

Early History of Greenfield

The Congressional Township 75, 31, now known as the township of Greenfield, was, at the organization of the county, included in the civil township of Grand River, which comprised the four townships in the southeast part of the county now called Greenfield, Orient, Union and Grand River.

Sometime in the early part of 1860, the township of Grand River was divided, and the civil township of Greenfield was created, comprising the present townships of Greenfield and Orient. In the month of June 1869, the township of Greenfield was divided, and the civil township of Orient was set off from it.

The township of Greenfield is beautifully located on the western slope of the watershed, separating waters flowing into the Mississippi and the Missouri, and whose general trend is from the southeast to the northwest.

Its elevation secures it a pure air and bracing climate. Its surface is gently rolling throughout most of its extent and is all available for agricultural purposes.

The soil is deep and fertile and abundantly watered by numerous streams, which, though small, afford sufficient irrigation. Good water is procured by digging from 15 to 30 feet.

There is no stone, perhaps, in the township, but this want is supplied by an abundance of most excellent stone on Middle River, whose proximity to this township obviates the inconveniences to which otherwise it would be exposed. The township of Greenfield had several settlers at a very early day.

In the year 1854, two men by the name of Hodgson and H-lin(?), settled upon the south half of the southwest quarter of section seven, of this township. Their dwellings were of the most primitive indispensable. These men appear to have been squatters. They made no improvements except those mentioned, and, shortly after, their lands passed into the possession of Bevington, Mungor and Holliday, and they left the country.

In the year 1856, Bevington, Mungor and Holliday laid out the town of Greenfield, upon the land purchased from these men. Mr. Mallery, who has attained a verable old age, and still lives in the town of Greenfield, was one of the earliest settlers of the township, and if we are correctly informed, made some improvements and broke some land in it before the time of the platting of the town.

The location of the town of Greenfield made it an important station on the route of California and Oregon, and subsequently an important and convenient stage station; and from this point of travel for southwestern Iowa and Kansas, diverged from the California trail, and passed down the divide upon the east side of the Nodaway.

To further accommodation for this travel, Matthew Clark kept an inn and stage station for several years and is well remembered for his hospitality.

In 1863, he left the county, emigrating to Colorado. Mr. J. Myers, one of early settlers before referred to, who is well remembered by his personal friends and acquaintances for his excellent qualities as a man and Christian, died in the year 1869. To him, in connection with his sons, many of the best improvements of the town and township are owing.

In 1859, Mr. A. P. Littleton established a store in Greenfield. The points at which he procured the supplies were at St. Joseph or Ottumwa. Previous to the establishment of this store, Winterset was the trading point for the greater part of Adair County. But after that time, much of the trade of the eastern, northern and southern parts of the county was diverted from Winterset to Greenfield.

Mr. S. C. Vance, one of the earliest settlers, has resisted the emigration fever and still resides in Greenfield. Mr. Vance has filled many positions of trust in his township and county, with credit to himself, and profit to his constituents. He is a farmer but is especially interested at present in growing sheep and hogs and is an active and useful officer of the County Agricultural Society.

Among the later settlers in the township who have opened farms and made substantial improvements, we may mention A. J. Mears, whose handsome and substantial stone house is indicative of the enterprise of its owner.

Col. S. E. Morris, whose farm lies near the northern line of the township, emigrated from Illinois. He is largely engaged in farming and raising hogs. His stock, which he imported from Ohio, is pure bred McGee and are said by those conversant with such matters, to be very superior. The Colonel is an active, public-spirited citizen, interested in all public enterprises, especially such as effect the farming interest. Mr. Rivinburgh has opened up a fine farm, which he is improving rapidly.

The town of Greenfield contains, besides the dry goods and grocery store of A. P. Littleton, a drug store, owned by C. P. Gilbert, a hotel by J. M. Dew, and a blacksmith shop by Franklin Letts. There are two religious societies, the Methodist and Adventist. The schoolhouse, which is well built, is of two stories and has two departments. The school has been well taught.

The township has a population of about ---- and although a more desirable country in which to locate can scarcely be found in this part of the west, yet there is an immense amount of land in this township that is still unbroken which can be bought at from four to twelve dollars per acre.

The stock of the township is herded by common consent, which offers inducements to poor persons to locate and invest, thus obviating the expense of fencing.