

City of Sycamore
March 22, 1871
Inaugural Speech by Mayor Richard A Smith
To City Council & Citizens

“Gentlemen of the Board of Aldermen and Fellow Citizens

Before entering the discharge of duty as presiding officer of this Honorable Board, I desire to express my sincere thanks to the people of this City – for the confidence they have reposed in me by placing me in this honorable and responsible position. And I must say that I enter upon the discharge of my duty with many misgivings and doubts as to my fitness for the place. And I must ask the indulgence and friendly forbearance of you all. I hope and trust that our relations may be of the most pleasant nature during the year that we may be called upon to act together. And that we shall all be actuated by only the one desire, to carry out that line of duty and policy that shall be for the best good and prosperity of our beautiful City.

And to his Honor the retiring Mayor let me hope that I may have the benefit of his counsel and mature judgment. I can not hope to make his place good or to retire at the end of the year with the full honors that are due him, but with the hearty cooperation of this Honorable Board and with the heartfelt desire to do what I can for the honor and prosperity of our City. I trust that my efforts will not be entirely without good results.

But upon you, gentlemen, rests the high duty and responsibility of making and enforcing the necessary regulations and laws for the government and protection of the People of this City. Among the things that will require your attention will be to make some provisions to guard against fires, to attend to the streets and walks and see that they are kept in good repair. And the financial prosperity of the City should be carefully guarded and attended to. Also the licensing of the sale of intoxicating liquors will come before you for your approval or disapproval. This disturbing element has taxed the wisdom of many of our greatest statesmen, and should receive your special attention for the honor and prosperity of our City. And for the sake of our children let this great evil be dealt with, as our conscience tells us is just and right, and not from consideration of policy or favor. If liquor must be sold let this Council see to it that the seller is held to a strict account for his acts.

Other and important matters will come before you for consideration. And I have no fears they will receive the attention their importance may demand.

The prosperity of this City in all its different relations and interests are entrusted to your keeping and care. And it is hoped and confidently expected that they will not be allowed to suffer at your hands.

Let just and good regulations and laws be made, and when once placed upon the records of this Council, then see to it that they are respected and enforced.”

Source: City of Sycamore City Council Minutes Book #1 1859-1877