

horses were left at Rolla. Nearly every regiment then had a brass band, but most of these were about this time mustered out of service. Ammunition and arms were inspected and all deficiencies made good.

---

## HISTORY OF DAVIS COUNTY, IOWA.

### CHAPTER III.

[Continued from page 602.]

ROSCOE TOWNSHIP, the smallest in the county, was originally part of Prairie, and is in the south-east corner of the county. It was first settled by William J. Hawley, John McIntosh, James Gleason, S. L. Hubbard, a Mr. Moudy, R. B. Cochran, and several others along the Missouri border. The late returns of this township show 679 head of neat cattle valued at \$5,304; 181 horses of the value of \$6,525; 13 mules, \$715; 815 sheep, \$1,555, and 971 hogs worth \$1,237. The value of other personal property and real estate swelling the total assessment of the township for 1863, to the sum of \$55,705. Number of dwelling-houses, 75; population, 434; voters, 78; militia, 45; between five and twenty-one, 162. This township is well adapted to agriculture and stock raising—the timber and prairie land being favorably disposed to those ends, and the whole being well watered. Roscoe supports her share of schools, and her citizens are as peaceable and well disposed as those of any section of our county. At one time she had a village within her borders which went to *pot* on a very frivolous cause, which will be referred to in another place. Since the downfall of this village, Hon. Barney Milizer's brick yard has been the most prominent point in the township.

A JUSTICE. One of the earliest settlers of this township was Aaron Cochran, Esq., one of the first Justices of the Peace

in the county. As early as 1842, Hon. Samuel W. McAtee, our present County Judge, having occasion to visit this part of the purchase, was directed to call on Esq. Cochran for any information he might wish. Having arrived in the vicinity where he supposed the 'Squire might probably be found, he neared a cabin situated in the brush, and was met at the fence by seven dogs, which disputed his further progress, and denied him a passage to the cabin. Several of these canine animals being of the *yellow tan* order, the inmates of the domicile had due notice of the Judge's approach. The door moved on its wooden hinges, and one of the roughest specimens of humanity stood in the door of the cabin and ordered Towser and the whole pack of noisy whelps to be still. Order was restored, and Mr. McAtee inquired of the squatter if he could direct him to the house of 'Squire Cochran,—not dreaming that he was then in the august presence of one of the first courts of the purchase. "I am the man," answered Mr. Cochran, as he stood in the door of his cabin, his hair matted about his head much after the style of the hair on the head of a wild buffalo, dressed in buck-skin breeches about nine inches too short, an old blue cloth coat with sleeves worn off up to his elbows, and hog-skin moccasins on his feet, and at the same time, inviting the Judge to "light and come in." The Judge had traveled on the Mississippi River from Dubuque to New Orleans, and had spent two years at the lead mines in the vicinity of Galena, but had never met as hard a looking specimen of the *genus homo* as the one before him; but as the 'Squire acted quite civil, and the dogs having subsided, the "stranger," as Mr. Cochran called the Judge, tied his horse to a sapling and made his way into the cabin. The usual compliments had scarcely been passed when the dogs gave notice of the approach of another squatter, who was also ushered in, bearing in his hand an empty jug. The house of Esq. Cochran seemed to be a central point, and at that time the barrel of whisky for the neighborhood was here kept. The jug was filled, and each tested

the quality, when something to stop the jug was wanted. No corn-cob could be found, and the lady of the house having searched in vain to find something, became impatient, and snatched a dirty rag from the sore foot of her son who sat in the chimney corner, and made a stopper of that. This was a little more than the Judge had bargained for when he set out to find Esq. Cochran's house, and thanking him for the information the 'Squire had imparted, and declining an invitation to remain for dinner, Mr. McAtee mounted his horse and pursued his journey.

GROVE TOWNSHIP.—Michael Letner, John McDonald, Samuel W. McAtee, John Allen, Thos. Holloway, Geo. Abernathy and a few others settled here about 1840, while David Newell, Ephraim Clawson, Yarby Paris, Thomas Sumerlan, James Quick, Henry S. Foshee, James Maskal, Ephraim Young and others were among the first who settled after the whites were permitted to come. The first settlers of Grove were an industrious well disposed class of farmers, and their farms, farm-houses and barns attest how well they have attended to their own affairs. The people of this township like all others, however, were subject to have jokes played off at their expense, and to perpetrate a joke themselves occasionally at the expense of others. About the best thing we have heard or know of in which this township is concerned, is,

HOW BILL JOHNSON BROUGHT IN THE RETURNS.—In 1854, Daniel Sloan, (w.) Wallace (d.) regular nominee, and William Camron (d.) independent, were candidates for clerk of the District Court. There was some excitement, and runners had been sent to all the townships to bring in the returns. By ten o'clock P. M. on the day of election, the returns were all in with the exception of Grove, and the contest thus far was so close that the disparity between the highest and lowest candidate was less than twenty votes. The fate of the three candidates hung upon the result of this township. Each candidate had claimed a majority here, but as each had been deceived by the vote of the other polls, the result of this was in

extreme doubt. The candidates were much alarmed. Col. Carpenter, the friend of Mr. Wallace, Dr. Phelps, the friend of Mr. Sloan, and Esq. Snoddy, the friend of Mr. Camron, each had his headquarters lighted up, and the friends of the several candidates were assembled at their respective headquarters, figuring and speculating upon the result. In the stillness of the night, when all were becoming weary and impatient, the clattering of a horse's feet was faintly heard in the distance. The shout of "he's coming!" gave general notice of the fact, and every one rushed out to meet Bill and hear the news. As he neared them—his noble animal fairly flying under whip and spur, the crowd fell back and opened a passage to receive him. In he dashed, and hauling up suddenly under the dim light of a tallow dip, with watch in hand he exclaimed:

"Five hundred dollars that better time was never made! Ten miles in only twenty minutes! and by a three year old colt, at that!"

A death-like stillness pervaded the crowd, as Bill Johnson continued to expatiate upon the speed and qualities of his colt. But being pressed to know the result of the election, he finally ejaculated:

"Thirty-eight majority!"

"For whom?" anxiously enquired Col. Carpenter.

"Gentlemen," continued Bill, "all I know about it is that some feller got thirty-eight majority, but who the d—l it was I can't tell; but one thing I do know, and that is, *you can bet your life on the hoss!*"

This township contains several meeting-houses and organized religious denominations, of which the Methodist Episcopal and Christian are the most numerous. It is also well supplied with school-houses and supports good schools. This township contains a village and post office, (Stiles,) which will be noticed in another place. The result of the election of which Bill Johnson brought in the returns, resulted in a tie vote between Mr. Sloan and Mr. Wallace, while Mr. Cam-

ron was but a few votes behind them. And by the way, the first, last, and only hatter shop ever in our county was set up by John McDonald, in Grove, about the year 1841, where he continued to manufacture wool and fur hats for the squatters for three or four years, when the merchants in Iowa and Missouri having multiplied in number, offered the goods in his line so much cheaper than he could afford the same, he was forced to give up the business.

WYACONDAH TOWNSHIP, the largest in territorial extent in the county, was first settled on the disputed territory about 1840. The first settlers were Joseph Carter, Joel Fenton, Johnathan and Samuel Riggs, Jefferson Sailing, Aaron Earnest, Isaac Atleberry, Jubal and Tyre Dabney, Anderson Mills, Fredrick Atchison, and others not now recollected. Like the early settlers in Fabius and other townships on the Missouri border, they were subject to many inconveniences as to mills &c., but enjoyed the largest liberty in matters pertaining to elections, both in Iowa and Missouri, and were never at a loss for amusements to pass their leisure time. But few of those who settled in this township as early as 1840, now remain with us, but many of our best citizens at this time resided here as early as 1843. It was the conduct and manners of citizens of this township mostly, that conferred upon our county the name of Hairy Nation. Many stories are told now-a-days of this part of the county, some of which seem almost fabulous, but it has been related to me by the best authority, that these people in order to save time in going to get their jugs filled, when empty, and to enjoy each other's society, the barrel of whisky of the settlement would be placed upon a sled and hauled from house to house—remaining at each place as long as the party lasted, which generally ended when all the edibles had been consumed, or until the contents of the barrel had yielded to the demands and commands of those rough yet hospitable pioneers. And to more fully illustrate the hospitality and liberality of the "first families," we may mention that at one time the barrel was plac-

ed upon the sled and was taken in the timber on the Wyacondah, and there remained until the whisky was all used up by the Squatters, each of whom, with coffee-pot in hand, repaired to the spot and carried away as the inclination of his appetite, and his sense of propriety and justice dictated.

**A WOLF HUNT.**—This township did more in early times towards destroying wolves, (which were numerous and troublesome,) than any other locality in the county. They were generally joined, however, by Reason Wilkinson and others from Bloomfield, and many a prowling whelp has been made to suffer in this region by those old hunters. We remember about seventeen years ago when the neighborhood had turned out for a little sport in this way, a wolf was soon *sprung up*, and being closely pressed by the hounds, ran into our village and took refuge under Mr. Steel's store house. The boys immediately surrounded the building with sticks, brick-bats, &c., and by inserting a long pole under the house, his wolfship was induced to come forth, which he did amid the shower of missiles which were hurled at him from the hands of his enemies, which he managed however, to escape for a few minutes, but being hotly pursued by a fresh pack of dogs, besides men and boys, he was forced to go into quarters or yield up the ghost. Arriving at the ravine or hollow just above town, this fatigued and frightened mutton lover, dodged under an old log in order to hide himself. Unfortunately for him, however, Mr. Steele and Michael Rominger, were not far behind, and saw this attempt to escape by secreting himself, and having no fear of the wolf before their eyes, and instigated by sport generally and capturing this fellow, in particular, they seized his wolfship and slew him.

**A CHANGE.**—Within a few years a great change has taken place, and at this time every school district in the township has a good school house, and their schools are well attended. This township now has five houses of public worship, to-wit: One Methodist Episcopal, one Christian, one Cumberland Presbyterian, one Regular Baptist, and one Missionary Bap-

tist, and each of these churches is in as healthy a condition as any in the county. The assessment for 1863, shows a population of 1,588, of which 303 are voters and 189 subject to military duty. Between the ages of five and twenty-one, 631. The number of cattle are set down at 2,013, valued at \$20,486; horses, 636, worth \$21,109; mules, 68, worth \$3,380; sheep, 2,585, valued at \$4,898; hogs, 3,972, worth \$5,614, and 212 vehicles, worth \$5,398. These sums added to the value of the real estate and other personal property gives the township a total valuation of \$203,897. This township contains one village and post office, (Savannah,) which will be noticed in another place.

FABIUS TOWNSHIP, in the south-west corner of the county, was settled by A. L. Toombs, Benj. Ethell, Elias and James M. Veach, T. Rials, Reuben R. Reeves, and Wm. Kelly. All then settled on the disputed territory as early as 1840 and '41, and many others before the more central townships were occupied by white men at all. These early settlers depended for the grinding of their bread-stuffs on two horse mills—one in Schuyler, and the other in Putnam County, Mo., until about the year 1843. About this time, Mr. Toombs with some of his neighbor's hearing of some water-mills on the Des Moines river, set out to find Bonaparte, and after a tedious journey of three days over the trackless prairie and through the untrodden brush, they reached the river and obtained their grinding at the Bonaparte mills. This township contains a population of 1,338, of whom 242 are entitled to vote, and 184 subject to military duty. The number between five and twenty-one years is 538. In 1856, the value of hogs and cattle sold was \$16,095, and the butter made amounted to 14,970 pounds. This township has several religious organizations within its borders, the most prominent of which is the Regular Baptist, commonly called the *Ironsides*. It has a fair share of school-houses and supports its share of schools. Monterey is located in this township, and will be noticed hereafter. The topography of the township is favorable for agricultural

purposes and a dense population, and it is destined to become one of the wealthiest townships in the county, aside from Bloomfield.

Thus, I have briefly sketched the division of our county into election precincts and townships, and noted the early settlement of each with such statistics as I have been able to collect at our county office. There is one other political division of our county, to-wit:

COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S DISTRICTS.—In June 1846, the County Court divided the county into three County Commissioner's Districts. The first district was composed of Salt Creek, Lick Creek, Soap Creek and Marion, and was represented on the Board by Willis Faught; the second district was composed of Union, Perry, Bloomfield, ~~Drakefield~~ and Fox River, and was represented by Riley Macy; the third district was composed of Roscoe, Prairie, Grove, Wyacondah and Fabius, and was represented by Isaac Atlebery.

Thus divided, the county remained until the taking effect of the Revised Code of 1851, when the Commissioner's Court was superceded by the County Judge system.

STATISTICS.—In 1844, the population of the county, including the settlements in Appanoose was 2,622. In 1847 it was, in our county alone, 4,493. 1850 it was 7,264; in 1851, 7,454; in 1852, 7,553; in 1854, 9787; in 1856, 11,528; in 1860, 13,764, and in 1862, our population was 13,956.

In 1848, the total amount of taxable property was \$242,474; in 1849, \$353,000; in 1858, \$3,603,293; in 1859, \$2,818,075; the assessment having been reduced by the State Board of Equalization. In 1860, our county had 13,893 head of sheep, from which was clipped 28,268 pounds of wool; in 1862, we had 29,790 sheep and clipped 72,313 pounds of wool. In 1860 and since that time, our county has contained a larger number of sheep than any other county in the State, and our wool clip has also been the largest. In 1860, we produced 38,917 gallons of Sorghum molasses, and in 1862, 75,095. In 1861, there were 4,914 hogs packed by three houses in the

county, and in 1862, 3,400 by one house. The value of hogs in 1862 was \$78,432; of cattle, \$174,097; and of horses and mules, \$313,747. This year we produced 51,913 pounds of honey; 239,398 pounds of butter, and 25,600 pounds of tobacco.

In 1851, 635 of our population lived in villages, as follows: In Bloomfield, 348; in Drakeville, 139; in Troy, 101; in Dover, (now Stringtown,) 32; in Pleasantview, (commonly called *Noseville*,) 8; in Richmond, (now no more,) 6. That year Mr. McAtee was our County Assessor, and as there was some doubt as to whether there was a greater number of Veatches or Evanses in the county, he kept a list of each. The Evanses came out ahead—there being 101 of that name.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### CHURCHES, ETC.

The Rev. L. W. Rankin, in 1841, organized near Troy, a New School Presbyterian Church, which was the first religious organization in the county; the Rev. Thomas Kirkpatrick of the Methodist Episcopal Church, had preaching in that neighborhood, however, before Mr. Rankin. And but a short time afterwards the Rev. Mr. Post, a Missionary Baptist, organized a church in the neighborhood of Stringtown. I think, in the year 1844, the first church was organized at or near Bloomfield, although christians did not neglect to assemble themselves together on the Lord's day for religious instruction. During that year the Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church sent a Minister, (Rev. Mr. New,) to the county seat, under whose stewardship a church was organized. He labored with us for one year. The next year Rev. Hugh Gibson of the same church was sent here and remained two years. Mr. Gibson was much respected by all, both in and out of the church, and was accounted a good man and a christian. He resided, as did Mr. New also, in a small log cabin, then standing immediately west of the present M. E.

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.