



JEHEIL BURR HURLBURT

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A valuable contribution to American genealogy is "The Hurlbut Family," by Henry H. Hurlbut. We learn from the reading of this work that Thomas Hurlbut, the earliest known source whence have come the various and numerous descendants bearing the names of Hulbut, Hulbert, Hurlbutt, Hurlbert and Hurlburt, came across the Atlantic from England in 1635. He was a soldier under Lion Gardner, who built and had charge of the fort at Saybrook, Connecticut.

Lion Gardner was an Englishman, by profession an engineer, and had been in Holland in the service of the Prince of Holland. But he was engaged by the proprietors of the Connecticut patent, issued by Charles II to Lord Saye and Sele, Lord Brooke and others, granting a large tract of territory on the banks of the Connecticut River, to erect a fortification at its mouth. Lion Gardner embarked at London for America, with his wife, a female servant, and eleven male passengers, August 11, 1635, in the *Bachelor*, a vessel of only twenty-five tons burden. After a long and very tempestuous voyage they arrived in Boston November 28. Thomas Hurlbut was one of the eleven passengers.

Lion Gardner in a letter which was written in June, 1660, and which is printed in Volume III, Third Series, of the "Massachusetts Historical Society Collections," refers to a battle with the Indians, in which Thomas Hurlbut received a severe arrow wound in the thigh. Following is an extract from this letter: "On the 22nd of February, I went out with ten men and three dogs, half a mile from the Fort, to burn the weeds, leaves and reeds upon the neck of land, because we had felled twenty timber trees, which we were to roll to the waterside to bring home, every man carrying a length of match, with brimstone matches with him to kindle the fire withal. But when we came to the small of the neck, the weeds burning, I having before this set two sentinels on the small of the neck, I called to the men that were burning the

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reeds to come away, but they would not until they had burnt up the rest of their matches. Presently there start up four Indians out of the fiery reeds, but they ran away, I calling to the rest of our men to come away out of the marsh. Then Robert Chapman and Thomas Hurlbut, being sentinels, called to me, saying there came a number of Indians out of the other side of the marsh. Then I went to stop them, that they should not get to the woodland; but Thomas Hurlbut cried out to me that some of the men did not follow me, for Thomas Rumble and Arthur Branch threw down their two guns and ran away; then the Indians shot two of them that were in the reeds, and sought to get between us and home, but durst not come before us, but kept us in a half moon, we retreating and exchanging many a shot, so that Thomas Hurlbut was shot almost through the thigh, John Spencer in the back into his kidneys, myself into the thigh, two more shot dead. But in our retreat, I kept Hurlbut and Spencer still before us, we defending ourselves with our naked swords, or else they had taken us all alive, so that the two sore wounded men, by our slow retreat, got home with their guns, when our two sound men ran away and left their guns behind them."

Gardner does not mention his estimate of the number of Indian assailants who attacked him and his ten men, but Underwood in his history says there were "a hundred or more." Thomas Hurlbut was by trade a blacksmith, and after the war with the Pequots he located and established himself in Wethersfield, Connecticut. He was one of the earliest settlers as well as the first blacksmith in this place. A single extract from the "Colonial Records" would seem to indicate that he was a good workman, and that he charged a good price for his work: "March 2, 1642, Thomas Hurlbut was fined forty shillings for encouraging others in taking excessive rates for work and ware."

When we take into account the ridiculously low wage that was paid at that time, there seems to have been valid reason for this early combination of labor against capital. But labor seems to have failed in this primitive struggle with capital, for Thomas Hurlbut's fine was "respited" February 5, 1643, upon Peter Baskaker's "tryal" to make "nayles" with less loss and cheaper rates.

Thomas Hurlbut stood in high repute in the town where he

spent most of his life. He was clerk of the Train Band in 1640, deputy to the General Court, grand juror and also constable in 1644. The records of Wethersfield show that he received various tracts of land in the several divisions of the town, which were recorded together in 1647. In 1660 the town of Wethersfield granted Thomas Hurlbut lot 39, one of the "four score acre lots" in Naubuc, east side of the river, which he afterward sold to Thomas Hollister.

For his services in the Indian wars the Assembly of Connecticut, October 12, 1671, voted him a grant of one hundred and twenty acres of land. But he never availed himself of this bounty that was set apart by the commonwealth in which he lived for his distinguished services in the Indian wars.

We may see in this brief, personal history of the earliest known ancestor of the Hurlbut family distinguishing traits, which have marked many of his descendants—bravery, energy, industry, thrift, honesty, independence and decision of character.

Jehiel Burr Hurlburt, the subject of this sketch and the seventh in line from Thomas Hurlbut, possessed in marked degree these leading characteristics of his forbear. He died at his home in Des Moines, Iowa, 1440 West Twentieth Street, August 20, 1914, in his eighty-seventh year, and was the last of the twelve children of his parents, Erastus Grant Hurlburt and Clarissa Goodwin.

Jehiel Burr Hurlburt was a member of the society of Sons of the American Revolution. The pension records that are kept in the War Department at Washington, D. C., show that his grandfather, Thomas Hurlbut (a change in the spelling of the name from Hurlbut to Hurlburt was made about one hundred years ago) enlisted twice as a soldier in the Revolutionary War, and served in all nearly four years, first as a private and then as a sergeant. His widow, Eunice Grant Hurlbut, applied for a pension as the widow of a Revolutionary soldier in 1837 and was granted it.

Following is the genealogy of the family of Jehiel Burr Hurlburt: His father, Erastus Grant Hurlburt, was born March 20, 1787, in Winchester, Connecticut, and died September 4, 1845. His mother, Clarissa Goodwin Hurlburt, was born March 21,

1791, in Winchester, Connecticut, and died December 15, 1856. The marriage of his father and mother occurred at Winchester, Connecticut, December 16, 1812.

As to his brothers and sisters, Clarissa Ann Hurlburt Norris, was born February 19, 1814, and died December 30, 1879; Erastus Belden Hurlburt was born June 5, 1815, and died March 14, 1818; Elizabeth Hurlburt Hudson was born February 4, 1817, and died March 12, 1855; Louisa Hurlburt Freer was born August 5, 1818, and died January 13, 1910; Belden Goodwin Hurlburt was born March 25, 1820, and died February 16, 1910; Erastus Dorr Hurlburt was born April 5, 1822, and died July 28, 1840; Edward Griffin Hurlburt was born March 12, 1824, and died June 2, 1897; Russell Higley Hurlburt was born April 21, 1826, and died April 14, 1883; Henry Clay Hurlburt was born August 19, 1830, and died September 5, 1905; Ruth Maria Hurlburt Seaton was born July 1, 1832, and died March 2, 1901; David Elmore Hurlburt was born December 26, 1835, and died December 20, 1913.

Three of the brothers of Jehiel Burr Hurlburt were men of note in the communities where they lived. Judge Belden Goodwin Hurlburt went to California in 1852, studied law, was admitted to the bar, and served as judge of the courts for many years. In 1884 he was elected to the California State Senate. He was a warm personal friend of Senator Leland Stanford, the founder of the Leland Stanford University at Palo Alto, California. He made one of the nominating speeches upon the floor of the California State Senate for Senator Leland Stanford, when the latter was elected as United States senator.

Edward Griffin Hurlburt occupied many positions of honor and trust in Ashtabula County, Ohio, where he was a large landowner, serving many years as a state commissioner and as president and director in various agricultural societies, in all of which he was an inspiring and most progressive leader. He was a man of discriminating judgment, of invincible purpose, of remarkable will power and of incorruptible integrity. In his younger life and before he had amassed a competence, he went on a note as security for several thousand dollars for a friend, who afterward failed in business. He said he would pay every dollar of that

obligation, although it was pointed out to him that he might escape it all through a technical point in the law. He paid every cent of that for which he had gone security. He was exceedingly well posted on current events, and in conversation his discussion of the great political issues was always listened to with great interest.

Russell Higley Hurlburt was a minister of the Methodist Episcopal church, a member of the Erie Conference of that denomination, and represented his conference four times in succession as a delegate, going to the General Conference in Philadelphia in 1864; in Chicago in 1868; in New York in 1872 and in Baltimore in 1876. He served some of the most prominent churches in his conference with conspicuous success. He was warm-hearted, sympathetic and brotherly in all the social and business relations of life. He made hosts of friends everywhere. Indeed all those whom he met as acquaintances soon became his fast friends. Although not in any sense of the word a politician for himself, yet he could so successfully trace out the trend of political currents that prominent politicians often came to him for counsel and advice. He possessed in a marked degree the qualities of high leadership. He was for many years a regular contributor to the columns of the Pittsburgh Christian Advocate, the denominational organ of that section of Methodism, where he spent the most of his ministerial life. And these numerous articles that came from his facile pen, were all marked with vigor of thought and beauty of expression, as well as deep spiritual insight. He was a graduate in medicine, receiving his degree of Doctor of Medicine from the Homeopathic Hospital College of Cleveland, Ohio. He received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1874 from the Mount Union-Scio College.

Hamline Hurlburt Freer, a nephew of Jehiel Burr Hurlburt and son of Louisa Hurlburt Freer, occupied for many years the chair of Political Economy in Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa, and was the dean of that institution. He served as the president of the Iowa State Teachers' Association and had a wide reputation as a remarkably interesting speaker and lecturer upon educational topics. He was known not only throughout the state of Iowa, but also far beyond the boundaries of the

Hawkeye Commonwealth, that for so long a time was his home.

Jehiel Burr Hurlburt covered a number of varied activities in his long and busy life of more than eighty-six years. He was farmer, teacher, California pioneer, "forty-niner," citizen, soldier and civil officer. He spent his boyhood in the manner common to the lads of the rural communities of his times, working on the farm in the summer and attending the country schools in the winter. His removal from Connecticut to Ohio when he was fourteen witnessed a continuance of the same yearly program, farm work during the summer months and attendance upon the rural school in the winter. Thus it came about in the most natural way that he graduated from the school benches to the seat of the teacher. He taught for seven consecutive winters in Ohio and Illinois. In the latter state he taught in the towns of Bloomingdale and Nauvoo. While teaching in Nauvoo, he contracted the prevailing "gold fever," and laid his plans during the winter of 1851-52 for an overland trip to California. He and his brother, Belden Goodwin Hurlburt, started upon their journey in the early spring of 1852, and were six months in making the overland journey to the Pacific coast. When they arrived in the territory of central Iowa, they found that the grass had not grown sufficiently for their oxen. So they encamped for a month on what is now the site of Mitchellville, a few miles east of Des Moines, until the grass was grown sufficiently to furnish good grazing for their oxen. This period of rest gave abundant opportunity to observe the richness of the prairie soil of Iowa and doubtless exerted a strong influence upon him in determining his future location in Iowa.

Nothing of an unusual nature happened to his party in this long, weary and monotonous journey. They found much of the way lined with the wrecks of wagons, oxbows, discarded boxes, the bones of dead cattle and sometimes those of human beings. They at last arrived at the longsought Eldorado, August 28, 1852. He engaged in gold mining for a short time, but meeting with indifferent success, he took up truck farming in the Sacramento valley, forty miles north of the city of the same name.

He followed this line of work for three years, returning in the early part of 1856 to his home in Ohio by way of Nicaragua

Lake and New York City. He came to Iowa in 1857 and purchased a farm in Worth Township, Boone County. After he had bought his Iowa farm, he returned to Ohio and pursued the work of farming there for three years. November 10, 1860, he was united in marriage to Miss Myra Lloyd, a native of Lake County, the ceremony taking place in Ashtabula County. The bride had been a successful school teacher prior to her marriage and was a daughter of Lester Lloyd, who was born in Massachusetts and who engaged in agriculture after his removal to Ohio. Shortly after their marriage Jehiel Burr Hurlburt and his bride came out to Iowa and took up their residence upon the farm that had been previously acquired, building first temporary quarters, breaking the prairie sod and in the course of time establishing themselves in a comfortable farm home. In 1896 they built and occupied for a time a pleasant residence in Luther, Boone County, later removing to Des Moines, where he died.

Seven children blessed this union only three of whom are now living, Mrs. C. D. Todhunter, Mrs. Lillian L. Pratt and Jay B. Hurlburt, all of whom with the surviving widow live in Des Moines.

Jehiel Burr Hurlburt became a close reader of the New York Semi-Weekly Tribune when he was only thirteen years of age, and for many years he read this paper with the closest attention, following with the deepest interest the great editorials of Horace Greeley. He became a remarkably well-posted man in the political history of our country, and he could tell on a moment's notice just what the distinctive issues were between the two great political parties in any campaign for the preceding quarter of a century.

He could not be indifferent to the assaults made upon the nation's integrity by open rebellion, and in 1862 he responded to the call for troops by enlisting August 11 in the ranks of Company D, Thirty-second Iowa Volunteer Infantry, commanded by Colonel John Scott. The regiment rendezvoused at Dubuque for organization and equipment and was promptly sent southward. It was divided at Cairo, one portion going into garrison duty at New Madrid and a battalion of four companies under command of Major Eberhart being detached for a long and arduous cam-

paign. The plans of this campaign led them into southern Missouri and then southward to Little Rock, Arkansas, which these forces succeeded in capturing after much detouring and skirmishing.

Jehiel Burr Hurlburt after having lain ill for several months in the hospital at Memphis received an honorable discharge and returned home in July, 1864. To have been a member of such a regiment as the Thirty-second Iowa Volunteer Infantry was in itself an honor. Its regimental colors, now in the capitol building at Des Moines, are inscribed with the battles of Cape Girardeau, Bayou Metairie, Fort DeRussy, Pleasant Hill, where the regiment suffered "the greatest loss in modern battles," Marks-ville, Yellow Bayou, Lake Chicot, Tupelo, Old Town Creek, Nashville, Brentwood Hills and Fort Blakely.

Jehiel Burr Hurlburt became a member of the Republican party at the time of its organization, voting for John C. Fremont, its first presidential candidate. He remained steadfast to the Republican faith until his death. In 1865 he was chosen by the people as county treasurer, and in 1873 he was elected county sheriff. In both these positions of public trust his fidelity to duty and his whole-souled honesty won the universal approval of his constituents.

While he was county treasurer one of his best friends and staunchest supporters and a thoroughly trustworthy man came to him and wished a short loan of a sum of money from the county funds. His reply was, "My friend, I would stake my life that you would pay the loan when it would come due, but as a sworn custodian, I cannot and will not make any loans to anyone from the county funds." This man whose request was not granted, far from being angered, went away esteeming more highly than ever the steadfast and fearless public official, who had refused him.

He at all times took an intelligent interest in promoting the best local government, and it was often his privilege to see his previsions of broader national policies merge into tangible realities, and to see some of his less discerning neighbors coming slowly around to viewpoints, which he had taken months in advance of them.

Religiously he was an almost lifelong member of the Methodist

Episcopal church, in the welfare of which he at all times took a deep and abiding interest. The following splendid tribute comes from J. W. Page, of Luther, Iowa: "The forty-four years of acquaintance with Jehiel Burr Hurlburt had brought me to regard him as a man of unusual attainments. Among all those with whom he was associated, he was known and recognized as a leader in all things pertaining to the elevation and progress of humanity. He has left several monuments to his memory here in Luther. It was through his work and untiring efforts that this town of Luther was surveyed and established. It was through him that our articles of incorporation were obtained, the post office was secured and the Methodist Episcopal Church was built. It was through him that there came later our waterworks and our system of electric lights. If it had not been for him the place where our beautiful little town now stands would still be only a cornfield."

In conclusion there is given a heartfelt estimate and token of affection, which comes from A. J. Barkley, of Boone, Iowa. This tribute begins with an army experience: "In camp our company formed itself into five messes, selected with a view to congeniality. Each mess had its own cook, whose labors excused him from guard and police duties. Every soldier was given a daily allowance or ration, which was valued at so many cents. It consisted of hard-tack, "sow belly" (fat pork), coffee, beans, sugar, rice and salt. While on the march no attention was paid to the mess and each soldier got his own meal as best he could. At Little Rock after the long five-hundred mile march, where for weeks we had been confined to coffee, hard-tack and fat meat, we were allowed once more our full rations. Every man wanted his full share, was willing to fight for it and grumbled continually. Many thought they were not getting their full rations. Company commissary sergeants were selected with a view to their fitness to oversee the proper distribution of the rations. Because of hunger, through jealousy and possibly for other good reasons, a general cry went up for the selection of a man, whose honesty could not be questioned, a man with force, courage and general good judgment, who could be trusted absolutely, one who could calculate quickly and accurately the exact amount each mess

was entitled to receive. Such a choice was deemed necessary because it was well known that soldiers in other regiments had been frequently imposed upon and sometimes tricked out of food, that had afterwards been sold by the regimental commissary or quartermaster.

"Many times good men who had been selected to act as company commissary sergeants were found to be incompetent and could not get at things correctly and were beaten out of rations, which they should have drawn. In the event that the quartermaster or regimental commissary was short on certain articles of food, their value could be taken in other kinds, so the different cooks could choose more of one kind or less of another, and yet get their full allowance or money's worth. Some companies had more men on duty than did other companies; some were absent in the hospital or on detached service. So the men who remained in the company were to be provided for according to their numbers. Taking all these matters into account, it required the services of an unusually careful and methodical man, who could quickly and correctly fill the bill or order for his company.

"These are the reasons why, when one night a heated discussion had been carried on until long after midnight and when a riot was brewing, Jehiel Burr Hurlburt was called out and was literally forced to take this responsible place without extra pay. He was the unanimous choice of his company for the position of commissary sergeant. He was conspicuously successful in this work. His judgment seemed to be infallible, and his ability to secure and then to distribute to each mess its exact portion was remarkable. His honesty was unquestioned. As to some of his more outstanding personal characteristics, I never knew him to make an indelicate allusion, or do a questionable thing. He never countenanced evil, yet he seldom rebuked an offender. He was a remarkably well informed man, and in certain chosen lines his range of reading was very wide. At home for many years he read and literally devoured Horace Greeley's New York Semi-Weekly Tribune. In his reading, he remembered everything of importance.

"For years back he could upon a moment's notice relate the distinctive issues that were at stake in the different national

political campaigns. He could name offhand the cabinet members under each president. He could name with equal facility the governors of the different states of the Union in office, all the United States senators and all the more prominent members of Congress from the several states. He had accustomed himself to think in states and nations, just as most men think in townships and in counties.

"He understood all about such things as Mason and Dixon's line, the Missouri Compromise, the Kansas-Nebraska bill, the Emancipation Proclamation, the Fifteenth Amendment, the Greenback issue, the Sixteen to one silver fad, and the Santa Fe trail. He could go minutely into the history of any one of these topics and could discuss them and a large number of other kindred subjects in a most entertaining and instructive way for hours at a time. In his wide range of reading, he pigeon-holed everything that was worth while in his marvelous memory. Everything was thus carefully catalogued in his mind and filed away for ready reference in the future, and everything that he had ever read, that was worth remembering, he could call up on a moment's notice. Hence he was an authority on so many things covering a century or more that lawyers, politicians, historians and editors consulted him as they would go to an encyclopedia. He was a loyal soldier, a good citizen and a Christian gentleman of the highest type. He had strong convictions and courage. But he was modest and not offensive in either declaring or defending his principles. He was a close observer, a student of men and of public measures.

"But his disposition was so retiring and his modesty so becoming that he was never before the footlights, nor did he ever allow himself to become conspicuous. He despised a tattler and simply tolerated men whose ideas never rose higher than the bung-hole in a beer keg. He was 'air-tight,' close-mouthed, and had but few confidants or intimate friends, but numerous acquaintances. He had a keen, analytical mind, and was an independent, thoughtful man, who loved truth and despised hypocrisy and pretense. I knew him well, better and more intimately, possibly, than any other man in Boone County. I loved him and revered his memory."

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