

## Log Cabin Remnant of Iowa History

By DWIGHT B. HICKS

One of the last remnants of that era in American history when pioneers carved their homes out of the wilderness can be found today on the outskirts of Nora Springs, Floyd county, Iowa. It is the two-story log cabin built 100 years ago this October 21, by Edson Gaylord, on the southeast fringe of what now is called Nora Springs.

The story all began back in 1853, when Edson followed Horace Greeley's famous remark, "Go west young man, go west!" He and his five brothers held a family council in their Northville, Conn., home. Edson Gaylord was selected to go west to find a section of country where the family could settle. The brothers then would join him later.

Edson traveled through to Rock Grove township in Floyd county, Iowa, and into a number of neighboring states. He was convinced by that time that Rock Grove was the "most lovely spot and possessed more natural advantages than any other" he had seen in all his rambling.

He then returned and built the two-story log cabin which still exists today. Although the 18- by 24-foot cabin is not in as good condition as it was 100 years ago, its stone chimney and fireplace still remain stable and intact.

The wood frame of the building now leans toward the north, but still is standing on the property now owned by Miss Vienna Gaylord, the third child of Edson Gaylord. She was born in that log cabin in 1871. When the cabin was built in 1853, not one nail was used in its construction. The roof originally was made made of split stakes held in place by heavy poles. The logs were cut with a sledge hammer and a wedge.

The once warm and comfortable home for Floyd county's first pioneer family now is more or less neglected. It is engulfed by bushes, brambles and trees, and during the summer months is almost hidden to the naked eye.

The log cabin may be found, when approaching from east of Nora Springs, by turning left at the first road, following its winding path across the railroad tracks, and turning right into the first driveway. The cabin then sets on the left of the drive opposite the Gaylord brick home.

The Gaylord family lived in the log cabin from 1854 to 1874, when Edson decided to build a magnificent home of brick, which today is still a show piece. Over 100,000 bricks and 500 bushels of lime were used to build the building on the Gaylord property, which was named Gaylord Glade soon after it was settled.

Mr. Gaylord, not only was a pioneer in developing the Nora Springs area, but also had many firsts to his credit. He built the first school house in Floyd county, getting up in the middle of the night to cut the first tree. The stump to that first tree has been kept by Miss Gaylord at the home of a niece with whom she now lives in Nora Springs. The log cabin school house was built in 1854, east of the Gaylord log cabin near a section where buffalo were plentiful. It burned after the first year and had to be rebuilt 80 rods to the west of the initial school, which now would be within the city limits of Nora Springs.

Mr. Gaylord also cut out and made the first pioneer road through Rock Grove township. He also burned the first lime in a regular kiln. In his trade, he made and supplied the countryside with lime and brick for many years. The Floyd county pioneer also was an authority on fruit trees. He wrote many valuable papers on the apple tree and its problems and set up the first apple orchard in the county.

The Gaylords were one of three pioneer families which planted and surveyed Nora Springs. Edson

bought most of the land where Nora Springs now stands from the government and deeded it to the community.

For years, people there thought the name "Nora Springs" originated as a compliment to the girl friend of one of the surveyors. Through the years Edson kept the secret of how it was named. But it finally came out. A friend of his was interested in buying a mill and settling there. He wanted to name the town Eleanora Springs after his fiancée in the East, but Edson and the friend compromised on the name Nora Springs.

After this came about, it was discovered the friend's bride-to-be had rejected his hand in marriage, so the man changed his mind about settling there. But the name Nora Springs stuck.

One story in connection with the naming of the town was brought to light by a newspaper story believed first printed about 1933. It told of a minister and his wife leaving the train at Nora Springs when they heard an elderly woman saying, "I have always lived in the East and since my youth I have wanted to see this place. It was named for me, but I cannot stop." It was assumed this was the bride-to-be who rejected Edson's friend's offer of marriage.

The log cabin and the Gaylord family's persistence against all odds, in an Iowa once a wilderness, are a great part of American history. But it must not be forgotten and neglected as the months turn into years and the years into centuries. Something should be done about keeping Floyd county's last log cabin from rotting and decaying into dust of the countryside.

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### Midwest Old Settlers Meet

A four-day annual meeting of the Midwest Old Settlers and Threshers association assembled at Mount Pleasant Wednesday, September 16. Ray Ernst, of near Mount Pleasant was the president and had charge of the meeting, which attracted many persons from surrounding states.

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