cash. Never before have greater inducements been offered to cash purchasers.

EXAMPLE.
Forty acres at \$10 per acre on long credit, interest at six per cent., payable annually in advance; the principal in four, five, six, and seven years.

Cash payment	Interest	Principal	On the same farm, on short credit:	Interest	Principal
Four years	\$10.00		Cash payment	\$10.00	\$40.00
Five years	12.00		Payment in one year	10.00	30.00
Six years	14.00		Do " " " " " "	10.00	20.00
Seven years	16.00		Do " " " " " "	10.00	10.00
		\$40.00			

The same farm may be purchased for \$200 in cash.

Full information on all points, together with maps, showing the exact location of the lands, will be furnished on application in person or by letter to

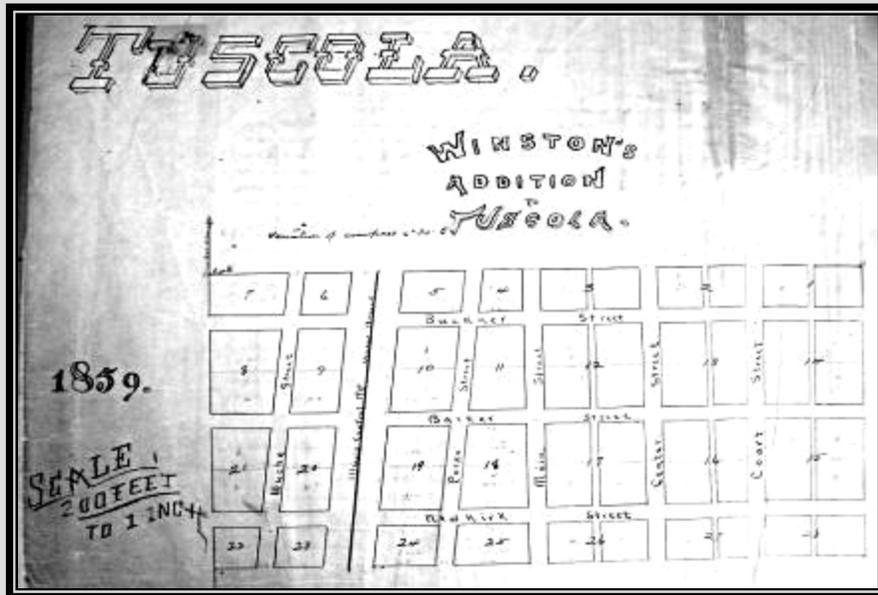
LAND COMMISSIONER,
Illinois Central R. R. Co., Chicago, Ill.

On July 9, 1857, the south half of the northwest quarter and the north half of the southwest quarter of Section 34, Township 16 north, Range 8 east, 160 acres, was surveyed by John T. Scott, Coles County Deputy Surveyor. The streets and alleys were plotted “square with the world” except along the Illinois Central Railroad where some “point rows” occur. A reserve was made of about sixteen acres, at the proposed railroad crossing, called “between the wyes”. In addition to this, a strip 300 feet wide was reserved running east and west, running approximately through the center of town, for “railroads and railroad purposes”. The east west railroad did not materialize until July 9, 1873, when the first train passed through town. Tuscola is unique because it covers the original square mile granted originally to the Illinois Central Railroad. Most towns used only a portion of the mile, bordered the mile, or started on the mile not granted to the railroad.



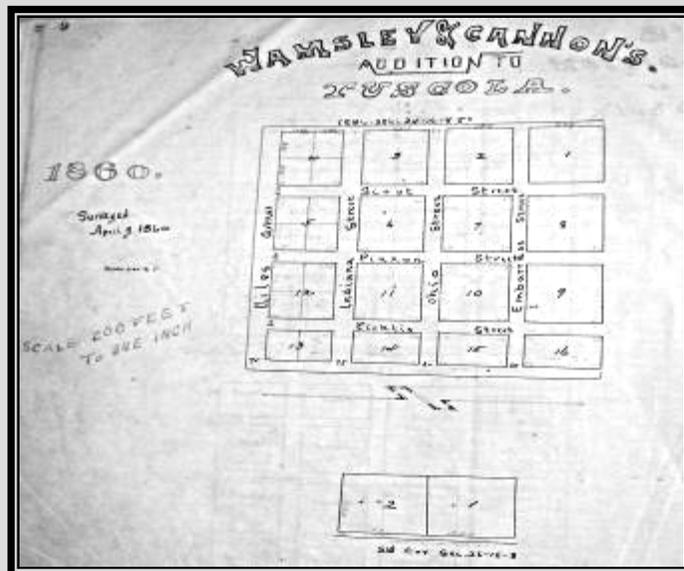
First map of Original Town drawn by Henry Niles in 1857

The original town is bounded on the west by the Illinois Central Railroad, and extends eastward to Niles Avenue, which is the north and south centerline of section 34. The boundary of original town to the south is route 36 and to the north, is met by Winston’s Addition.



Winston Addition map drawn by Henry Niles in 1859

The first addition to Tuscola was made by a. B. Newkirk, of Chicago, and consists of the north half of the northwest quarter of Section 34, township 16 north, Range 8 east, and was surveyed by Henry Niles, the county surveyor, in August 1859, assisted by Henry Beach, who afterward built the first Beach House. Mr. Beach had a contract for grading all the streets in this addition, and was to take lots for pay; the arrangement was carried out only in part, the proprietor having changed his mind. No street was made between this addition and Original Town.

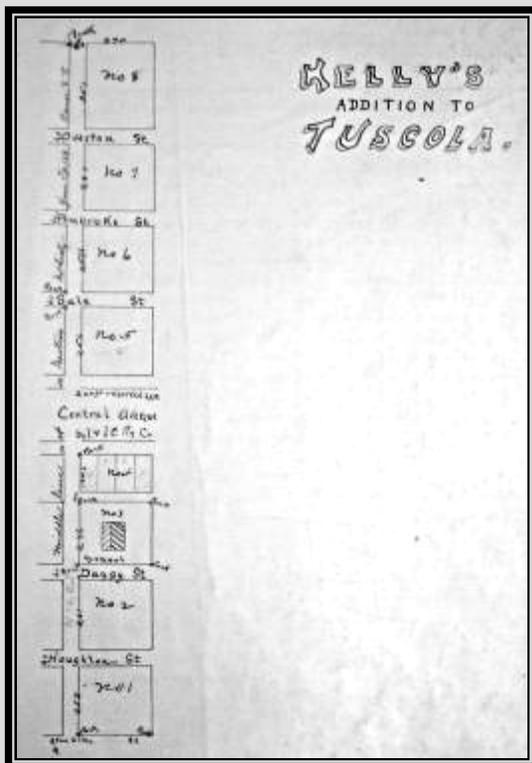


Wamsley & Cannon Addition map drawn by Henry Niles in 1860

In the Spring of 1860, William Wamsley, with Joseph G. Cannon as manager, laid off into lots the southeast quarter of Section 34, Township 16 north, Range 8 east, making sixteen blocks, the west tier of which was subdivided into quarters, surveying of which was done by Henry Niles.

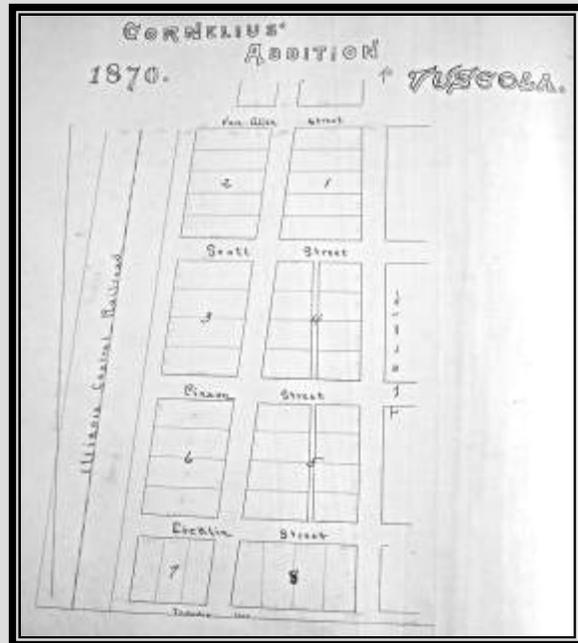
Kelly's Addition map drawn by Henry Niles in 1861 & 1864

Kelly's first addition, November 15, 1861 followed by his second addition December 30, 1864, consists of the southwest quarter and the northwest quarter of the southwest quarter of Section 34, Township 16 north, Range 8 east, eighty acres, and was surveyed by E. C. Siler, County Surveyor. In the first addition, however, he was the deputy of Niles. The lots were made large, to meet a demand for such, amongst which streets and lanes were scarce. Robert Kelly, of Indiana, was the proprietor of these additions. He was a Quaker of standing and much business ability.



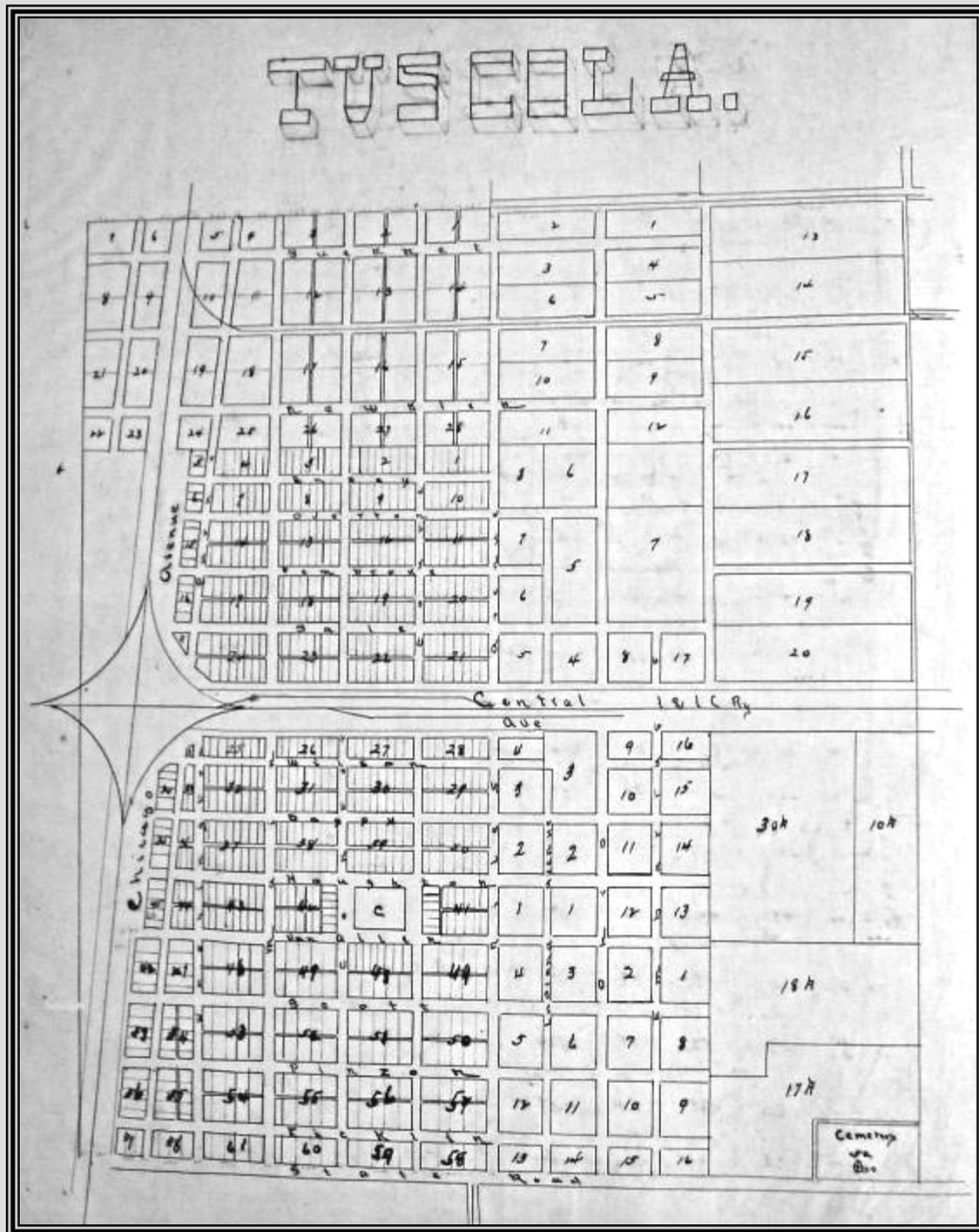
Mather's Addition map drawn by Henry Niles in 1864

The next addition made was called Mather's North-east Addition, and comprised the east half of the northeast quarter and the northwest quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 34, township 16 north, Range 8 east, 120 acres. E. C. Siler, County Surveyor, surveyed it July 1864, under the proprietorship of John Mather, who had previously acquired an interest in the lands of the original Town Company. The streets in this portion of Tuscola do not conform to those of the original town, not only being of different widths, but do not fairly meet the original streets.



Cornelius' Addition map drawn by Henry Niles in 1870

Cornelius' addition consists of about twenty acres of land in the southwest corner of the section, being a reserve portion of the Original Town plat, and lying east of the Illinois Central Railroad, and north of the south line of the Section (Route 36). The lots are of good average size, with a location not very desirable. It was laid out by Pembroke Cornelius, one of the original Town Company and surveyed by Henry Niles, August 19, 1870.



First map of Tuscola including additions drawn by Henry Niles 1870.

ORIGIN OF TUSCOLA'S NAME

It has been presumed for a long time that the name “Tuscola” is of Native American origin, but little else was known of its source. A publication of the Illinois Historical Society, “Indian Place names in Illinois”, lends considerable light on the subject.

According to this publication, which was written by Virgil J. Vogel, the name comes of the Muskogean language group of Native Americans, which includes Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Seminole. The Choctaw word Tashka or Tushka, means “Warrior”. Therefore, the choice of “Warriors” for the high school athletic teams is indeed appropriate.

The Choctaw word, ola, means sound or many sounds. Hence, the name Tuscola could literally be taken to mean, “Warriors Cry.” A more liberal interpretation might be “warrior people” another source feels the name Tuscola means “Warrior Prairie.”

Another group of people say “Tuscola” is of Cherokee origin, possibly even the name of a sub-group of Cherokee by the name of Tuscola Cherokee.

Tuscola is proud to have a “Sister City” located in Texas. Tuscola, Texas was recognized as a community on April 6, 1899 and was named by one of its founders, Clarence M. Cash, who moved to the area in 1898, for his hometown in Illinois.



Postcard of South Niles Street looking north – 1940's.



Photo by James Pettit of Pettitt Photo Service – 1940's.

TUSCOLA'S STREETS

Northline Road – At one time, this was the northern edge of Tuscola

Buckner Street – Colonel Allen Buckner was a field officer in the 79th Illinois Infantry. This regiment was more completely identified with Douglas County than any other in service was during the Civil War. This regiment marched through Kentucky to Tennessee. When the commander of this regiment was killed early in action, Buckner took command. They fought in the battle of Chicamauga.

Barker Street – No information.

Newkirk Street – A. B. Newkirk, of Chicago made the first addition to Tuscola. It is called Winston's Addition in August 1859.

Ensey Street – Mr. Ensey was a large landowner in the area. He was partner in the first dry goods store in Tuscola, with James Davis (who was elected mayor in 1883). The firm was Davis & Ensey and stood on North Central Avenue.

Overton Street – No information.

Pembroke Street – Pembroke Cornelius was one of a company of three men who laid off the original town of Tuscola.

Sale Street – Business District

North and South Central Avenues – The center of town on the north and south side of the railroad tracks. When the original town was laid off a 300-foot wide, east/west strip was reserved intending to be exactly through the center of town for railroad purposes. Having been laid in the country first, when the city was reached, this straight line projected would have passed through the north side of Central Avenue, leaving the greater part of the reserve on the south side of the tracks and a line of switch shaved very close to the west end of the south side. Valuable buildings were built up to the line of this reserve. When attention was called to the owners of the buildings, they called on the legal ability of Mr. Thomas Bundy. He went to Chicago and secured a quitclaim deed from the Illinois Central Railroad for the 50-foot street on either side of the 300-foot reserve, thus, securing forever to the city the use of these streets.

Wilson Street – No information.

Daggy Street – Dr. Samuel Daggy came to Tuscola in 1859. He was a prominent Presbyterian and helped establish the first Sunday school in Tuscola.

Houghton Street – No information.

Van Allen Street – No information.

Scott Street – After the original town was laid off, John Scott surveyed the land on July 9, 1857. He was Deputy Coles County Surveyor and Douglas County was originally the northern part of Coles County.

Pinzon Street – No information.

Ficklin Street - Orland B. Ficklin was a large landowner in Douglas and Coles Counties and one of the first settlers. The town of Ficklin was also named after him. He was a member of the U. S. Congress several years before the Civil War.

Southline Road (Route 36) – At one time this was the southern edge of Tuscola.

Parke Street – William P. Mulhullen and Pembroke S. Cornelius, Officials of the Town Company, who laid out the original town of Tuscola, were from Rockville, Indiana, which is in Parke County.

Washington Street – Named for our nations first President, George Washington.

Center Street – It runs through the center of Original Town.

Court Street – Street runs passed the Courthouse.

Niles Avenue – Named for Henry Clay Niles, Douglas County's first surveyor and one of the most important men in Tuscola and Douglas County's history.

Main Street – About every town had to have a Main Street!



Photos taken by James Pettitt of Pettitt Studio about 1940.

Indiana Street – Runs through both Wamsley & Cannon’s and Kelly’s Additions. Both Joseph Cannon and John Kelly were originally from Indiana.

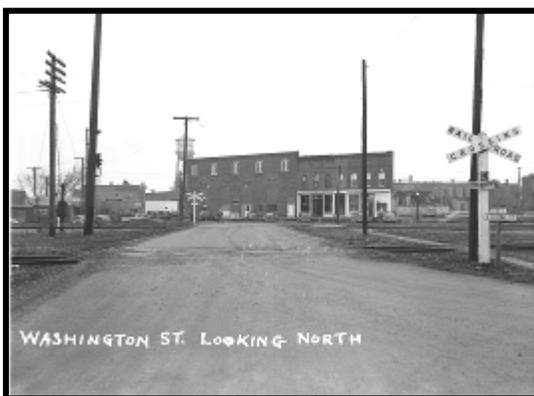
Ohio Street – The next street to the east of Indiana Street. The next state to the east of Indiana.

Embarras Street – Named after the river, which runs through Douglas County.

Carico Street – Harry S. Carico was a Civil War hero from Tuscola. He served as Deputy Sheriff of Douglas County and later was admitted to the bar. A Civil War wound however caused his death at an early age.

MacPherson Street – Robert MacPherson was elected Clerk and City Attorney in 1872.

Prairie Street – Last street on the eastern edge of Tuscola. The prairie was on the other side of the street.



Photos by James Pettitt of Pettitt Photo Service – 1940’s.



Aerial view of Tuscola taken in 1955, by James Pettitt of Pettitt Photo Service. .This picture shows Downtown Tuscola and the intersection of the Illinois Central, the C& EI, and the B&O railroads.



Aerial view of Tuscola taken in 1955, by James Pettitt of Pettitt Photo Service. Bottom center of picture is the Catholic Church. The big building is the Courthouse. The south Ward Grade School is in the center of the picture and the old High School is across the railroad tracks in the upper left corner.



Aerial view of Tuscola taken by Jim Pettitt of Pettitt Studio in 1955. Ervin Park is in the left side of the picture. The intersection of Routes 36 & 45 is the lower center of the picture.

DOUGLAS COUNTY FORMED

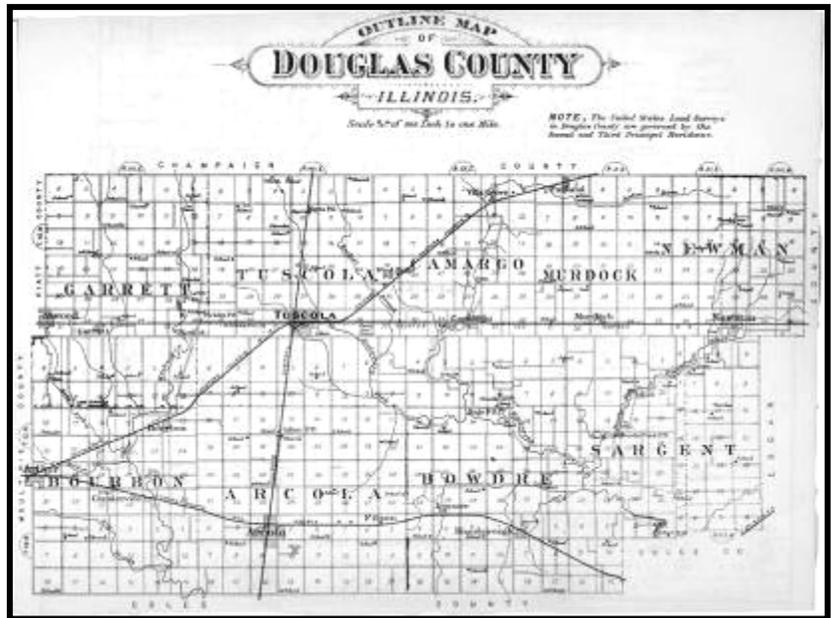


Stephen A. Douglas

Douglas County was originally the northern part of Coles County. To promote the sale of lots and lands the officers of the Town Company predicted that a new county would eventually form and Tuscola would become the county seat.

They were right. The residents of these newly formed towns grew tired of the long journey by horse and buggy to Charleston when they had business to conduct in the county seat. A group of citizens prepared a bill for the state legislature setting apart the northern portion of Coles County as a new county. The bill passed February 16, 1859.

Although the area was predominately Republican, the Democratic majority in the state legislature named the new county for Stephen A. Douglas, a prominent Democrat from Illinois. The residents planned to change the name of the new county to "Richman" after the first white inhabitant of Douglas County, John Richman, who arrived in Camargo Township in May 1829. This change never happened.



Douglas County was the second to last county formed in Illinois, with Ford County being the last. This map is from the 1893 Douglas County Atlas and Plat Book

TUSCOLA – DOUGLAS COUNTY SEAT

The act forming the county of Douglas provided that on its formation an election should be held within the limits of the new county for the regular officials. This occurred on the second Monday of April 1859, and resulted in the choice of James Ewing as Judge, John D. Murdock and Robert Hopkins as Associate Judges; John Chandler as Clerk; A. G. Wallace, Circuit Clerk and Recorder; S. B. Logan, Sheriff; William Hancock, Treasurer; and H. C. Niles, Surveyor. The convention for the nomination of these officers was held in a board shanty on the McCarty farm, two and a half miles east of Tuscola, and the nominations were made and nominees elected without reference to party or politics.

On Thursday morning, April 28, 1859, the County board convened in the oldest village in the county, Camargo. At this meeting, it was ordered that an election be held on the 30th day of May 1859, “to choose between the points of Tuscola and Arcola, contesting points for the county seat.” As the public interest mounted, the rivalry between the towns grew.

By paragraph 6 of the enabling act, it was provided that at the election of officers, votes should be cast for a permanent seat of justice, and if no choice was made, another election should be held within sixty days to choose between the two contesting points receiving the highest votes. It was not expected that the first ballot would decide the question.

Several points were presented, but the real contest lay between Camargo, Tuscola, and Arcola, and in this trial vote, the effort on the part of each was to secure enough votes to give it a place in the final contest. This election was generally fairly conducted, though it is charged that Arcola got sufficient illegal votes to beat Camargo for the second place. This made the residents of Camargo doubly enthusiastic in favor of Tuscola in the run-off election provided by law. The canvassing was spirited. The struggle was not so much to get the greatest number of legal voters to support the claims of the respective towns, but to get the largest number of votes recorded.

Repeating was the order of the day. Tuscola which cast fourteen votes to two for incorporation, in the same year cast over 6,000 votes for county seat; Arcola with about the same population, cast about 5,000 votes, and Camargo about 3,700 votes. The rest of the county, not so greatly interested, voted properly, but proved of no importance in the question. There were a good many employees upon the larger farms in the county, and these men voted early and often. The various poll-books show how widespread the interest was in this matter by exhibiting the names of every postmaster in the United States as voters on the question. It is said that when the various poll-books were sent in to Tuscola before the Judges of the election had canvassed the vote, a few in favor of Tuscola, in their anxiety, weighed the poll-books to ascertain if there was any difference in the weight of the recorded votes of the contesting localities.

The court, however, decided in favor of Tuscola, and while the fraudulent votes were plainly apparent, it was looked upon as a great joke in which the “biter had gotten bitten” and the issue were accepted as final. Some indiscreet action was taken by the defeated party to contest the election, but it proceeded no further than the initial action in the Coles County Court, and was allowed to die a natural death.

Camargo was made the temporary seat of justice, and it was there that the first county court held their first meetings. There was little of permanent interest in the first transactions of the county court. The first business was to arrange and name the precincts of the new county; to provide donations for the erection of county buildings, for grand and petit juries and for the election to choose the county seat. This occupied the three sessions before March 1860, and as an aside, it was ordered at the first session “that the court, sheriff and clerk charge nothing for their services for the present term of court.” There was no cash in the treasury and the first “county order” was appropriated in payment of Judge Ewing, during the June term, 1859, the amount of six dollars.



INCORPORATION

Tuscola's official record begins October 11, 1859, when an election by the citizens was held for and against incorporation. The names of all the voters were, William Chandler, I. J. Halstead, Michael Noel, A. L. Otis, F. F. Nesbit, P. Noel, A. J. Gorman, James Harrison, James Davis, A. G. Wallace, John Chandler, Archibald Van Deren, Thomas Woody, and Joseph G. Cannon. Vote for incorporation was 12; against 2; total 14.

As to who were the first president and village board the history fails to mention. The only result of a diligent search was to secure the names of the officials of the village for the years 1862 and following. Prior to this time there seems to be a blank simply because of the manner in which records were kept, on scraps of paper and not very complete. The results of piecing everything together are as follows;

1862 – Robert Charlton, President; W. J. VanDyke, Clerk and Attorney; H. B. Evans, Treasurer; William Wamsley, Superintendent of Streets and Constable; Henry Beach, Joseph Wyeth, James B. Hart, and Albert Woody, Trustees.

1863 – Samuel Daggy, President; Erasmus Hudson, Clerk; J. M. Ephlin, Treasurer; William Wamsley, Superintendent of Streets and Constable; George P. Olmstead, A. G. Wallace, J. H. Harrison, and J. L. Wyeth, Trustees.

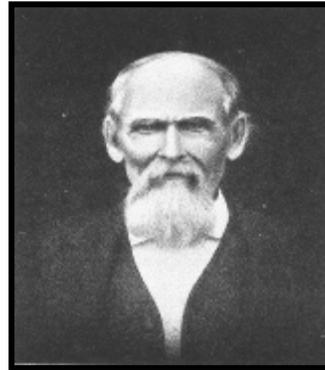
1864- 65 – A. G. Wallace, President; Erasmeus Hudson, Clerk; J. M. Ephlin, Treasurer; William Wamsley, Policeman and Superintendent of Streets.

1866-67 – John F. Hall, President; Thomas E. Bundy, Clerk; W. B. Dryer, Treasurer; O. A. Squires, Policeman and Superintendent of Streets.

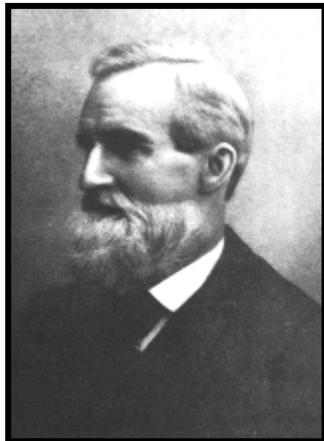
1868 – Erasmus Hudson, President; Thomas E. Bundy, Clerk; W. B. Dryer, Treasurer; William Wamsley, Policeman and Superintendent of Streets.



Joseph G. Cannon



Archibald Van Deren



Joseph Wyeth



Jacob Ephlin

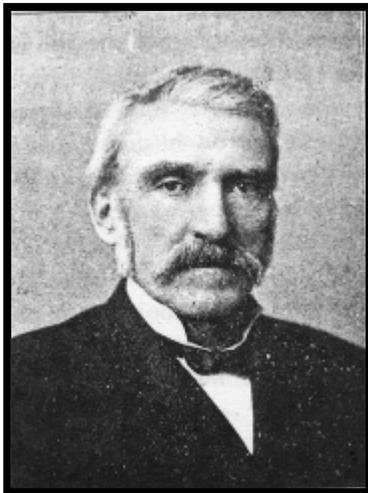
CITY CHARTER

This brings us to March 11, 1869, the date on Tuscola's city charter. The first Mayor was James H. Martin, with a counsel consisting of I. L. Jordan, Elijah Price, M. Pugh, and Wesford Taggart. Mr. Jordan, formerly a farmer in Garrett Township, was Sheriff of Douglas County, became a resident of Tuscola and ran a large livery and sale stable. Price, though a large landowner in the county became a resident of Tuscola.. Pugh, was a wagon maker and Col. Taggart, fought in the Civil War and served two terms as Sheriff, owned a furniture business on the north side of Central Avenue called Taggart & Elkin. Mr. Martin resigned the mayoralty in June 1870, partly because of ill health and partly because he lived outside of the city. To correct the matter he had an addition made to the city and recorded, which was situated in the southwest corner of Section 26, Township 16, Range 8, but no lots were sold and the matter was dropped.

Mr. Martin resided in Tuscola for about six years and was an attorney. He died November 15, 1871.

MAYORS

1869 – 1870 James H. Martin	? - ? Isaac D. Urquhart
1870 – 1875 Thomas Sluss	1936 – 1941 George O. Land
1875 – 1879 W. H. Lamb	1941 – 1945 H. A. Wiesener
1879 – 1883 Albert M. Woody	1945 – 1948 W. H. Waltrip (resigned)
1883 - 1885 James Davis	1949 – 1949 Lawrence Allen (interim)
1885 – 1887 James Trowsell	1949 – 1957 Fred M. Jones
1887 – 1889 W. S. Martin	1957 – 1961 Roy A. Toomey
1889 – 1891 R. W. Harrison	1961 – 1965 Fred M. Jones
1881 – 1893 P. C. Sloan	1965 – 1969 Dr. Robert E. Burns
1893 – 1895 A. W. Wallace	1969 – 1973 Frank M. Marlor
1895 – 1897 Alonzo C. Sluss	1973 – 1976 Garland Strohl (resigned)
1897 – 1901 R. W. Harrison	1976 – 1976 Ray Carlson (interim)
1901 – 1903 T. W. Roberts	1976 – 1981 Chris L. Hill
1903 - ? Charles L. McMasters	1981 – 1988 Clarence Snyder
1922 - 1925 Frank A. Warren	1988 – Present Daniel J. Kleiss

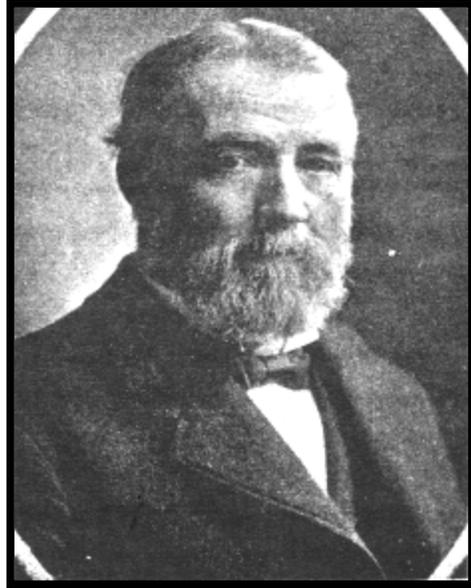


COL. WESFORD TAGGART

Was a member of the first city council and served several times afterward.



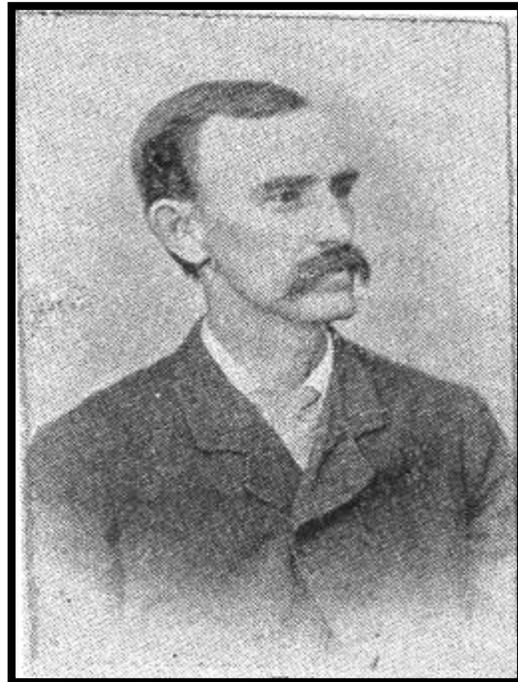
Thomas Sluss
1870 - 1875



Dr. W. S. Martin
1887 - 1889



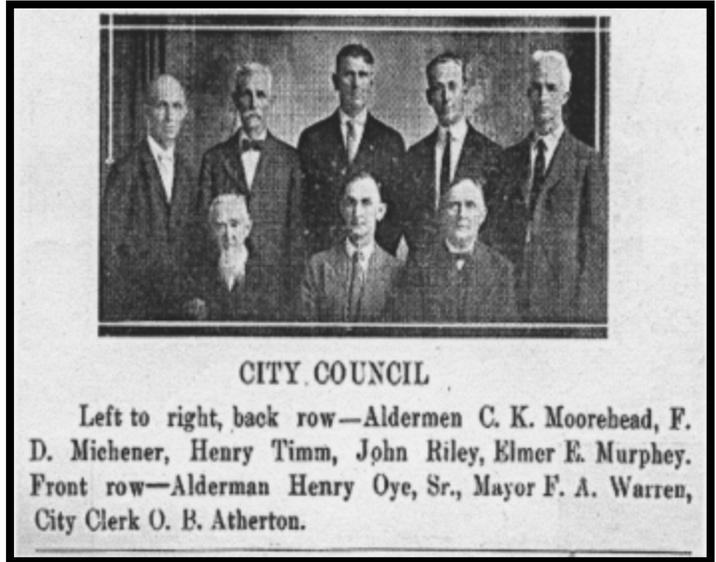
Albert W. Wallace
1893-1895



Alonzo C. Sluss
1895-1897



Charles L. McMasters
1903 - ?



CITY COUNCIL

Left to right, back row—Aldermen C. K. Moorehead, F. D. Michener, Henry Timm, John Riley, Elmer E. Murphey. Front row—Alderman Henry Oye, Sr., Mayor F. A. Warren, City Clerk O. B. Atherton.

Frank A. Warren
1921-1925



George O. Land
1936-1941



Roy Toomey
1957-1961



Fred M. Jones
1949-1957 & 1961-1965



Dr. Robert E. Burns
1965 - 1969



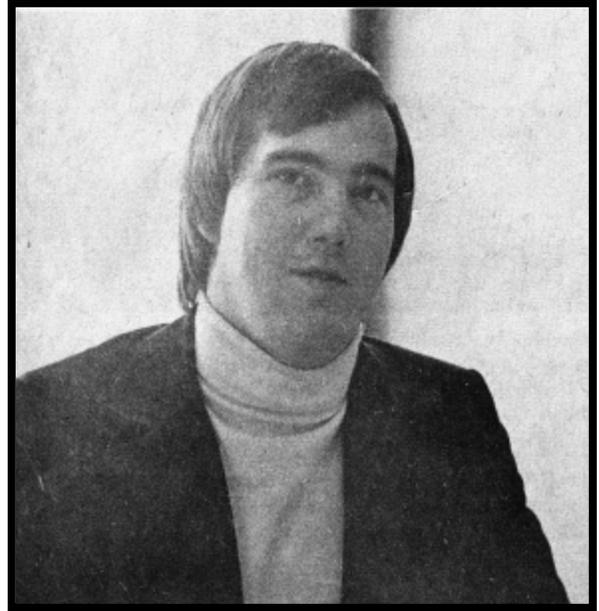
Frank M. Marlor
1969-1973



Garland Strohl
1973-1976



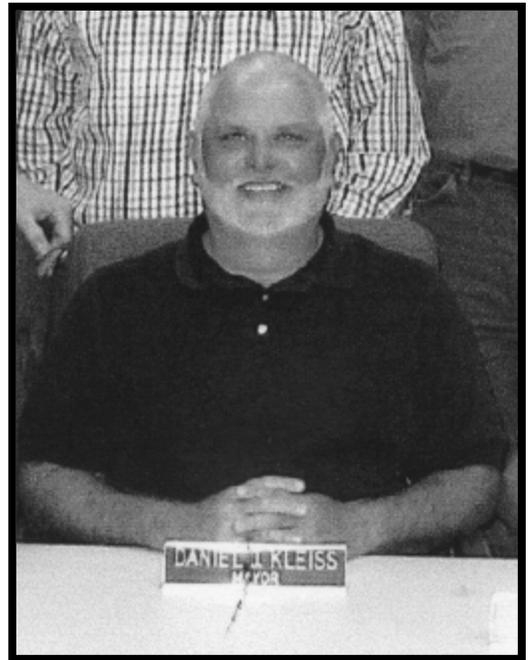
Ray Carlson
1976-1976



Chris L. Hill
1976-1981



Clarence Snyder
1981 - 1988



Daniel J. Kleiss
1988 - Present