

MN
Big Stone
Misc
1.1

Minnesota County Officials: Big Stone County, 1873-1941

Duane P. Swanson

The following list contains names of Big Stone County officials from 1873 to 1941. The names are transcribed from the *Inventory of the County Archives of Minnesota, No. 6 Big Stone County (Ortonville)*, prepared by the Minnesota Historical Records Survey of the Work Projects Administration and published in August 1943. It includes the following officials: county commissioners (1873-1941), auditors (1874-1941), registers of deeds (1874-1941), clerks of the district court (1874-1941), judges of the probate court (1874-1941), court commissioners (1881-1941), coroners (1874-1941), sheriffs (1874-1941), county attorneys (1878-1941), treasurers (1874-1941), county superintendents of schools (1874-1941), county surveyors (1874-1918), highway engineers (1921-1941), and agricultural agents (1912-1924, 1933-1941).

No attempts have been made to verify the accuracy of this information or to confirm the spelling of the names. Incumbents in office as of 1941 show that date in parentheses; their terms probably continued thereafter. The original publication usually includes the month and day on which the official's position began and ended. Copies of the original publication

may be found in the libraries of the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota Genealogical Society.

The territory that became Big Stone County was originally part of the territorial county of Dakota. On 5 March 1853 it became part of Pierce County and was attached to Nicollet County for judicial purposes. Big Stone County was created from Pierce County 20 February 1862. In 1866 it was attached to Renville County for judicial purposes. Two townships of Big Stone County became part of Stevens County on 6 March 1868, and on 27 February 1873 the county was attached to Stevens for judicial purposes. The governor appointed county commissioners in 1874 and they operated the county until court action determined the organization was invalid.

The county remained unorganized until 8 February 1881 when it was fully organized. On 1 January 1938 a small portion in the city of Ortonville was transferred to Big Stone County from Lac qui Parle; 8 November 1977 this portion was transferred back to Lac qui Parle and on 22 May 1979 it was retransferred to Big Stone. The county seat was established at Ortonville in 1874 and has remained there.

Allen	E.	S.	Commissioner	1935	(1941)
Anderson	A.	J.	Commissioner	1897	1905
Anderson	A.	H.	Coroner	1938	1940
Anderson	J.	Alfred	Register of Deeds	1939	(1941)
Anderson	N.	G.	Auditor	1887	1891
Beardsley	A.	D.	Commissioner	1881	1883
Benson	C.	A.	Agricultural Agent	1933	(1941)
Benson	C.	J.	County Attorney	1935	(1941)
Bentley	J.	W.	Register of Deeds	1907	1915
Berdon	Almo		Commissioner	1933	1937
Bladholm	A.	J.	Highway Engineer	1928	(1941)
Boland	Wm.	H.	Register of Deeds	1903	1907
Bolsta	Charles		Coroner	1897	1899
Bolsta	Charles		Coroner	1901	1905
Bolsta	Charles		Coroner	1911	1915



Big Stone County Courthouse, 1972

Photographer: Thomas Landvik

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Bolsta	Charles	H.	County Attorney	1923	1927
Bolsta	Charles	H.	County Attorney	1931	1935
Bolsta	Ole		Coroner	1875	1877
Bolsta	Ole		Treasurer	1881	1895
Bosta	A.	L.	Auditor	1905	1909
Brown	W.	R.	Superintendent of Schools	1875	1878
Brown	W.	R.	Superintendent of Schools	1881	1893
Brown	W.	R.	Surveyor	1875	1877
Buchanan	R.	R.	Agricultural Agent	1923	1924
Burns	W.	E.	Commissioner	1925	1933
Campbell	Wm.	H.	Judge of Probate	1886	1891
Carlson	A.	V.	Commissioner	1915	1919
Carlson	August		Clerk of District Court	1875	1876
Cauley	F.	W.	Coroner	1940	(1941)
Chapman	R.	H.	Surveyor	1881	1901
Chapman	R.	H.	Surveyor	1903	1909
Chesley	G.	B.	Commissioner	1887	1891
Church	Jacob		Auditor	1874	1875
Clark	A.	Arthur	Coroner	1883	1884
Clark	D.	K. J.	Court Commissioner	1891	1895
Clarke	P.		Commissioner	1900	1915
Cliff	F.	L.	County Attorney	1893	1899
Conforth	R.	A.	Commissioner	1899	1903
Converse	A.	B.	Superintendent of Schools	1901	1903
Conway	James		Commissioner	1897	1901
Crawford	E.	F.	County Attorney	1888	1891
Dahlhjelm	C.	A.	Treasurer	1895	1903
Daly	P.	W.	Sheriff	1928	(1941)
Danielson	Mons		Commissioner	1893	1897
Dassel	Bernhard		Clerk of District Court	1881	1886
Dewey	Alvah	A.	Clerk of District Court	1886	1886
Dittes, Jr.	Fred		Commissioner	1911	1919
Dunn	F.	W.	Coroner	1935	1938
Eastvold	Carl	J.	County Attorney	1927	1931
Engdahl	T.	W.	Highway Engineer	1921	1928
Farrington	R.	G.	County Attorney	1899	1903
Farrington	R.	G.	County Attorney	1919	1923
Finney	J.	M.	Commissioner	1891	1894
Frankhouse	Frederick		Commissioner	1873?	
French	Hayden		Clerk of District Court	1887	1932
Geenty	John	F.	Commissioner	1919	1927
Gillis	C.		Surveyor	1877	1878
Gowan	John		Sheriff	1901	1927
Grant	T.	M.	County Attorney	1881	1887
Grant	T.	M.	County Attorney	1891	1893
Hagaman	C.	B.	Commissioner	1891	1895
Hahn	O.	E.	Auditor	1931	1937
Hahn	O.	E.	Court Commissioner	1923	1928
Hanratty	P.	A.	Commissioner	1933	(1941)
Hart	Job	K.	Commissioner	1877	1878



*Ole Bolsta
ca. 1910*

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*Jerry M. Finney
of Clinton, 1895*

Finney served as a state
legislator in 1895-97

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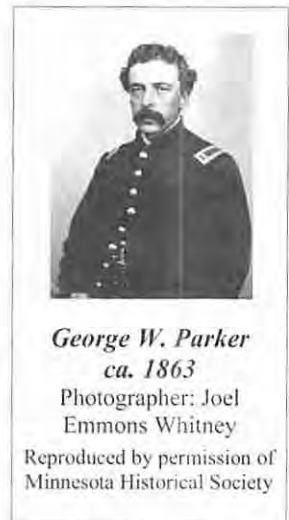
Hart	Job	K.	Surveyor	1874	1875
Haues	Erastus	T.	Sheriff	1877	1878
Heily	Hugh		Commissioner	1909	1917
Holmes	H.	L.	Commissioner	1883	1884
Hudson	Dena	B.	Auditor	1923	1931
Hudson	R.	B.	Commissioner	1897	1902
Hudson	R.	B.	Judge of Probate	1916	1933
Hudson	R.	B.	Court Commissioner	1917	1923
Hudson	R.	B.	Treasurer	1903	1915
Hundeby	Theo.		Commissioner	1923	1935
Hurley	Jacob		Commissioner	1874	1881
Hurley	Jacob	W.	Sheriff	1874	1876
Jackson	A.	P.	Commissioner	1887	1895
Jackson	A.	L.	Judge of Probate	1874	1876
Jackson	A.	L.	Coroner	1887	1891
Jackson	A.	L.	Treasurer	1875	1878
Jones	L.	R.	County Attorney	1887	1888
Jones	Lyman	R.	Court Commissioner	1911	1917
Kaercher	A.	B.	County Attorney	1911	1919
Karn	B.	R.	Coroner	1915	1933
Karn	Jacob		Coroner	1891	1897
Karn	Jacob		Coroner	1899	1901
Karn	Jacob		Coroner	1905	1911
Keating	J.	T.	Commissioner	1882	1887
Keating	Luke	J.	Judge of Probate	1933	1935
Keefe	J.	E.	Superintendent of Schools	1903	1905
Keefe	John	E.	Superintendent of Schools	1893	1901
Kemerer	S.	D.	Judge of Probate	1881	1886
Kingsbury	E.	L.	Commissioner	1884	1893
Knoll	George	H.	Commissioner	1902	1909
Knudson	K.	G.	Commissioner	1919	1923
Kollitz	H.	W.	Treasurer	1931	(1941)
Lange	C.	H.	Auditor	1891	1895
Lannan	Andrew		Commissioner	1887	1897
Larkin	Henry	A.	Clerk of District Court	1932	(1941)
Lathrop	A.	B.	Agricultural Agent	1912	1914
Leet	J.	R.	Register of Deeds	1874	1878
Lestina	John		Commissioner	1929	(1941)
Lillesater	Ole		Coroner	1877	1878
Lundberg	Nels		Commissioner	1909	1929
Lyman	H.	C.	Commissioner	1884	1891
Martinson	R.	D.	Commissioner	1905	1917
Matthews	M.	I.	Commissioner	1878	1881
Matthews	M.	I.	Superintendent of Schools	1874	1875
McCallum	John		Commissioner	1907	1911
McCallum	John		Register of Deeds	1881	1893
McCallum	John		Sheriff	1878	1878
McDonnell	M.	J.	Surveyor	1909	1918
McMurphy	Geo.		Coroner	1881	1883
Mero	Charles	H.	Auditor	1881	1887



*P.A. Hanratty,
with Stafford King and Luke J.
Keating, looking over
application blank for
agricultural loan program,
ca. 1935*

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Meyer	Otto		Commissioner	1919	1923
Miller	E.	J.	Auditor	1895	1901
Millett	J.	A.	Surveyor	1901	1903
Mitchell	John		Register of Deeds	1893	1903
Morrill	E.	N.	Judge of Probate	1909	1915
Morrison	James	N.	Commissioner	1874	1875
Movius	J.	W.	Commissioner	1873	?
Nelson	Agnes		Superintendent of Schools	1935	(1941)
Nelson	N.	J.	Commissioner	1929	1933
Nelson	N.	J.	Commissioner	1937	(1941)
O'Brien	M.	J.	Commissioner	1917	1917
O'Hara	D.	N.	Commissioner	1895	1897
O'Hara	D.	N.	Commissioner	1905	1909
O'Neill	E.	J.	Commissioner	1917	1919
Orton	C.	K.	Commissioner	1874	1887
Orton	O.	M.	Commissioner	1895	1900
Orton	Peter	M.	Sheriff	1876	1877
Otrey	William		Coroner	1874	1875
Parker	A.	J.	Auditor	1875	1878
Parker	A.	J.	Judge of Probate	1876	1878
Parker	A.	J.	Court Commissioner	1884	1891
Parker	A.	J.	Court Commissioner	1895	1911
Parker	Addison	J.	Clerk of District Court	1874	1875
Parker	Addison	J.	County Attorney	1874	1878
Parker	Frank	C.	Clerk of District Court	1876	1878
Parker	George	W.	Court Commissioner	1881	1883
Pearson	Nels		Commissioner	1917	1921
Perry	H.	V.	Coroner	1885	1887
Phelps	Addison		Treasurer	1874	1875
Purcell	J.	J.	County Attorney	1903	1911
Randall	A.	E.	Treasurer	1878	1878
Randall	A.	E.	Sheriff	1881	1901
Randall	A.	V.	Auditor	1909	1923
Randall	B.	M.	Coroner	1884	1885
Reynolds	L.	A.	Commissioner	1931	1939
Roske	M.	P.	Agricultural Agent	1918	1922
Rothwell	J.	T.	Commissioner	1901	1905
Rothwell	Joseph	F.	Judge of Probate	1891	1893
Rothwell	Martha	M.	Superintendent of Schools	1918	1935
Schoen	Martin		Coroner	1933	1935
Scotfield	A.	J.	Judge of Probate	1893	1909
Scotfield	Charles	E.	Court Commissioner	1928	(1941)
Shaw	G.	W.	Auditor	1937	(1941)
Steen	Ole	I.	Commissioner	1921	1929
Stephens	A.	S.	Commissioner	1884	1887
Stephens	A.	S.	Commissioner	1895	1899
Stephens	A.	S.	Commissioner	1903	1907
Strong	D.		Commissioner	1881	1882
Sturges	Albert	H.	Register of Deeds	1915	1939
Swanson	Anna		Superintendent of Schools	1905	1918



Todd	Jerome	G.	Commissioner	1881	1884
Utley	William	T.	Treasurer	1915	1931
Utley	Wm.	T.	Judge of Probate	1935	(1941)
Webb	J.	T.	Commissioner	1881	1884
Weeding	John	F.	Sheriff	1927	1928
Zwiener	A.	A.	Commissioner	1923	1931
Zwiener	Henry	L.	Auditor	1901	1905

Book Review

Review by John Knowles

Poles in Minnesota

By John Radzilowski
St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2005. 112 p., Paper, \$13.95.



This is a volume in the Minnesota Historical Society's series on ethnic groups in Minnesota.

Dr. Radzilowski recounts the early history of Polish settlements in Minnesota beginning in the mid-1800s and then moves into modern times both in rural areas and cities.

It provides good treatment on the life of the Polish farmer who made up a small minority of Polish immigrants who came to the United States. According to the book, about ninety percent settled in the large industrial cities of the East and Midwest. He devotes most of the book to Polish church communities, organizations, traditions, and the press, and how often controversies among members arose as to their direction.

Anecdotes, quotes, and pictures fill the gaps as well as a number of sidebars dealing with population statistics, food, and other matters.

I believe the author wanted to also provide an insight into the adaptability and tenacity of the early Pole émigrés. Their life and economic difficulties in their

hometown, no doubt, to a large measure fostered the migration. There seemed to be a search for their identity in many instances since they largely emigrated from Prussian, Austrian or Russian-controlled areas—not the Polish nation. Often Poles were never properly recognized. Maybe it was their lot that one of the first planned Polish farm communities in Minnesota was in Lincoln County which had marginal farm land and for many years was the poorest county in the state according to family income.

Later chapters deal with the Poles and their relationship with the outside world. While it is not an all-encompassing history, it does provide a flavor of their early history, progression and assimilation in the state.

For me personally it was of great interest since I lived a large part of my early life in some of the communities referenced in the book, being born in Winona and living my school years in the Ivanhoe-Wilno area of Lincoln County.

The book is a good read for Minnesota Polish; for genealogists who are writing their family history and want to supplement it with some historical information; and for those interested in sociological aspects of Minnesota history.

The book comes in a handy 6x9 paperback (101 pages) and is indexed by name, place, and topic. There are over ninety end notes and many references for those who would like to probe further into the subject.

