

THE EARLY HISTORY OF IOWA.

BY CHARLES NEGUS.

(Continued from page 31.)

DUBUQUE, BURLINGTON AND FORT MADISON.

After the death of Julien Dubuque, which took place in 1810, the lead mines on the west side of the Mississippi were not worked to any extent till after the purchase of these mines from the Indians.

The Indians did not feel disposed or had not the ability to work these mines themselves, and to prevent the whites from intruding, they always guarded the mining district with the most vigilant care. They would not allow the whites to visit the grounds, even to look at the place where Dubuque had worked, and much less admit mining to be done or settlements to be made. But early in the spring of 1830 an incident happened which gave the whites from the east side of the river an opportunity to explore this mining country.

The hostilities which had long existed between the Sac and Fox nations, and the Sioux and their allies, were kept up, and they were constantly committing depredations upon one another, whenever an opportunity permitted.

Early in the spring of this year some ten or twelve of the Sac and Fox chiefs, with a small party, started from their village on Catfish Creek, which was situated a short distance below where now stands the city of Dubuque, to go to have a talk with the United States Commissioner at Prairie du Chein. But when they had ascended the river as far as Cassville Island, they were attacked by a large party of Sioux and Minominies, and the whole party, with the exception of two, were killed on the spot. And one of them being severely wounded never reached home; and the other, shot through the body, after much exertion in swimming streams, and skulking from his pursuers, exhausted with fatigue and hunger, only arrived at his village in time to impart the news, and die among his friends.

The receiving of the intelligence of this slaughter at their village on Catfish Creek created the greatest alarm among the Indians, and they fled from their village in great confusion, most of them never to return.

Previous to this there had been some white settlements on the east side of the Mississippi, in the vicinity of Galena. As early as 1823, Col. Johnson, from Kentucky, with a large force of negro slaves, commenced mining near Fever River, and found some very profitable diggings. In 1824 Moses Meeker, Orrin Smith, and several others came from Cincinnati in a keel boat, being some fifty days in making the trip, and engaged in mining. In the fall of the same year James Longworthy, from St. Louis, came to the mines and formed a co-partnership with Orrin Smith and others, and commenced working the mines which in early days were known by the name of Hardscrabble. These mines were situated about nine miles north of Galena, and received their name from a fierce contest which was had there by contending parties for the possession of these mines. From this lode there was raised over twenty thousand dollars worth of lead, over and above paying all expenses in getting it out. In 1827 Lucius H. Longworthy, with a brother, two sisters, and some ten others, embarked at Quincy, Illinois, in a "pirogue," and after a voyage of thirty days arrived at the mines.

The emigration to this part of the country was so great, that previous to 1830 Galena was known at a long distance as a town, and mining was carried on in the vicinity to a considerable extent.

The whites on the east side of the Mississippi, learning that the Indians had deserted their village on Catfish Creek, thought they might venture to cross over the river and look at a country which they had long been anxious to explore. In the month of June, 1830, Lucius H. Longworthy and his brother went over to what was looked upon by the miners as the promised land. At this time there was not a white settlement north of the Des Moines, and west of the Mississippi, to Astoria in Oregon, with the exception of a few Indian trading

establishments. The Longworthys "crossed the Mississippi in a canoe, swimming their horses by its side, landed for the first time on the western bank of the stream, and stood upon the soil of the unknown land. The place, where has since been built the city of Dubuque, had been cultivated by the Indians as a corn-field, and the stalks of the last year's crop were still standing. Longworthy says, "a large village was then standing at the mouth of Catfish Creek, silent, solitary and deserted, no one remaining to greet us but the mystic shadows of the past." About seventy buildings, constructed with poles and the bark of trees, remained to tell of those who had so recently inhabited them. Their council house, though rude, was ample in its dimensions, and contained a great number of furnaces, in which kettles had been placed to prepare the feasts of peace or war. But their council-fire had gone out. On the inner surface of the bark there were paintings done with considerable artistic skill, representing the buffalo, elk, bear, panther, and other animals of the chase; also, their wild sports on the prairies, and even their feats in war, where chief meets chief, and warriors mix in bloody fray."

But this village disappeared before the whites like the morning dew. It was set on fire by some visitors that summer, and burned to the ground, much to the regret of the new settlers.

A short distance below this place is the Sioux bluff, noted from Indian traditions as the place where the Sac and Fox nations fought a great battle with the Sioux. It is an isolated bluff, about two hundred feet high. The side next to the river is nearly perpendicular, and separated on all sides from the neighboring bluffs by a wide valley.

The Sioux had fled from their enemies to this place for safety, and had fortified their position on the summit of this bluff by cutting down the trees and brush, interlocking them together, forming a kind of a rude parapet, behind which, with their wives and children, they sought to protect themselves from the assaults of the enemy. The Sacs and Foxes,

learning their position, thought it not prudent to commence an attack by daylight, but chose a time when their enemy could not watch their movements. At the dead hour of night they commenced to ascend the hill; they proceeded in a slow quiet manner, unobserved by the Sioux, to the very out-posts of their camp. They then made a desperate assault, dispersed the sentinels, and were over the breast-works and attacking the camp before the main body of the Sioux were aware of their approach. They set fire to the brush fortifications and fell back, and the fire illuminated the camp of their enemy, and they fought with the advantage of darkness around themselves, while the Sioux were exposed by the light of the burning camp to the deadly aim of the arrows and guns of the assailants. The fight continued around the illuminated outlines of the camp till the Sioux, thinned in numbers, began to yield the ground. The Sacs and Foxes now made a charge with their tomahawks and war-clubs; short and terrible was the conflict which now ensued upon the summit of this towering bluff, for the Sioux, driven to the very brink of the precipice, next to the river, and their enemy occupying the front ground had no chance for a retreat, and were all slaughtered on the spot or hurled headlong down the precipice, and their bleaching bones were to be seen along the margin of the bluff after the country was settled by the whites.

The Sacs and Foxes, while they occupied the country, looked upon this bluff with great reverence, and the traveler never passed the place without ascending to the summit and casting pebbles or some other substances upon the place of carnage as a token of their reverence for the spot. They say that the spirit of a young squaw, dressed in habiliments of mourning, could be seen at midnight of every full moon since the great battle, hovering around the mournful spot, bewailing her lover slain on that occasion.

On the prairie where Dubuque has been built, there used to be several large mounds; some were round, some square, and others arranged in parallel lines, presenting the appearance of some old fortification. These mounds were used by

the Indians as burial places, and on the approach of the white man many of the graves of the aborigines were desecrated; some through curiosity, some for the purpose of getting Indian trinkets, and others for getting teeth for dental purposes. But these mounds and other relics of the Indian, are fast disappearing before the progressive tread of the white man.

The miners who crossed over the river made some valuable discoveries, and were about commencing to mine on an extensive scale, when they were visited by Capt. Z. Taylor, (afterwards President of the United States,) then in command of the United States troops at Prairie du Chein, and were forbidden to make any settlements upon the Indian lands, and ordered ~~them~~ to recross the river. These lands had not then been purchased from the Indians, and it became the duty of Capt. Taylor, (as he was then called,) to protect them against the encroachment of the whites. The Captain ordered them to leave within one week, but the miners at first told him they would not go, saying to him that the country had been abandoned by the Indians and that they had discovered some valuable mines, that the lands would soon be purchased, and that they intended to retain possession of their mines. To this, Taylor replied: "We shall see to that my boys." And in the course of a week, a detachment of troops was dispatched, with orders to clear the country of the whites. But most of the miners believing that Capt. Taylor would execute his orders by force if not obeyed, recrossed the river before the troops arrived, so that when the soldiers landed they only found three of them remaining. These were taken into custody and retained as prisoners, but not being watched very close, they soon made their escape, and the whites were not permitted to engage in mining at that time. A military force was soon after this stationed at this point, after which, some of the Indians ventured back, and aided by the traders and settlers from the east side of the river, they worked the mines which had been opened by the whites, and obtained large quantities of mineral.

When the Indians mined there were often from fifty to a hundred at work in one vein. Their mode of operations was peculiar to themselves; they generally dug down a square hole, covering the whole width of the bed of ore, having one side of the shaft inclining to an angle of about forty-five degrees, then with bags made of deer-skin, fastened to bark ropes, they hauled the ore, when dug, up the inclined side of the shaft. Their mode of smelting was to dig into the side of a hill and make a pit in the shape of a funnel, by setting up flat rocks edgewise, which was filled with wood and mineral, and then set on fire. In this way they smelted the ore, and the lead would run out at the bottom of the pit, which was conducted into moulds and formed such shape and size as suited their convenience. The mode of smelting first adopted by the whites was somewhat similar to that of the Indians, they built "a furnace somewhat like the large chimney-places, set in a bank of earth, leaving an aperture in the lower side for a circulation of air. In these, large logs of wood were placed, like back-logs, back-sticks and fore-sticks all piled together; then the mineral was placed on the logs, which was covered with fine wood, and the whole set on fire."

By this process the mineral yielded about fifty per cent. of lead, and by submitting the dross and waste pieces to another heat, about fifteen per cent. more was obtained. But by the improved mode of blast furnaces the mineral of these mines yields about eighty per cent.

In 1832, as soon as it was known in the mines at Halena that the war with the Indians had closed, and that they had sold a portion of their lands on the west side of the Mississippi, the whites again crossed over the river and commenced to work the mines which had been discovered in 1830. They built houses, erected furnaces for smelting, cut hay, and made every preparation for a winter's work, and before the 1st of January there were over two hundred persons collected about the mines, and many valuable lodes had been discovered, and a large amount of lead manufactured. But in the month of January the United States soldiers again interposed, and

forced the miners to again leave their work, and recross to the east side of the Mississippi.

Many of the miners thought this a great hardship, and severely censured the government authorities for driving them away after these lands had been purchased from the Indians. But the treaty had not then been ratified by the Senate of the United States, and under its stipulations the Indians had the right to occupy the lands till the first of the next June, unmolested by the whites; and for the government to maintain good faith to the Indians, it was necessary to prevent the whites from occupying any of the purchase until the time it was to be given up by the Indians.

The duty of keeping the whites from intruding upon the rights of the Indians did not produce a very good feeling between the soldiers and the miners, and there was a disposition to annoy each other. Several of the cabins erected by the miners were torn down by the soldiers stationed there, and some wagons engaged in removing mineral, which had been dug, were cut to pieces by the order of Lieut. Covington, who had command of the troops at that point, and saw fit to use his authority to the injury of the miners. Complaints of the conduct of Covington were made to Capt. Taylor at Prairie du Chein, and he was recalled, and Lieut. Geo. Wilson sent to take his place. Lieut. Wilson was a man of an amiable disposition, and much more acceptable to the settlers, and there was no more trouble with the miners about intruding upon the Indian territory.

On the first of June, 1833, the whites were permitted to make settlements in Iowa. The miners about the mineral region had waited anxiously for the arrival of the time when they might be lawfully permitted to work the mines on the west side of the Mississippi, and immediately a large quantity of these mineral lands were taken into possession. But just as the miners had fairly got engaged in raising mineral, they were again molested in their operations, for the United States Government assumed control of the mineral lands, and sent out John S. Sheldon as their agent to superintend the

mines. No one could work the mines without the agent's consent. He gave permits to the miners, which authorized each one to stake off two hundred yards square of land where there was no previous claim, and hold possession of the same on condition that all the mineral which was dug should be delivered to a licensed smelter. A licensed smelter before he could do any business was required to give bond with conditions that he should pay to the Government a per centage on all the lead which he manufactured. These restrictions were, as long as imposed, very objectionable to the miners, and hard to be enforced, and they became so odious that Government was induced to change its policy, and under the provisions of an act passed on the eleventh of February, 1846, regulating mineral lands, these lands were brought into market and sold.

The imigration to the mining regions was rapid, and in the winter of 1833-4, a town was laid off at the mines, and by a vote of the citizens assembled in a public meeting, was named Du Buque, in honor of Julien Du Buque, who obtained a grant from the Spanish Government and worked these mines as early as 1788.

In the first settling of the country at Dubuque, there were many exciting scenes. The class of people collected about the mines were not generally of the strictest morals, drinking, gambling and fighting, were amusements of common pastime, and there being no established law, every one, to a great extent, regulated his conduct as he thought proper.

A man by the name of O'Connor shot his partner dead with a rifle. This act so enraged the community that he was arrested without the due process of the law, and the citizens immediately organized a court from among their own number, empaneled a jury, assigned the prisoner counsel, and put him on his trial. The jury found him guilty, and he was sentenced to be hung. After giving him a short time to prepare for death and receive religious consolation from a priest of his own choice, he was executed upon a mound, which for a long time bore his name, but has disappeared before the

hand of improvement, and substantial buildings are erected on the site.

By the regulations of the United States it was necessary to work or have tools almost constantly on the land claimed, in order to hold the right to it.

A man by the name of Woodbury Marsey, the eldest of several brothers, and a sister, who had been left orphans in early life, came to the mines and established himself as a merchant. He purchased a claim on which there was a valuable mine. A man by the name of Smith and his son set up a claim to the mine, and took possession of it. Marsey commenced a suit of forcible entry and detainer before a magistrate, and the jury decided the claim to be his.

Marsey and all his family were persons of a peaceable and amiable disposition, educated, and energetic in business, and much respected. The Smiths were directly the opposite in character. Marsey, in order to prevent a personal difficulty with the Smiths, got the sheriff with a writ to put him in possession of his claim. When they arrived upon the ground, the Smiths arose up from a low place in the diggings, where they had secreted themselves, and fired at Marsey. The ball penetrated his heart, and he fell dead on the spot. The Smiths were arrested and kept in prison till the sitting of the court at Mineral Point. At the trial, their counsel objected to the jurisdiction of the court, which objection was sustained by Judge Irving, who was then on the bench, and the prisoners were discharged from custody. They immediately left that part of the country, but it was not long before they returned. One of the brothers of the murdered Marsey became very much exasperated on account of the Smiths thus escaping a trial, and resolved to take vengeance into his own hands, if an opportunity was presented.

One day while engaged in his shop at Galena, young Marsey saw the elder Smith in the street. He instantly snatched a pistol, pursued till he overtook him, and with a deadly aim fired and gave him a mortal wound. And in this manner Smith received the punishment from the hand of the brother

of the murdered Marsay, which, it would seem, the community judged he deserved, for young Marsey, though he did this in broad day light, in the presence of numerous witnesses, was never tried for the act, or even arrested, but long lived in the community, a peaceable, quiet citizen, greatly respected by all who knew him. The death of the father soon brought the younger Smith to the mines. He had indicated, that the object of his visit was to avenge the death of his father, and it was generally understood that his intentions were to shoot some one of the surviving brothers at the first opportunity. Smith was known to be of a rash, vindictive temper, bold, daring, and a good marksman with a pistol.

These rumors were brought to the ears of the young Miss Marsey, who was intelligent, beautiful, and amiable in her disposition, and at that time was just verging into womanhood. The death of her eldest brother, and the thought of another brother falling a victim to the malice of the Smiths, aroused her to madness. She determined to take this affair into her own hands, and one day without any consultation or making her plans known to any one, she resolved to settle the matter with young Smith. Having disguised herself and being well armed with pistols, she went into the street in pursuit of her enemy. Not knowing Smith herself, she took a lad with her to point him out. On passing a store where there was a large collection of men, the boy discovered Smith in the crowd, and described him by his clothes. As soon as she saw him, she deliberately walked into the store, and stepping up before him, in a voice trembling with emotion, and indicative of danger, she exclaimed: "If you are Smith defend yourself." Smith, conscious of his danger, made an attempt to shield himself from her attack, but the moment he moved, she pointed a pistol at his breast and fired. He fell, and in an instant the girl was missing.

Her appearance was so unexpected, and her work done so quickly that all the spectators seemed bewildered at the tragical scene, till the act had been performed, and it was too late to prevent her escape. It so happened that Smith had in his

pocket a large wallet filled with papers, through which the ball passed and so wasted its force that it did not penetrate the vital parts of the body. Though Smith was not immediately killed in this attack, he died a premature death, probably hastened by the wound he received on this occasion. As soon as Smith recovered from the shock, he rushed into the street in pursuit of his assailant, but she had fled and was out of his reach.

This tragical act of Miss Louisa Marsey in avenging the death of a murdered brother, and in endeavoring to put out of the way a fiend who was lurking around for the purpose of getting an opportunity to take the life of another brother, has probably immortalized her name in the history of Iowa, for the Legislature of Wisconsin, whose jurisdiction at that time extended over the Black Hawk purchase, in dividing the territory into counties, named one Louisa, after the christian name of this young lady, as a token of respect for her brave act, which will no doubt be the means of perpetuating her memory and handing her name down to many generations.

Burlington was quite a noted place before it was settled by the whites, and was known by the name of Flint Hills, (or by the Indian name of Shak-o-quon,) and had for a long time been a post for carrying on trade with the Indians. At the time when the whites were first permitted to make settlements here, there were "numerous old trading houses, boat houses, and a number of graves along the bank of the river," and the remains of other Indians deposited in canoes with their trinkets suspended in the trees, which were fastened to the limbs with bark ropes. Among the graves was the noted French or half-breed, Maurice Blondeau, who, previous to his death, lived and had an extensive improvement near the head of the Des Moines Rapids, between Montrose and Keokuk. This grave was inclosed with a paling fence, and over it was erected a wooden cross, on which his name was engraved. This was in token of his religion, "he being a Roman Catholic." But after the settlement of Burlington his remains were taken up and re-interred in the place selected for a common burying ground.

This trading establishment was a branch of the American Fur Company and had been under the superintendence of John W. Johnson, who was a native of Maryland. Johnson had acted in the capacity of an Indian agent, and took up with a Sac and Fox squaw, by whom he had three daughters. Johnson was fondly attached to his children, gave them a thorough education at a Catholic convent, and all three of the girls married highly respectable gentlemen. After leaving the Indian country, he settled in St. Louis, and in 1833 was elected Mayor of that city, which office he held for three years. He died somewhere about 1852, and left a large estate, about which there was a hard contested law suit. He had married a second wife and it was claimed that the three half-breed girls could not inherit his property because they were bastards, and not his legitimate heirs. But it was shown before the court that his marriage to the Indian squaw was in accordance with the Indian mode of celebrating marriages, and was decided by the court to be valid, and the girls were held to be his legitimate heirs, and got their share of his property.

In october of 1832, some twelve or fifteen persons crossed the Mississippi in canoes at the head of Big Island, and made a landing about two miles below Burlington, and took an excursion through the surrounding country, and laid claims for future settlement. They built for themselves cabins, and in February, 1833, they brought over their stock and commenced making fences and preparing the ground for cultivation. But to their great annoyance they were driven away from their claims by the "Government soldiers from Rock Island," and they recrossed the river and stopped "on Big Island, taking with them their implements of husbandry and their stock." All the labor which they had performed availed them nothing, for their cabins and fences were set on fire by the soldiers and burned up. But notwithstanding these molestations they resolved to hold on to the sites selected for their homes. They held a council and "agreed to strike their tents and went to work to build a flat boat," so that they could cross

over the river and improve their claims whenever they had an opportunity.

The first persons who settled within the limits of the city of Burlington, were Morton M. McCarver, and Simpson S. White, who moved there with their families previous to "the extinguishment of the Indian title, suffering all the privations and difficulties attending the settlement of a wilderness country, which were very great, and but a few of them."

These individuals have the honor of having made the first claims at Burlington, and also of having established the first ferry at this point, by which immigrants were enabled to cross the great Mississippi.

A short time after they had established their claims, they sold out one-third of their interest to A. Doolittle, who immediately went to improving his purchase, but did not become a citizen until the early part of 1834.

In the fall of 1833, (Doctor) William R. Ross came to Burlington with a valuable stock of goods, accompanied by his father, who was an old revolutionary soldier, and was one of the first settlers of Lexington, Kentucky. But the old man being worn down with toil and age, and not having the constitution to stand the exposures incident to the settlement of a new country, was attacked with the chills and fever, and died that fall, being the first of the immigrants who died in this part of the territory. Late in the same fall, Jeremiah Smith brought to the place a fine stock of goods and engaged in merchandising, but previous to that, he had taken up a claim about a mile and a half back from the river, and made some valuable improvements on it. These adventurous pioneers have erected for themselves a monument on the pages of history, which will out-last the iron pillar on the marble slab.

The original town of Burlington was drafted and surveyed by Benjamin Tucker and William R. Ross, in the months of November and December, 1833; A. Doolittle and Simpson S. White, being the proprietors, gave it its name. In 1837 the whole town was re-surveyed by Gilbert M. Harrison, under

the direction of the General Government, but it retains its original name.

Cupid was not slow in finding his way to Iowa; he was among the first immigrants, and he soon got up a little contest in love between William R. Ross and Matilda Maryan, who compromised the affair by agreeing to take each other for better or for worse during their natural lives. But this agreement did not end their difficulties, for they had not the officials on the west side of the river by whom the contract could be solemnized. To overcome this difficulty the parties with their friends crowded into a flat boat and paddled to the Illinois side of the river, procured from Monmouth, Illinois, a man possessed of legal authority, who in the flat boat, before their friends, pronounced them man and wife, which is presumed to have been the first marriage of immigrants in the territory after the Black Hawk purchase.

The town of Fort Madison derived its name from a fort which had once been built there, and known by that name. This fort was built in 1808, the building of which at that point, as has been before mentioned, was regarded by the Indians as a violation of the treaty of 1804, and gave them great dissatisfaction. And soon after it was erected, Black Hawk with a party of warriors undertook to destroy it, but failed; an account of which has been given in the sketch of the life of that distinguished chief.

After the failure of Black Hawk, the Indians undertook to accomplish by treachery what they had failed to do by force.

For this purpose, small parties frequently came to the fort under the guise of friendship, and a few of their number leaving all their arms without, would go within the stockade and engage in dancing for the amusement of the soldiers. Some of them evincing great friendship, and being well known, were admitted at any time without scruple. Among this number was the old shrewd chief, Quash-a-qua-ma, who by his duplicity in a short time won the confidence of the officers. Thinking that he had got the officers off of their guard, he laid his plans for taking the fort.

One day several hundred Indians evincing their usual

friendship camped near by. The old chief and others paid their respects to the officers, and proposed to amuse them in the evening with grand dances before the principal gate. Preparations were made for the sports, and as soon as it was dark a large number of Indians in their dancing costumes appeared before the gate and commenced the amusements. About this time a young squaw, with whom one of the officers had played his amours, came into his quarters, apparently in the greatest distress. He asked the cause of her sadness, when she told him that the Indians under the pretence of a dance for the amusement of the soldiers, had taken this plan to avert the attention of the officers, and when they were not suspected of any hostile intentions, to attack and destroy the garrison.

Upon obtaining this information the commander immediately caused a six-pounder, loaded with grape-shot to be secretly brought to bear on the entrance to the stockade. A sentinel was placed at the gate with the strictest orders to not let more than one person at a time enter, and if more attempted, at once to bar the gate. Quash-a'-qua-ma and a number of the braves were soon within the stockade, while the dancing went on with increasing interest without. At length the dancers in one of their turns all made a rush for the gate. At this critical moment the Captain, who had carefully watch their movements, caused the cannon to be unmasked, which was presented to the full view of the Indians with a soldier standing with a fuse in his hand ready to touch it off at command.

As soon as the cannon was unmasked, the Captain called the attention of the old chief to his perilous condition, and at the same time charged him with treachery. When the Indians saw their danger, they retreated more hastily than they had advanced. The old chief was fortunate enough to make his escape, but several of the braves were captured, and about their persons were found their implements of war concealed. They confessed to the plot and expected to suffer the penalty of death for their rash act, but after a short imprisonment, the commander of the post, first admonishing them, that if another like attempt was made, they would receive the severest punishment, set them at liberty.

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