

# Monroe's first commissioners kept busy

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**Looking back, from page A1**

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It didn't take long for the commissioners to discover that not all of the buyers of city lots were thinking of making Bloomington their permanent home. So the county fathers came up with their own way of dealing with land speculators. "Profiteering and lack of ethics in real estate deals was clamped down on by an edict which asserted that anyone buying land in the city and not fulfilling conditions of the purchase within 48 hours would be forced to pay the county 6 percent of the purchase price, the land to become the property of the county until sold a second time," related the *Star*.

Wandering animals detracted from the dignity of the seat of Monroe County government and the commissioners were obliged to do something about it. The *Star* reporter learned from the minutes of their meeting that they "ordered erected on the south side of the square a 'stray pen' designed as a harbor for lost, strayed or stolen cows, sheep, horses and other domestic quadrupeds. . . . The latter (pen) was a 33-foot-square corral, built of strong white oak, divided into sections, and locked in various places with big gates and padlocks. Joel Woodward built the pen at a cost of \$23."

After all that flurry of building, a brand new county could have run a deficit. But, as the very first year of Monroe County government came to a close, the treasurer counted the tax blessings and found a handsome balance of \$701.02 in the treasury.