

of public improvements, etc. For many years he has been troubled with asthma, and, two or three years since, removed and fixed his residence in Colorado, finding there the only relief and freedom from chest and throat complaints.

Some time in the course of the rebellion, three or four lines in the newspapers announced the death of John Tyler, and that was all the notice the event received. He was merely a specimen of the nobodies we place in high position. John C. Calhoun died some years previous, an astute politician, and only half a man because, lacking a third story to his head, he was unable to understand that the world is governed by natural, or, as we say, moral laws. He was useful however; he combined, concentrated, and intensified all the strength and venom of slavery for its last grand struggle with freedom. In the encounter slavery was worsted and swept out of existence. He may still be of use, for, to quote Shakspeare again :

“Imperial Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,
May stop a hole to keep the wind away.”

EARLY EXPERIENCE IN IOWA.

BY R. B. GROFF, MARENGO, IOWA.

I was standing on the hurricane deck of the steamer Potosi, on the morning of the 7th of April, 1845, looking out through a heavy fog for the soil of Iowa. Suddenly, large stacks of brick and mortar appeared in view, and the captain kindly informed me that these were a part of the city of Burlington. After a journey of twenty-two days in coming from Strasburg, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, eleven of which had been spent on the water from Pittsburg, I was glad to feel safely landed. I was much pleased with Burlington. She had a beautiful situation surrounded by rich farming lands, which would eventually build up a great city. But I

had not sufficient means to pay the price then demanded for lots or claims. I borrowed a horse and rode out north-west from the city to get an outside view of the country. After riding beyond the Mississippi, I had my first introduction to the vast rolling timberless tracts of land called prairies. My first impression was that they were worn out old commons, like I had seen in old Virginia. But as there was no appearance of old houses or fences, I could not help asking myself how or when had they been so completely swept by the besom of destruction. On more close inspection I saw no ridges or open furrows usually seen in old worn out fields. Then the impression came home to my slow moving mind that this was the land cleared by the hand of nature for actual settlements, and dug up by living gophers!

On ascending a high ridge, I looked all around and could not help exclaiming, beautiful! beautiful! I saw a solitary house far in the distance surrounded by an ocean of land. It was an unfinished, inhabited log cabin. I do not know how long I had been riding, but this was the only house, and the inhabitant the only man, since I left Burlington. I hallooed, a hand slowly pulled aside the white sheet suspended over the hole intended for a door, and a long, lean, sallow visage crowned with a stack of uncombed hair, filled the opening; a long, heavy, greyish beard concealed the place where a mouth ought to be. I spoke several times before he made reply:—

“Where does this road go to?”

“Don’t go at all — *stays there!*”

“How far to Burlington?”

“Don’t know.”

“What is up that way?”—pointing in a certain direction.

“Columbus City.”

“Well,” I quickly replied, “I want to see the city.”

I rode on, looking in every direction to see the “city’s peopled towers.” I did not see any one, nor hear the sound of any human being. Occasionally a wild bird would start up at my horse’s feet, and, with a whirling, whistling motion,

violently divide the air. I was at first as much frightened as the birds, but as separation between us seemed so rapidly to widen, I felt perfectly secure. As the dusk of evening was collecting around me, looking from the summit of a ridge I fortunately saw a house, and made for that point with all possible speed. It was dusk when I arrived at the house. A short, heavy-set, unwashed man was standing in an opening in the side of a log wall. His pantaloons, shirt, and wamus were brownish linsey-woolsey; his pants were tucked inside the tops of huge 'oots that had seen many better days — *toes* looked out at one *end*, and *calves* at the other; knees peeped out of pants, elbows out of wamus; hatless, shirt collar open, hands chucked in huge pockets. A kind of half smile lingered around his almost beardless mouth, which was heavily coated with tobacco, the essence of which had flowed copiously down on his garments.

"Can I stay all night?"

"*Yes, sir.*"

"Have you anything to eat?"

"*No, sir.*"

"Why, how do you do?"

"*First rate — how do you do?*"

I had hominy, fresh pork, and milk for supper; the same for breakfast. Slept on the naked floor with my clothes on, while my head was supported by a huge, noisy machine (when I touched it) — the host said it was stuffed with prairie feathers. My horse was tied to the corner of the house, and fed with grass.

"What is the name of this place?" I asked.

"Columbus City," was the reply.

There was but one house! In the morning I asked the distance and direction to Iowa City. He told me to go down the hill, cross the Iowa river, and go up on the east bank. The distance was about twenty-five miles. "Has it as large a population as this place?" I inquired. "Yes, it is *some* larger," he replied. I determined to ride on and see for myself. I do not remember passing a house from Columbus

City to Iowa City. I arrived at the latter place about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and put up at the Hawkeye House, kept by Mr. Gault. This place was so much larger than Columbus City that I felt very agreeably disappointed. The state capitol made quite a show, and many other buildings gave signs of advancement. While at the hotel I became acquainted with Abraham Bowman, from near Carlisle, Cumberland county, Pennsylvania. He persuaded me to go with him some six miles out of the city, on North Bend, to see his son Francis. We crossed the river and passed up on the south side, where Newcomb had commenced grinding, and entered the bend through the claim of Mr. Harles. Mr. Bowman was armed with a rifle, and near this place he shot one of the largest spotted rattlesnakes I ever saw. While we stopped we cut a forked stick, placed it firmly on the neck of the snake, and with another stick we critically examined its very curiously constructed teeth. I looked up, and some distance from us we saw a herd of deer prancing, playing, and sporting.

The next day we went out to see the timber and the rocks from which the stone had been derived for the capitol. Here there appeared to be a den for snakes, for rumpers had crawled out from their winter nap, to be thawed out for summer business; they were so stiff they could not jump, so we killed thirty-two rattle and three garter snakes.

I bought a claim from Frank Bowman on eighty acres of prairie and fifty-seven of timber for twenty-five dollars. I returned to Burlington, brought my family on the bend, lived there nearly two years, and then sold out to Nicholas Zeller. I then moved to this place, where I have been living since the spring of 1847, in and near Marengo, Iowa county, Iowa.

ANECDOTES AND INCIDENTS.

The first court held near the county seat was held in my house. Judge Carleton presided. L. B. Patterson was prosecuting attorney, and R. B. Groff sheriff. The grand jury

was stowed up in the loft, and as the ceiling was high, and I had no ladder, Robert Murcheson lifted the men up till they caught the joist or flooring. ✓ Cleaveland, deputy sheriff, sat under the hole to keep them up. Fears were entertained that ✓ Hutcheson, sitting near the hole, might forget himself and fall through. To prevent this, the sheriff poked him up with a broom handle.

The first legal act performed, to my knowledge, was done by Horace H. Hull. A couple were to be married at Brush Run (now called Homestead). Hull had just received his commission as justice of the peace. The old blue book was the only statute. Hull inquired if the book was in the house, and a copy was presented. He searched the book to find the form of marriage, but, failing to do so, he handed the book to another, kindly requesting him to look. He failed. The company became impatient. Then the justice said: "We will have to try it." He (stepping close to the couple) said: "Please be *elevated*—rise up; join hands. And you," addressing the groom, "take this woman to be your wedded wife, to nourish, cherish, sustain, love, forsaking all others, and pertain eternally to her in death and sickness. Oh! — there is a mistake! — disconnect hands — *it was usual to inquire if any one has any objection.*" The father-in-law spoke up: "*I'll insure you no one has any objection.*" "Well," said the justice to the bride, "what do you think of these things?" She said: "I think they'll do." "I think so too," said the justice; "*you're man and wife.*"

Ex-Governor Stone on the bench. — In the morning, first business, motions. His Honor was calling in the usual way. When he came to a motion, Mr. J. D. ✓ Templin would rise up on end, and spread himself in an eloquent, long, windy, rambling, scattering speech, while his *honor* sat patiently, with his legs crossed on the desk. When Templin had finished talking, and sat down, his honor said "Well," as he took down one foot, and let it strike the floor hard. Then the other would go through the same process; and his honor said: "Mr. Templin, I see no *beginning, middle, or end* to

your speech; but hereafter if anything comes up during court, in which you are interested, I will consider your speech as already made."

Rev. Israel L. Clark was preaching, on a warm summer day, and in the discourse he said: "I am beset on all sides by proper subjects for immersion. I am sorry water is so scarce. If I was surrounded with the pure, crystal, rippling, rumbling, bubbling Jordan, that immersed the Immaculate Son—" Bro. D. Sprague spoke up: "Father Clarke, *there is a large hole on Clear Creek!*"

Dr. J. Simon Frost and Mr. Taylor first attempted to stake off the lots in this city. they could get two stakes to range first rate; the difficulty was to have three to exactly fall in line. Cyrus Sanders eventually came to perform the surveying. Frost professed to be a doctor, preacher, and millwright. The proprietor of the first mill above Iowa City told me the Doctor was preparing a frame-work to sustain a pair of ponderous burrs. "The owner told me," I modestly said, "the frame is not heavy enough for those heavy burrs." The Doctor quickly replied, "It is necessary for all ponderous machinery to have *elasticity* and *vibration*."

Mr. Headly moved from Clear Creek, Johnson county, Iowa, to Iowa county. He was a singular man, and professed to be acquainted with all branches of business. He was a doctor, preacher, &c. Rev. Israel L. Clark paid him a visit, and the two commenced a *very learned* discussion upon the advantages of education. Headley would talk, and gave Clark no chance to stick a word in edgeways. "Yes, yes," remarked Headly, "*edecation* is a first-rate thing—*first-rate*; if I had not received a first-rate *edecation*, I'd have been almost an *idiot*." "Well," said Clark, "you didn't miss her much with all your *edecation!*"

Judson Athey used to be fond of *metaphor*. He always had better things than any body else. He said he planted one-half bushel of potatoes of a new kind, and had a yield of eighty bushels. "Well," said Squire Brown, one of Athey's nearest neighbors, "I guess you dug some of my pota-

toes." As Athey was a class-leader in church (the preacher in charge told me), I kindly told Bro. Athey that these large stories did not become a ^vMethodist class-leader. "Well, well," said Athey, "that's so; it is one of my failings, and I have shed *barrels upon barrels* of tears over it."

ANECDOTES FROM JUDGE WILLIAMS.

When I was holding court in Johnson county I got tired of calling "Territory of Iowa *v.* Mrs. Dupont," so I thought I would reverse the case — "Mrs. Dupont *v.* Territory of Iowa."

I received my commission as judge of the territory of Iowa while in Pennsylvania. The first court I held was in Cedar county. Some one placed a large split-bottom chair under a spreading burr oak, and I sat down to settle the county seat. I picked out the longest, leanest, lankest, ugliest looking man in the crowd for sheriff. He had a long beard, and when his mouth was closed no opening was visible, and when he spoke it looked like a hole in a buffalo hide. The grand jury sat down on the ground on the right, and the petit jury on the left. I impannelled the former, swore a bailiff, and sent them off to work. The bailiff took the jury to a large rail-pen and herded them in. They were about indicting a man for stealing hogs, when a Dutchman squealed out, "*I dont agree.*" At these words, an Irishman, springing to his feet and pulling off his coat, said: "I'll make you agree," and commenced pegging the Dutchman. The bailiff came running to me, saying, "Judge, Judge, the jury are all fighting." I went down, kicked open the fence, and sent them home, saying I would not have the county disgraced.

When I was in Jones county I was led into a slough where the grass was as high as my head. A chair was placed and I sat down, and they told me that was the county seat. I impannelled the grand jury, and they were taken down the slough to commence work. I was preparing the petit jury for work, when the bailiff of the grand jury came slipping up close to

me, and then hallooed: "Judge, is it right to have any body *sneakin'*?" I did not know what that meant, so I inquired and said, "No, no,—have a picket guard placed at a certain distance to keep all sneakers off!"

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF NORTH-WESTERN IOWA.

BY N. LEVERING, GREENWOOD, MO.

(Continued from page 606.)

At the October election of 1857 John L. Campbell was elected county judge, C. E. Hedges, treasurer and recorder, L. Tacket, sheriff, and C. B. Rustin, county clerk. Judge Campbell was, at the time of his election, a partner of W. R. Henry, in the real estate business. He was very affable and genial, which, together with his suavity of manners, made him many warm friends. Soon after his election he was beset by a few pretended friends, who were eager to plunge their hands into the county treasury, and urged upon the judge the building of a county jail, and the issuing of county warrants to pay for the same. Yielding to the advice of friends, the spring following he awarded the contract at big figures to J. W. Bosler and C. E. Hedges. The building was to be of brick, two stories, and rooms sufficient for jailer and family. No other county warrants were to be issued for county buildings until the jail warrants were disposed of by the contractors.

About this time, S. H. Cassady erected a large and commodious two-story brick building in Sioux City at a very heavy expense, which so involved him that he found it necessary to sell the building for the liquidation of the many claims against him. As the county was having a fine jail for the reception of criminals, there was no good reason

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.