Early History of Fontanelle

"*The Reporter* of last week says of Adair County: 'The county of Adair lies between the C.R.I. & P.R.R. and the B. M. R. R. The distance from Fontanelle (the county seat) to the former is about fifteen miles, and to the latter about eighteen miles. It will thus be seen that Adair county already enjoys the advantages of two competing lines of railroad. In addition to these commercial facilities, several railroads are already pushing westward to make connection with the Union Pacific Railroad. To one of these, the Mississippi and North Western, to connect Keithsburg, on the Mississippi River, and Council Bluffs, aid has already been voted by the townships of Greenfield and Summerset.

The county of Adair was originally united with the county of Cass for civil purposes. Early to the year 1854, it was set off from Cass County. The first record of the county court shows that it was held in Jefferson township at the home of G. M. Holiday, the first County Judge, May 1st, 1854. The first nominating convention was held in a small grove near the residence of Wm. Sexsmith, north of Greenfield.

The location of the county seat was made by a commission consisting of Mr. Stafford, of Winterset, Mr. Hitchcock of Mills County, and _____ of Cass county, appointed by the Legislature. The present location was selected from its proximity to the timber then known as Vawter's Grove, on the middle branch of the Nodaway, and its name, Summerset, probably had some connection with the name Winterset, by which the county seat of Madison county was called. The survey of the town was completed May 29th, 1854 and was made by D. M. Valentine, the first county surveyor, assisted by A. Rutt and J. M. Holiday, chainmen. The name Summerset was retained until the year 1858, when it was ascertained there was another town in the State called by the same name, whereupon the name was changed to FONTANELLE, the name of an Omaha Chief of some celebrity, who lived in this region within the recollection of some of our citizens.'"