



HON. MILO P. SMITH

Judge of the Eighteenth Judicial District of Iowa

## RECOLLECTIONS OF MARENGO

BY JUDGE MILO P. SMITH<sup>1</sup>

I first saw the village of Marengo in January, 1862. It then had about five or six hundred inhabitants. I walked there from Leroy station (now Blairstown) on the Chicago and Northwestern Railway. The snow was quite deep and walking hard. I crossed the river down where Robert McKee formerly had a ferry and went up town by the old hotel kept by the Ratcliffs. There were but few buildings then on either the south or west sides of the square, and the little town looked straggly, sickly and very bleak in its coat of snow. I stayed over night at Lewis Wilson's on the Koszta road, and the next day passed on my way westward. The railroad only ran to Victor then.

The next time I saw the place was in May, 1866, when I located there and began the practice of law. The town had grown some in the four years and then contained about eight hundred inhabitants, with but four brick buildings—the school house, the Presbyterian church, the court house, and L. Q. Reno's dwelling house—all the rest being wooden, some frame and some log buildings. Aside from Beaupre's Hall near the northwest corner of the public square, William Liddle's blacksmith shop and McConnell's millinery shop (where the First National Bank now stands) and the V. M. Ogle & Co.'s store, there were no other buildings on the west side. Mrs. Groff's dwelling,

<sup>1</sup>This article was originally written in 1909 at the request of the editor of the Marengo Republican and published in the home-coming edition of that paper, issued on October 13, 1909, on the occasion of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Marengo. Judge Smith recently made some revision of the article for publication in the ANNALS. The author of the article, Milo P. Smith, was born in Delaware County, Ohio, July 16, 1835. He spent most of his youth in Washington County, Ohio, and came with his parents by covered wagon to Linn County, Iowa, in 1855. He graduated from Cornell College, Mount Vernon, in 1861. In 1862 he enlisted in Company C, Thirty-first Iowa Infantry. He was promoted several times and became captain of his company. Anticipating the fact that the war was almost over he resigned late in 1864 and entered the law department of the University of Michigan, and graduated therefrom in 1866. He entered the practice of law at Marengo, Iowa, in May, 1866. In 1874 he was elected district attorney of the Eighth Judicial District which was composed of Cedar, Jones, Johnson, Linn, Iowa, Benton and Tama counties, and was re-elected four years later, serving from 1875 to 1883. In 1882 he removed to Cedar Rapids and has continuously resided there since. In 1906 he was elected one of the judges of the Eighteenth Judicial District, composed of Cedar, Jones and Linn counties; was re-elected in 1910, 1914, and in 1918 for the term which will end in 1922. He occupies the bench acceptably to a most distinguished bar, and administers the duties of his office promptly, impartially and with exceptional ability. He surpasses in age the record of any presiding judge of which we have account, being well into his eighty-sixth year.—D. C. M.

where the Masonic building now stands, L. Q. Reno's store, Jake Hass' saloon, Charley Eckert's blacksmith shop, and the Marengo hotel on the southeast corner were all the buildings there were on the south side, while the north and the east sides were about half filled with buildings, many of which have long since disappeared.

The court house was a boxlike building standing close to the sidewalk on the east side of the park or square, the length being the breadth of the present old court house building, as it was afterwards improved. The county offices were all on the ground floor and were entered directly from the sidewalk, with no hall or staircase in the building. The second floor was reached by some outside steps at the south end, and up there was the court room, small, stuffy, but certainly well lighted. In place of carpet or linoleum the floor was covered with about one inch of sawdust, making a good deposit for tobacco spit. All the furniture was of the plainest kind, and unpainted except the judge's desk, and that was white. N. B. Vineyard was county treasurer and occupied the south room, while the middle room was used by the clerk of the court and the sheriff. W. G. Springer was clerk and his son, John C., deputy. Eli D. Akers was sheriff, and he had for deputy the irresponsible "Bill" Hastings, who could tell the biggest yarn of any man in the county. He used to tell it as a fact that he was driving a wagon loaded with loose gunpowder during the war through the city of Columbia, South Carolina, when it was burning, and that the powder caught fire and half the load burned up before he could tramp it out. But the Ananias Club had not been organized then. The county recorder (Judge John Miller) and the county judge (A. H. Willetts) occupied the north and remaining room of the building. I believe Mr. Jennis was county superintendent and Mr. Childers coroner. They both carried their offices in their hats.

The stores of general merchandise were those of L. Q. Reno on the south side and V. M. Ogle & Co. on the west side, and Scheuerman Bros. at the northeast corner of the square, where Eyrich so long had his shoe store. The only drug stores were run by Ed Alverson in the old Beaupre building on the west side, and by Williams & Garnes on the north side. Libby & Martin had a hardware store just south of Alverson's drug

store. Gus Holm, genial and accommodating, was running in connection with Myers Bros. of Davenport, a hardware store on the east side, and Henry Deffinbaugh had the office of the express company in the same room with him. Hon. John R. Serrin, representative in the legislature, was postmaster, and carried in the same room a stock of notions, wall paper, etc. His store was east of the southeast corner of the square, and the Masonic Lodge and Good Templar lodge met up stairs over his store. H. N. Redmond (Nice) and B. F. Haven each carried a small stock of goods. These were the chief parties engaged in business as I now recall them. A. J. Morrison ran the Clifton House and Uncle John Cone ran the hotel at the southeast corner of the square. John Dinwiddie, now the cashier of the Cedar Rapids Saving Bank, and secretary of the Bankers' association of Iowa, was learning to clerk in the store of B. F. Haven. He was very young and small.

Some years afterwards J. H. Branch came and established his bank. It is said he started with \$2,500, one-half of which he invested in a safe, which must have proven a good advertisement and investment, as his subsequent success showed. Drs. Bartlett, Grant and Huston were the leading physicians, though Drs. McFall and Alverson had some practice. Afterwards Drs. Eddy and Schultz came and both acquired a good practice and won for themselves enviable positions in the community for their learning, judgment and skill in their chosen profession.

The legal fraternity was represented by Martin & Kagy, J. H. Murphy & Bro., Templin & Feenan, Capt. (Judge) C. Hedges, and John Miller, who became my partner. Soon after I went there C. S. Lake and Charles E. Baker came up from Iowa City and established the firm of Lake & Baker. Capt. J. N. W. Ruple was at the time reading law in the office of Martin & Kagy, and Homer Wilson was reading with Templin & Feenan.

H. M. Martin (commonly called Hugh) was *facile princeps* of the bar of the county. He was a first rate lawyer, careful, painstaking and studious, and always kept abreast of the decisions of the supreme court of the state. Though not a man of great learning or especial breadth of general reading, he possessed excellent judgment and a good understanding, and was a splendid all-round lawyer. He was almost destitute of wit,

however, or the power of repartee. He was genial and pleasant, and was of fine physique and princely bearing, always dressed in the height of fashion, his clothes neatly fitting his almost perfect form, and his head always crowned with a silk hat. He was instinctively respected by all who met him, was admired by his associates and loved by his friends. He left Marengo shortly after I came and went to Davenport, and he and J. H. Murphy constituted the firm of Martin & Murphy, which became eminent and was known as one of the strongest law firms of the state. Mr. Martin died many years ago from the effects of an accident when on a visit to the Rocky Mountains. He was a man of affairs and acquired quite a property and left a generous estate to his family at the time of his death. His partner, Mr. Kagy, was a respectable lawyer, industrious and careful. He only remained in Marengo a few years, but early went to Muscatine and died many years ago.

J. H. Murphy, member of the firm of J. H. Murphy & Bro., was, as his name indicates, an Irishman, possessed of the unique distinction of being an Irishman born in Massachusetts. He was the son of a Yankee mother and there was no other man like him. "Jerry," as we called him, was a splendid judge of human nature, a pretty good lawyer, possessed a fair education, and had more than ordinary ability as a public speaker. Whether addressing the jury or speaking from a platform, he was very effective, and was always listened to with close attention. He had unusual assurance and unbounded faith in himself, and never hesitated to push his own claims or any claims in which he was interested to the utmost. His motto, and it was appropriate, was "If a man bloweth not his own horn, surely that horn shall not be blown." His horn was heard early and often. His self-esteem and egotism were most remarkable. It passed the line of boredom and disgust and become not only tolerable, but really pleasant and enjoyable. He was of a large, sturdy frame and was a man of affairs, and accumulated before his death considerable property. While the firm of Martin & Murphy existed in Davenport, I presume that Jerry Murphy could go to New York City and drum up more valuable collections against western merchants than any man in the state of Iowa. Soon after going to Davenport he began to take a great interest in politics,

was mayor of the city a long time, and represented his district in congress for a number of terms. He was whole-souled, open-handed, a generous man and one who loved a joke and appreciated all the good things that came his way. I heard Dr. Peck say once "There were a thousand people in Davenport who believed 'Jerry' Murphy was the greatest man in the state, because Jerry had told them so himself." He was the sort of man

Who, meeting Caesar's self, would slap his back,  
Call him "Old horse," and challenge to a drink.

I learned to respect him very much, and loved his company and genial conversation.

T. P. Murphy, commonly called "Tim," was a very good lawyer indeed. We regarded him as a much better lawyer than his brother, J. H. He was industrious, persevering, vigilant and very determined in any thing he undertook, and at times his logic was merciless. He was not, however, so good a business man, nor was he so good a talker as was his brother. He went years ago to Sioux City and at one time filled the office of United States district attorney for the northern district of Iowa.

After the departure of H. M. Martin, Mr. Hedges was recognized as the head of the bar of Iowa County, and, indeed, many thought he was not inferior to Mr. Martin. He had, I believe, a better education than any of those before mentioned. His general reading and his acquired information were very broad and very thorough. He had read law and was prepared for admission long before he was twenty-one years of age. He had read in the office of one of the best lawyers in Ohio, had been thoroughly drilled, and became versed in the common law and the principles of American jurisprudence, and but few lawyers in the state were his superiors in that respect. His mind had been well trained to investigation, reflection and accurate decision. He was a splendid pleader, and was an advocate of no mean ability. He could discover and present finer questions of law than any other member of the bar, and sustain them with better reasoning and more profundity if not lucidity of argument than almost any lawyer I ever knew. He was very firm and tenacious of purpose, and when he afterwards was elected judge of the Eighth Judicial Circuit of the state, he became eminent for the justness and fairness of his decisions, and for his firmness

and impartiality in dispensing justice. He was as fearless as death itself, and as honorable and upright as a man could be. He was always very plain and direct in expressing his opinion of men and things, and at times quite blunt, as was illustrated in the answer he made to Lawyer Clarkson, who blew into Marengo at one time, remained a few years, and departed between two days. On the occasion I refer to, Homer Wilson, who did not always use the best language in the world, was addressing the jury, when Mr. Clarkson turned to Hedges and remarked, "Homer's vernacular grates so harshly on my ears that I can scarcely stand it." Hedges instantly replied, "Cut your d—d ears off then." Such indulgence in the energetic idiom came so natural to him that it never seemed to be profane. Clarkson, however, afterwards partly evened up with the Judge upon being told that Hedges' first name was Christian, by saying, "What strange ideas his parents must have entertained of the character of Christ." In my early efforts in the practice of law in Iowa County I acquired more valuable information from Judge Hedges concerning the practice of law itself than I had acquired in all of my previous reading.

Mr. Templin, of the firm of Templin & Feenan, had formerly been a Methodist preacher of great power and unction, but abandoned the cloth for the court room. His enemies always insisted that he never forgot Paul's injunction in I Tim. 5:23. He was a good advocate and quite strong before a jury; was a man of good parts and acquired information, but not overly profound as a lawyer. He was not about Marengo very much, intrusting the business to his partner, Mr. Feenan, as a general thing. I never thought he deserved the implied excommunication administered to him by LeGrand Byington of Iowa City. They were trying the case of Byington vs. Scanlon that came to Marengo on change of venue from Johnson County. In addressing the jury Mr. Byington went for Templin's client, Scanlon. He described him as a thief, robber, perjurer and law-breaker, a moral pervert, a man without a single virtue to his credit, then pausing and pointing downward, he said, "And now, gentlemen of the jury, leaving Scanlon and descending the scale of human degradation, we come to Templin."

Mr. Feenan, as the name indicates, was an Irishman too, although he looked the least like it of any one you ever saw. He was rather below the medium size, trim built, with a good head, fine face and dressed always at the top of the fashion. His movements about the office or court room were stately, considerate and quiet, rarely in a hurry. His step as he walked upon the street would remind you of that of a cat walking in damp grass. He was not the profoundest lawyer, nor did he possess the strongest individuality in the world, but he was the soul of industry, with an unflagging zeal for the rights of his clients; was honest, careful and true, and became quite eminent in the line of probate law and commercial collections. He died a comparatively young man several years ago, quite well off.

Mr. Lake, of the firm of Lake & Baker, afterwards became a member of the well-known firm of Ruple & Lake, that flourished a number of years in the county. He spent the later years of his life at Marion, enjoying the respect of all who knew him, dying in 1917. I always thought that Mr. Lake had naturally the best legal mind of any lawyer in the county. His natural abilities were far above the average; his education, though not so broad as some, was solid and thorough, and his knowledge of the law and his ability to discern the main points in a case and the effect of a legal proposition were really invaluable. He was a fine pleader, and presented his questions to the court with clearness and fairness, so that it was a pleasure to listen to him, but he very much disliked the trial of jury cases. In the preparation of a case for the supreme court or in looking up the law applicable to a case in the trial court, he was wonderfully useful and successful.

Charles E. Baker remained in Marengo only about a year, when he returned to Iowa City, entered the office of Mr. Blackwell, became his partner and finally his successor, and then the senior member of the firm of Baker & Ball, now one of the oldest and best law firms in the state. I always had a fellow feeling for him, because he came to Marengo as poor as I was. He rendered valuable service to the profession in assisting to frame the Code of 1897. He has since passed away.

Mr. Ruple, as I have heretofore said, was a law student when I first knew him, who afterward became one of the most

prominent men and most highly respected citizens of the county, and had a reputation that was state wide. He was the trial member of the firm of Rumble & Lake, and probably no man tried or assisted in the trial of more cases in Iowa County than he did, and with the assistance of Mr. Lake, their firm justly became very eminent and successful. Mr. Rumble's education was good and his early advantages were such as usually fell to a young man of that period. He, like Judge Hedges and his partner, Mr. Lake, and Mr. Baker, had served faithfully and honorably during the War of the Rebellion, which gave him much prestige in his after life. I never thought he was as deep and profound a lawyer as was his partner, Mr. Lake, but his perceptions were quick, his judgment was sound, and as a trial lawyer and advocate, he stood surpassed by few. He represented the county for many years in the state senate, and died while a member of congress from the Second District of Iowa. Rumble & Lake had the best clientage in the county after the departure of Martin & Murphy. We used to think that Rumble needed Lake as much as Lake needed Rumble in the firm.

Homer Wilson was entitled to much credit for the position he won for himself as a lawyer when one considers his lack of advantages in his early life. He always had a fair clientage, and there came to him a class of business among his old acquaintances and friends that could not be driven to anyone else. He served his country also as a member of the First Iowa Regiment and fought at Wilson's Creek.

My old partner, Judge Miller, gave a very accurate description of himself the first time I saw him, in which he said, "I am not much of a lawyer, but I can work just as hard as anybody." He came to the county when the Indian trading post stood down where South Amana stands, became acquainted with the Indians, and was by them named Kish-Ke-Kosh. He had a common school education, had been a farmer, and was once elected county judge of Iowa County, hence always carried the title of Judge Miller. He too had been a member of the Twenty-fourth Iowa. He was admitted to the bar when such admission could be obtained by having two lawyers recommend him and setting up the oysters for the crowd. He was a man of fair natural ability, and I soon found that he was just as industrious as he said he was,

nor was his profundity in the law in excess of what he had first told me. He was honest, upright, true to his friends, a kind husband and father, and no one was more highly respected than he during all the time I knew him. He also died some years ago.

To show that lawsuits were not always conducted then with the decorum that now prevails, I give the following illustrations:

Thomas Rankin of Millersburg was a lawyer of pretty fair ability. He was lawyer and farmer combined, and was respectable in both capacities. He was a small, active, wiry little fellow with a very scant supply of hair on the top of his head, and, fortunately or unfortunately, was very quick tempered. There was a long, lathy lawyer that lived in Marengo a short time, who announced to some of us one day that he was going over to Millersburg to try a case before Pat Sivard, a justice of the peace. He was asked who was on the other side. He answered, "Tom Rankin." He was told to be careful or he might have trouble. He just laughed and went on the next day. After he came back he dropped into Hedges' office where I was sitting at the time and began to tell what a fine time he had over at Millersburg. Hedges asked him how he and Tom Rankin got along. He replied, "Oh, first rate; we had no trouble at all." Hedges asked him what made that black and blue place on the top of his forehead. He replied, "Oh, during the trial I told Tom he was a d—d old bald-headed fool and he knocked me down." We afterwards learned that it was true and Tom had cleaned out the ranch.

I was once trying a case before Squire Ogden in Troy Township against old Thomas Hughes, a sharp but domineering old Welshman who acted as his own lawyer in the trial. He purposely insulted and exasperated every witness that testified against him. I finally called old Lewis Jones, another fiery Welshman, to the witness stand, and Hughes (they called him "Windy Hughes") insulted him with his first question. Jones sprang up, laid some money on the Squire's table and then turned and struck Hughes, turned him around and kicked him clear out of the room, through the kitchen and off the back porch. The Squire regarded it as being contempt of court, and announced that he would have to fine him for contempt, when one of Jones'

friends spoke up at once with great assurance, "You can't fine him, Squire, for he laid the money down before he struck the man." The Squire regarded that as good law and entered up a fine for the amount laid down and let the contempt matter go.

At another time I went over, or rather he took me over, to the school house in York Township, to try a case before Squire Kelly for Mike Rigney, a well-to-do old Irish bachelor. As we approached the building, I saw a great crowd around it. I asked Rigney whether or not the justice of the peace was friendly to him. He replied, "Friendly, of course, because I board with him." I asked what lawyer was on the other side. He answered, "A little fellow by the name of Winter from Iowa City." I said, "Maybe he will call for a jury." He replied, "It's all right; the crowd is all my friends, for I have two kegs of beer up there on the hill." It is needless to say that I won the case.

Of the judges who presided in the courts at Marengo during my stay there, much could be said. There was Judge Hubbard, Judge Rothrock and Judge Shane of the District bench; and Judge William E. Miller, Judge George R. Struble, Judge C. Hedges and Judge John McKean of the Circuit court, and I doubt if, all things being considered, the judiciary of the state was ever represented by seven more competent, upright and fair minded men than by the above-named gentlemen.

Hubbard only held court a few times in Marengo. He had an extraordinarily acute and penetrating mind, and had no superior as a trial lawyer in the state, as his subsequent career demonstrated, but his methods in the transaction of business from the bench were so energetic and novel, presenting phases so unexpected, and at times with conduct so abrupt and severe, and withal quite humorous and interesting, that some were constrained to say that he held court-martial rather than an ordinary court. He afterwards attained to great eminence in his profession and in state affairs.

Judge Rothrock, though not a man of extensive learning or very great breadth of reading had an unusual amount of "uncommon common sense," and his knowledge of men and affairs, and his natural good judgment made up for his deficiencies in other respects. He was a large and fine looking man, and his aspect when on the bench was always that of strong judicial integrity.

He afterward served for over twenty years on the supreme bench of the state.

Judge John Shane of Vinton was probably the best educated and the best read of any of the district judges that had sat on the bench prior to his time in Iowa County. He too was a natural jurist, with a presence that was satisfactory to all who knew him unless you would say that his facial resemblance to Boss Tweed of New York fame was a drawback. He died greatly lamented.

Judge William E. Miller, our first circuit judge, a sort of helper to the district judge, lived in Iowa City. He had been fairly well educated when young and trained to the trade of a mechanic or rather machinist, which knowledge was very useful to him afterward in his profession and especially in deciding cases that came before him. He was a good lawyer, clear headed, perfectly upright and very suave and sociable. He served as a judge of the supreme court after leaving the circuit court, from 1870 to 1875. He died in Des Moines, highly respected, many years ago.

Judge Struble of Toledo, succeeded Miller on the circuit bench. He was then a young man of fine appearance, well educated, and thoroughly grounded in the laws of Iowa, and no man was more familiar with the provisions of the Code of Iowa than was Judge George R. Struble. He was, if anything, more genial, more pleasant and more accommodating than any of the other judges. He used frequently to adjourn the spring term of court for half a day to go fishing with the lawyers. After his retirement from the bench he entered into the active practice at Toledo and was known throughout the state as a careful, painstaking, high-minded and successful lawyer.

John McKean of Anamosa also served as one of the circuit judges. He was well educated, a good and profound lawyer, a learned jurist and an upright judge, though a constant sufferer from an affliction that rendered his neck stiff and eventually terminated in death. Having long served in the Iowa Legislature he proved to be a wise and sagacious statesman. A lover of learning, he took a deep interest in college work and higher education. No man in Jones County was more respected than Judge McKean.

Of Judge Hedges I have already written.

The district attorney at that time was C. R. Scott of Anamosa, who was followed by William G. Thompson of Marion. I pause for words when I come to write of Major Thompson. He was tall, straight, broad-shouldered, full of life and vitality, and everybody knew he was around when he was there. A man of remarkably quick perceptions, rapid judgment and a sound understanding, he also possessed the readiest wit and quickest repartee of any man in the old Eighth Judicial District. He had read law and been trained in an old-fashioned Pennsylvania law office, which training was seasoned by doses of the Westminster catechism administered by his Presbyterian parents, so that he came to the bar thoroughly imbued with the principles of the common law and a knowledge of the natural degeneracy of mankind. The readiness with which he could grasp the main points in a case was equalled only by the rapidity with which he let loose his gatling guns on the enemy. When the Major "turned himself loose" on a criminal, all that fellow had to do was to select the articles of clothing he wanted to wear to the penitentiary. If there was any man living who could prepare and try a case quicker, and say more to the point in addressing the jury, in the same length of time than Major Thompson could, I never met him. He had always been an omniverous reader, and his naturally retentive memory aided him so that his mind became well stored with the thoughts of the world's best authors which he used to advantage. He was remarkably democratic in his habits and in his dress and had a *bon homme* about him that rendered him very popular indeed. He filled many offices of trust and honor in the state and never was defeated at the polls. Coming to Iowa in 1853, he soon entered public life and has ever since been in the lime-light, and no blur or stain ever formed on his name. He was state senator and representative, presidential elector, chief justice of Idaho, member of congress and district judge, besides district attorney, all of which positions he filled with credit and honor. He died at his home at Kenwood Park in April, 1911, when past eighty-one years of age, full of honors and loved by all who knew him.

C. R. Scott, who, as I have said, was district attorney when I went to Marengo, was a small, waspish fellow, whose greatest

delight was to be the hero of a row in a lawsuit. He was familiarly called at that time "Little Scott," but after he went to Omaha he was called "Great Scott." When Scott's ire was raised he made the saw dust fly in that old court room. He was surely a live wire. He went to Nebraska in the early '70's and was for many years a judge in one of the courts in Omaha. I believe he is not now living.

Of the other citizens that I early became acquainted with in the town of Marengo forty odd years ago, but few are living. We had some characters there, as all communities have. The man who was nearest regarded as a part of Marengo, and who came, I think, while the Indians were in possession, who was always a property owner there and had faith in the future of the town equalled only by the faith of a Christian in his Saviour, who was always ready to greet friend or stranger with a smile and pleasant word, and help anyone who was in need, and who bought every patent right that was offered on the street, was Uncle Horace H. Hull. No kinder hearted or more optimistic man ever lived than Uncle Horace. I don't think he had, when I knew him, or ever had, an enemy; nor did he deserve to have one. I don't think anyone ever asked alms of him that he did not receive something, and always got the sympathy of the old man, but the singletree on his side always scraped the wheel. When I travel over the state and visit different towns and see hundreds of miles of cement sidewalk and scores of beautiful buildings made from cement, I recall the fact that the first time I ever saw anything of the sort, Horace Hull made the stone with which he laid up a cement wall for a cellar in Marengo over fifty years ago, and it stood there on the north side of the square a naked and unfinished wall for years, and furnished scoffers and wits the opportunity to laugh at "Hull's folly." The old gentleman had bought a patent right for Iowa and possibly some other county, and had started to make stone. It was the incipient step to the great cement industry that now practically takes the place of natural stone in sidewalks throughout the country.

The man that I always felt I owed as much, if not more to, than anyone else, was G. W. Williams, commonly called "Gord." I soon became acquainted with him, and learned to love him. He

was such a good hearted man, so kindly disposed, so ready to help a friend, that I early became indebted to him for many acts of kindness. On many a time when I hadn't a dollar and did not know where the food for myself and family was to come from, I have gone to Gord, and a hint of my situation would prompt him to proffer me any amount I wanted, and many a five dollar bill did he loan to me, saying "You can pay it back to me, Cap, whenever you get ready." I often wonder at the mistaken faith that he had and why he was so foolish as to trust a penniless fellow as I was without any security. We all knew that Gord kept not only his family, but all his brothers and a part of his wife's family. He never had a word of complaint to make to anyone, but seemed to do it not only as a duty, but because he loved to do it. There was but one person living that ever was or ever could be an enemy of Gord Williams, and that was Gord himself. The circumstances of his death it is not necessary to mention. I would place a laurel wreath on his grave.

A. J. Morrison, then the keeper of the Clifton House, was another with whom I early became acquainted, and for whom I ever had a tender and affectionate feeling. No one enjoyed a good joke on another more than did Andy Morrison. I recollect before I had been there a year, on a cold winter morning I started on horseback over into Benton County to try a case before a justice of the peace. I had a copy of the Conklin Treatise under my arm, and as I rode past the Clifton House, Andy came out, called to me to stop, and tendered me one of Jayne's Almanacs, saying it was just as useful to me, and that I could comprehend it just as well as the book I had. During the long period of the time that he lived in Marengo, no man filled as many offices as he did, and no one filled them more acceptably and faithfully. He was a public spirited man and always had an interest in the town. I never believed the trouble which came to him eventually was by reason of his want of honesty or integrity. I believe the "recording angel dropped a tear on the charge that blotted it out forever."

Another very prominent man and one who probably did more for Marengo than any other man there, and who had more varied ability than any other, was N. B. Holbrook. He was, I think, the best educated man in the town. He was a splendid

surveyor and engineer, a successful newspaper editor, a respectable member of the bar, a very prosperous land agent, a good banker, and one of the most successful all-around business men that the county ever had; and was, withal, the most complete master in politics that could be found in this portion of the state. No church subscription was ever circulated there that didn't have N. B. Holbrook's name on it with a good sized amount; no appeal was ever made for charity to which Holbrook did not respond; no town meeting was ever held for the general good of the town and community that Holbrook wasn't prominent in. In school matters and the financial affairs of the churches and in the general business affairs of the town N. B. Holbrook had no superior, if he had an equal. He was thoroughly versed in the history of the country, and had the political events of the nation at his finger's end, and no one was safe in getting into an argument with him on the history of American politics. He filled many places of eminence and trust and offices of responsibility, and, withal, Bruce Holbrook, as we called him, was in his daily walk and conversation, as quiet, gentlemanly and polite as a subdued minister of the gospel.

Another quaint character in Marengo was Uncle Dicky Groff. Teacher, preacher, lawyer, merchant, book peddler and poet all rolled up in one man makes a combination hard to beat, but that was Dicky Groff. A short, stubby man with a full grey beard, always of the same age and never changing, he was honest and well meaning, but never learned how to do anything. His greatest claim to immortal renown lies in his poem to Iowa, commencing, "Young Peri of the West." His greatest achievement in teaching a Sunday School was to ask the children where Moses was when the light went out, and his preaching was about on a par with that. As a lawyer he went out of practice about a hundred years ago, in fact, he never began. The goods in his store consisted of two old straw bonnets, some ribbon, a few spools of black thread, and an old stove that never had a fire in it winter or summer. He had no customers, for he had nothing to sell, but still he went to the store every day, opened it, sat down and read a book a short time and then went home. But I think he was the most constant reader in the state of Iowa, and read to the least purpose of anyone in the state. Still he could write

a first class newspaper article, and make words jingle in what he called verse or poetry. He was always happy and good natured, and viewed life from a pleasant standpoint. The following quotation, worthy of Hudibras, he frequently used, possibly because it fully embodied his ideas of men:

The world of fools has such a store  
That he who would not see an ass  
Should go home and bolt his door,  
Then break his looking-glass.

I don't think he ever sat five minutes in his life that he did not pick up a book or paper and go to reading. He could write as good an article on farming as could Horace Greeley, and could manage a farm about as well as could the great editor.

But there were other good men in business there: J. P. Ketchem, who was probably the best business man in the town; Ed Hopkins, who was a royally good and lovable man; J. M. Rush, true to his friends; W. A. Snavely, tinner and hardware merchant, a good citizen and "pillar" of the M. E. church; "Nice" Redman, with his "North Carolina" ditty; Fred Eyrich, the shoeman; Ben Liddle, whose love for Canada was so intense that, when in a fight with a stranger who struck him a fearful blow, he said, "I knew he was Canada from the way he struck me." There was I. M. Lyon, "Pappy," we called him, who came as near as mortal could to keeping the commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbor as thyself." Quiet and of even temper at all times, he was surely a good and consistent Christian. He had a large family of boys—Asher (the dragoon), Tom, Ben, etc. Ben Lyon once at a meeting of the G. A. R. men to bury a comrade, unconsciously paid his father an unclassified compliment. We could find no minister in town to officiate at the funeral, when Bent cut the Gordian knot by saying, "Why, d—n it, boys, Pap can do the praying, and Cap. Rumble or Smith can do the talking." And no minister ever made a more appropriate prayer than did "Pappy" Lyon at that grave. Out on the hill in the old grave yard, on a cold stormy day, from an earnest man came an earnest prayer to the Heavenly Father that for simplicity of language, grandeur of pathos, and firmness of faith, could not have been excelled by a bishop. And when he

asked divine blessings on the band of scarred veterans standing around, it seemed that heaven was near!

J. S. Shaw, soon after I went there, "came to stay." Next to his family, he loved the Methodist church and a good horse more than anything else. And by kicking Jake Sehorn out of his hotel, he was the innocent and unintentional cause of Jake's dropping into poetry in the next issue of the Marengo Democrat.

Of the young men of the town that I became acquainted with, there was Capt. McBride, Capt. J. B. Wilson, C. V. Gardner, W. P. and Sam Ketchem, Nate Martin, A. B. Eshelman, Thomas Owen, Henry and Newton Leib, Lute Wilson, my dear friend, Henry E. Goldthwaite, still living there, and others. We never painted the town red, but it was sometimes made green. Our enjoyments were primitive, but they were well worth their cost, and did us no harm. An evening at the Good Templar's Lodge, a sleigh ride to Blairstown, or a trip to the Colony, were regarded as sufficient acts of dissipation. But few of those early friends are living. The departed acted well their part in life.

Yet they who fall in fortune's strife,  
Their fate ye should not censure,  
For still the important part of life  
They equally may answer.

I could mention many others with whom I early became acquainted and whose friendship has left a sweet remembrance, but I forbear. Any town that could withstand a campaign of "Mike McNorton" and two floods deserves to live while the hills stand.

Of my numerous acquaintances subsequently made, though just as dear as the older ones, I will forbear to speak.

Around Marengo hangs many a recollection of struggles in life, clouds of adversity and sunshine of joy and happiness, and the town and its people will never be by me forgotten till my heart is as cold as death can make it.

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.