

How the question led to a political imbroglio, which at one time threatened to result in open war between these States, I have not attempted to explain. This question of hostilities I leave to other pens.

Webster City, Iowa, Nov. 15, 1894.

THE BORDER WAR BETWEEN IOWA AND MISSOURI, ON THE BOUNDARY QUESTION.

BY HON. ALFRED HEBARD.

In our Territorial days there was little that marked any of the three administrations of the three Governors appointed to rule over us, except the Indian treaty negotiated by Governor Chambers* and the threatened Missouri border war, a sensational incident that occurred during the administration of Governor Lucas. Of the latter, I am not aware of any specific record now existing. As I understand it, the boundary between Iowa and Missouri was described as a line running due west from the Des Moines Rapids to the Missouri River. But the Des Moines Rapids in the Mississippi were twelve miles long, extending from Keokuk to Montrose, and a line drawn from any point in them due west would fulfill the conditions. No matter how it happened, there was a serious disagreement about the boundary, and as counties were organized on the opposite sides, there would inevitably grow up a conflict of authority. Iowa settlers tried, of course, to shove the line south. The Missourians tried to crowd it north. Sheriffs were chasing criminals back and forth, and sometimes were themselves arrested when serving civil processes, because they were beyond some supposed boundary. A state of confusion of course followed such a condition. The population along this disputed line was very sparse, scattered from grove to grove, most of whom on the Missouri side had drifted up from

*See page 397 *Annals of Iowa*, July, 1894.

below and had not yet advanced far enough in civilization to entitle them to the rank of "squatter sovereigns." Nomadic in character, living mostly by hunting, like their Indian *confreres* who still lingered among them, fit antecedents of those who in later days became bushwhackers and "border ruffians." On the other hand I cannot at this day entertain a very high opinion of those Iowa people who sought homes in a locality where the moral element at the time had few attractions for well disposed people. These rude ramblers were unimportant in themselves, but, as it often happens, they were smart enough to make trouble, while to do good they had neither purpose nor understanding. As a consequence, loud were the reports of the border troubles in the southwest. Those naughty Missourians were invading Iowa soil and defeating the ends of justice. These reports undoubtedly gained too willing an ear on the part of our worthy Governor and his advisers. Prompt action by force, in support of law and order, was at once resolved upon. Then, as now, there were men ready to identify themselves with any unusual event that would give notoriety if not renown.

Governor Lucas was reported to have had a successful experience in a similar border trouble between Ohio and Michigan, known historically as the "Wolverine war." This may have affected his present action. I do not impugn his motives. A show of prompt action is sometimes effectual without anything further. The rank and file among us knew only the letter of our orders. Any latent purpose on the part of those in authority was a sealed book to us. Ours was to obey, not to suggest or advise. But more than a few of us, in our ignorance, perhaps, believed the order for military service in severe winter weather to be without adequate cause.

I give my own experience in this border war army, because it will tell the story better than any attempt at a general statement. In the month of February, of the year 1840 (I think), I found, on reaching my cabin on Saturday, an unexpected document, nothing less than a commission from the Commander-in-Chief, appointing me captain of a military company to

be raised within a certain defined beat, also naming Warren Dee and Thomas R. Davis, as my lieutenants, with orders to organize and report for duty. Recovering from a momentary amazement, I rode over to see and consult with my lieutenants. No matter what we thought, we agreed at once to drum up our beat. Couriers were dispatched to sound the tocsin in the remotest corners, proclaim the imminence of war, and call upon all able-bodied men to appear on the following Monday at Billy Moore's blacksmith shop on Long Creek, ten miles west of Burlington. Also, to bring with them or report all war machinery within their reach. Sunday passed and Monday came. There had been talking, thinking, and some writing, for a paper appeared, nailed to the shop door in open view. It discussed the situation in a decided manner and came to a decided conclusion. It was very generally read and seemed to meet with a hearty response. At the appointed hour, the Captain, with an old dragoon sword strapped to his side, made a brief speech, saying that all understood the situation as well as he did, but owing to the great difficulty of providing supplies, equipments and transportation at such an inclement season it was necessary to know first what our force would be. He knew that some could not go, others were disinclined and might risk disobeying orders. To test the matter he scratched a line in the slight snow on the ground, and requested all who would go to come forward and "toe the mark." For several minutes no one moved. Presently, however, two sons of Erin, who had probably found something somewhere to stir their courage, shoved the toes of their boots up to the line. The infection spread, another and another slowly ventured up, till finally a large majority were on the line, brave and hilarious. The Captain, *nolens volens*, was "in for it" now. The only thing to be done was to make ready and report as soon as possible. We agreed to meet the next Wednesday and see how near we could get to a starting point. Wednesday came and we straggled together again, but not in a very hilarious mood this time. Many had been painting what they were to leave behind. They fancied a lone cabin,

in the edge of a grove, with its early smoke rising straight to the clouds; the wood-pile at the door, consisting of a few saplings, half covered with snow, a dull ax leaning against it, waiting to be used; an old cow, with roached back, in the angle of a fence that enclosed the hay, waiting for attention. But where was the man whose duties were thus suggested? He was a hero now, marching to the Missouri line, one hundred miles away, to reconstruct the disorderly, while the wife, children and the cow took care of themselves in a temperature below zero.

While we were discussing and arranging our preparations, tidings came and we were all eager listeners. The border trouble had been settled, and the order for military service revoked, signed by A. C. Dodge, a sympathetic man, who thus gained a warm place in our hearts.

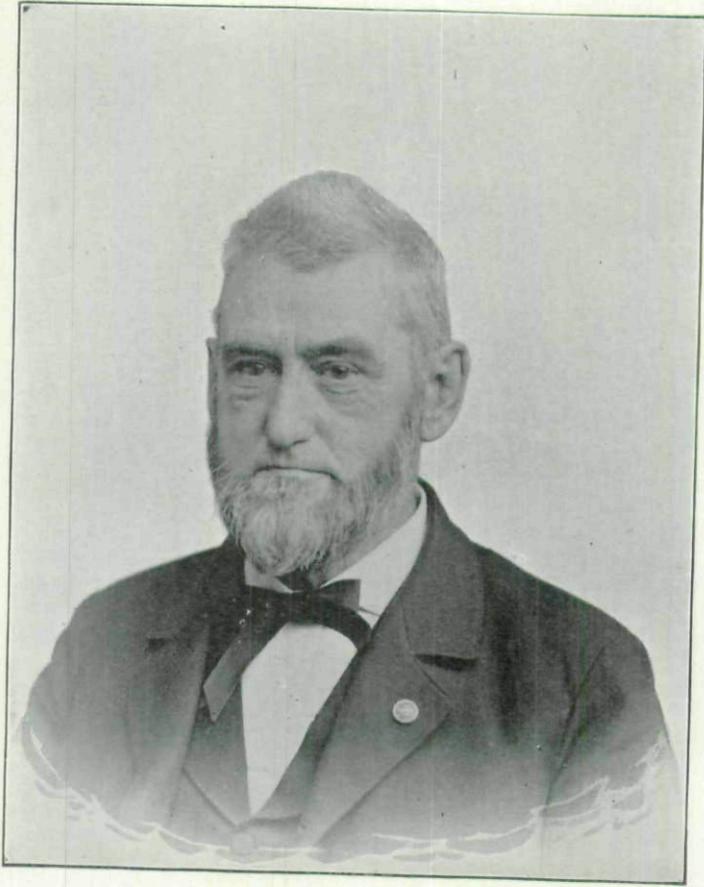
Some other localities were ahead of us. A company from Muscatine was already in Burlington. Another had been formed at Davenport, but had not left. We were greatly relieved, cruel exposures were avoided, the war was over and our honor was bright. Whatever we may have thought, no act of disloyalty was chargeable to any one. Had the end not come when it did, it might have been otherwise. Many I fear would have found excuses for returning, and would have exercised their rights as squatter sovereigns without asking leave. But thanks to General Dodge for his agency, we were our own again, at liberty to return to our homes with a prolific theme for neighborhood and fireside conversation.

But the real end was not yet; an afterpart occurred. By and by rumors were in the air, that a "month's pay was possible for those who promptly obeyed the call." As the Long Creek officers did not lose an hour before sounding the tocsin of war and drumming up their beat, it was thought the chances of their company would be number one. Before anything could be done, however, something definite must be known of our number, the time and nature of our service. To this end a review was ordered. An officer of the United States Army was detailed by the War Department to inspect

the material of the Border War Army and make a report. Notice was given of a day appointed in the early spring, after our supposed winter campaign. No imperative order for our appearance was needed this time. If we could bag a month's pay for a parade of a day, we were more than willing. When the day arrived the sovereigns appeared. The streets of Burlington were thronged and conspicuous among them was Colonel Temple, our commanding officer. He enjoyed his distinction but a brief moment, though, before he might have been seen brushing the dust from his handsome suit, while a lively nag with empty saddle and flowing rein was capering up the street. With a little aid he was mounted again and ordered the parade on the north hill; thither we all straggled. Our energetic Colonel worked hard to put us in order, for we were green and raw. We were told how to act and how to look—that it was military to look stern and defiant. While the Colonel and his men were thus engaged, the reviewing party had taken their stand. It consisted of the Governor and his two Aids and a Lieutenant of the United States Army, all mounted. Our worthy Governor, if intensely democratic in his feelings, was none the less in the simplicity of his dress. Strong, serviceable boots met or enclosed the legs of his pantaloons. A blue jeans coat "all buttoned down before" encased his form and a hat that once was new crowned his head. His right-hand Aid, General Morgan, neither robust in person nor erect in figure, though a lively, incisive editor, made no striking military appearance. Colonel Jesse Williams in citizen's attire was on the left flank, being like his chief, "tall as a mast, straight as a bolt." They both sat their steeds with becoming dignity. In striking contrast with our plain Governor in appearance, was Lieutenant Ruggles, our reviewing officer. He was anchored some ten or fifteen feet directly in front of Governor Lucas, and "sat his horse" with ease. Military boots with high buff-tops, with short clothes matching in color, encased his nether limbs. A coat of regulation blue, richly adorned with lace and gilt buttons, fitting tightly to the throat, showed his manly form. Dazzling epaulettes

adorned his shoulders, and a military chapeau surmounted by two long waving plumes adorned his head. I know that all this was in accord with military custom, but at that day it was a novel sight to us, being accustomed more to the simple garb our Governor wore, and to head-gear often fashioned from the skins of the rabbit and coon. Arrangements being finally completed, the Colonel set his troops in motion. The tap of the drum gave the step for the march. On we moved in platoons of six or eight abreast. Alignment was important, but difficult to maintain on a field covered with hazel brush and scattered with limbs of trees whose trunks had been removed. Some of us tripped occasionally and the alignments were now and then somewhat demoralized, and a few hasty words might have been heard, impolite in good society, but admissible among soldiers. On reaching the crucial point an order was given to "Present arms!" Every gun, and everything representing a gun, jumped about a foot ahead of its bearer, in honor of, or compliment to the reviewing party. A few rods further on, another order was given to "Shoulder arms!" and every gun jumped back to its normal place at the shoulder. Our success in these brilliant maneuvers was not quite perfect for lack of proper alignment, and from the further fact that we were more engaged in inspecting that gay Lieutenant than he was in inspecting us! After all was over our Colonel made us a modest little speech, saying we had done fairly well and that he was rather hopeful, and closed by saying, "The Review is over and you are dismissed!" Three hearty cheers were then given, one for the Colonel, one for the reviewing officer, and one for the Governor, and all broke at once for their tents.

Days and weeks passed by—and what of our month's pay? Listening ears had heard nothing. Anxious souls had learned nothing. At last it flashed upon our minds, that, perhaps the reviewing officer regarded our parade very much in the same light as we did ourselves, and so visions of pay, and pensions and glory, passed away, and we were soon busy again in the humdrum round of commonplace life.



Sincerely yours,
Wm. S. Moore

All this was fifty-five years ago. Since then the world has moved far along. Midway between then and now, our country had an experience that was no military farce, but a terrible reality, a very death-struggle for existence.

Since then the untamed field on the North Hill where we met has become a charming part of a beautiful city. Mansions of wealth and homes of comfort cover its entire extent. But they are not the homes of those who, buoyant with life, and health, and strength, then and there tried to march proudly, keeping step with the "stirring drum." The Governor and his aids, the Colonel and his staff, and all the rank and file, save possibly a very few last remaining leaves upon the tree, have heard their last tattoo upon earth, and now sleep quietly, where no reveille shall ever again disturb their rest.

Red Oak, Iowa, Dec. 1, 1894.

THE RUSH TO ARMS IN 1861.

BY W. S. MOORE.

The majority of the people of the present generation have no conception of the grandeur of the spectacle presented to the world in April, 1861, in the alacrity with which the patriotic young men of the Nation flew to arms. The knowledge of the events which marked that heroic epoch in our national history possessed by those who have been born within the last thirty-five years is necessarily limited. Time is a great condenser of history, and years hence a brief paragraph may tell the story of the great war between the northern and southern sections of the United States. To those of us who were contemporaneous with that time and took part in the stirring scenes of 1861 to 1865, the lapse of one-third of a century has not even made misty the memory of the rush to arms and the spirit that animated the volunteer.

In 1861 I was a resident of Fairfield, the beautiful county seat of Jefferson county. Stepping into a law office about 8

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