

## Chapter 16

### Liberty

A platt was filed on April 28, 1857 by J. C. Mooney, Robert R. Elder, and Daniel Stevens. This location was in Liberty Township, Section 27. There was a post office there from 1857 until 1864. It is not known for sure if this is the same one as located in Cramtown, just north of Liberty.

The formality of platting the town was apparently as far as the town developed. It appears that only one or two lots were ever sold.

#### CRAM TOWN

The area about one half mile west of Bevins Grove Cemetery on Minerva Creek has been referred to as Cram Town. In reality it never was a real town, but appears to have been a rural trading center with a post office, blacksmith shop, general store and a few houses. The area was named for Abram E. Cram who operated a blacksmith shop there in the 1870's and 1880's. The area was probably one of the locations of the Bevins post office.

The store set on the east side of county road going south from the north quarter corner of Section 27, Liberty Township, about 300 or 400 feet south of the corner. The east end of the store reached about to the creek and the store was built up on poles. Today an old oak tree still stands just south of where the store stood. The blacksmith shop stood directly across the road on the west side.

On the west side of the creek and the north side of the east-west road in Section 22, Liberty Township stood about 3 nice houses with basements. Parts of these basements and foundation still remain. There may also have been a few old houses and shacks. Part of this area is also at the north end of the old town of Liberty that had been laid out and platted in 1857.

There appears to be references to earlier deeds but nothing prior to 1878 can be found. On April 1, 1878, Pat Dunn and wife deeded Lots 1 and 2, Block 1 and Lots 1 and 2, Block 10 in the northeast corner of the northwest quarter of Section 27-85-20 containing about 2 acres to A.E. Cram.

In 1882, this land is deeded back to Dunn by Cram. Also, a deed was found from A. T. Miller and wife

Emily to Phebe Bevins dated April 13, 1883, for the land "starting in the northeast corner of the northwest quarter section 27-85-20 running thence west 3 rods, thence south 17 rods, thence east 19 rods, thence north 17 rods, thence west 16 rods to beginning containing 2 acres except improvements inside of lots inclosed and picket fence in front of house - also 4 trees".

Later this property was described as Lot 1 of the northeast quarter of the northwest quarter, section 27-85-20.

A further research of the records indicates a deed on April 16, 1907, from Abram E. Cram to Thomas C. Andrews for "Lots 1 and 2, Block 1 and Lots 1 and 2, Block 10 of the old town of Liberty " plus unopened and vacated streets containing two acres and also called Lot 1 of the subdivision of northeast quarter of the northwest quarter of section 27-85-20.

The old 1878 history of Marshall County lists A. E. Cram as coming to Marshall County in 1865. He is listed as a blacksmith in Section 27 of Liberty Township. Old reports indicate he was a very well respected resident.

The settlement appears to have pretty well disappeared by 1900 and probably was declining since the mid 1880's when it lost the post office and the train arrived at Clemons and St. Anthony. Some old stories indicate that some of the houses or buildings were moved to St. Anthony. Other old stories indicate that about 85 years ago the last house in Cram Town was occupied by Ann Mulhane.

#### More On The Settlement Of Bevins Grove

Much of the area on Minerva Creek in Section 22 and 27 of Liberty Township known as Bevins Grove has been subdivided into small lots of various sizes. Some only an acre and some up to 5 or 10 acres. This is a very old area and was the site of many early activities. There are stories that some earlier settlers had shacks or cabins there to spend the winter and move out on the prairie in summer to farm.

There are also many accounts of early lumber operations. On the east side of the creek and about 50 or 60 rods north in the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of section 22, Liberty Township, was a large sawmill operation in very early days. There were several shacks, maybe 30 or more, at one time for workers at that sawmill and also a few houses.

The sawmill was powered by horses and required a lot of horses to operate the power for the mill. The faster the horse went around the better the mill operated. Many times wild or only partially broke horses were used and the faster they went the better. An early attraction at the sawmill was the sight of half a saw blade that broke on the saw and flew up in a large tree where it stuck. For many years the part of a saw was visible sticking out of the tree.

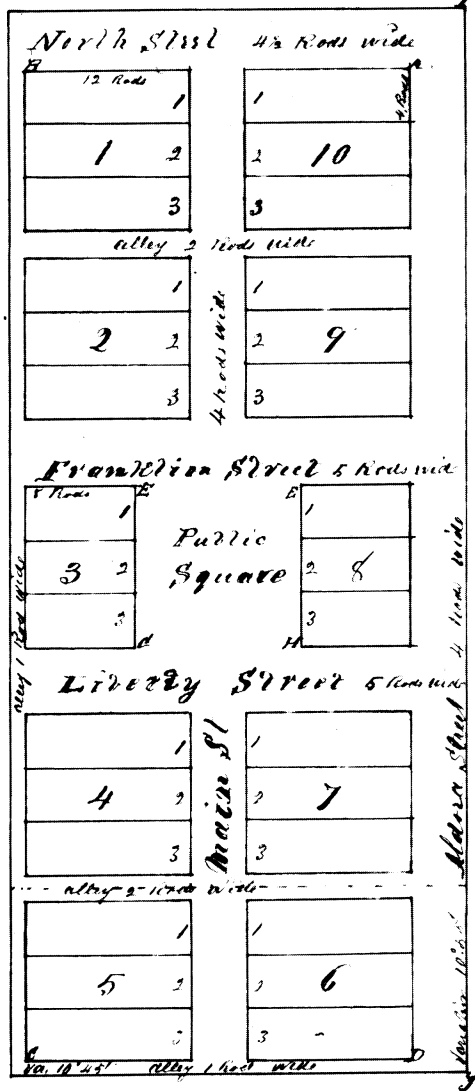
Old maps show the old state road that was the stagecoach route coming from the north down to the center of Section 22 and crossing the creek and heading off in a southwesterly direction. The Bevins' cabin was probably close to the center of Section 22 and the post office at that time. A later old map in 1871 shows the post office at the Cram Town location and the road going clear across Section 22 from north to south and crossing the creek in the center of Section 22 and proceeding on south on the west side of the creek.

The 1885 map shows the road going across Section 22 but being entirely on the east side of Minerva Creek and no road on the west side.

# Plat of Liberty in Marshall County Iowa

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Subdivided into 36 lots  
1857 & 1858, 1860 & 1861  
Recorded in Book 16  
Page 168  
H. J. Moore, Recorder.  
J. Marshall Co. Iowa.



Scale 8 Rods to  
one inch

The Town of Liberty is located on the East End of N. 27  
S. 35 36th of range 20 West Iowa. It is the 1st. T. center of N. of Sec  
27. Streets located at A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H. North Street 4 1/2 Rods wide  
Franklin Street & Liberty Street 5 rods wide. Aldora & Main Street 4 rods  
wide. alleys 172 Rods wide as shown by the plat, & lines running North  
& South 10 55'. Lines running East & West 10 40' all lots are  
4 Rods wide & there lots in blocks 37 & 8 are 8 Rods long, all others  
are 12 Rods long. public Square 12 Rods Square. Surveyed August  
12th 1858. Lewis C. Moore protractor North of dotted line, & Robert  
K. Elder & Daniel Stevens South of dotted line

Fred. Baum  
Surveyor