

IOWA—AS I KNEW IT

By HENRY W. WRIGHT*

In picturing "Pioneer Days" in the great state of Iowa in the light of my own observations and experiences as a native-born Hawkeye, I am conscious that others have done so who may have far more vivid recollections of her early history. I have been proud that I was born on March 4, 1868, in Chickasaw county, on a farm near Ionia, about five miles from the present location of the "Little Brown Church in the Vale."

With six children, two yoke of oxen, a covered wagon, four cows and little or no money, my parents set out in the spring of 1870 bound for the "New West." After several weeks of travel over a country without roads, we finally located upon a homestead of 160 acres in O'Brien county, Iowa. Here a few slanting boards were placed over a stove and my mother started housekeeping under conditions, it seems to me, that would well-nigh crush the spirit of any woman. Our nearest neighbor was miles away. The nearest town was sixteen miles distant, over almost impassable roads and impossible hills when driven with ox teams.

Before the snows of winter father had constructed with his own hands a frame house of two rooms, with cellar and attic, which as I now recall, appear to have been the most important adjuncts. Ours was one of the first houses erected in Liberty township.

Those first few winters spent on the open prairie of northwestern Iowa were terrible. Our house became somewhat of a "Halfway Inn" for travelers going from towns and settlements north of us to the larger and older towns and cities to the south. I well remember the night

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of a terrible blizzard when eight men, besides our own family of eight, slept in those two rooms and attic.

In the spring of the year the melting snows made every creek and "slough" a raging river and they became impassable for weeks. Then, when the water receded, it would be additional weeks before farmers could get onto the soaked ground. Many times I have seen yokes of oxen and teams of horses floundering in the mud, and many times, later in life, I have driven them under those conditions.

Our first barn on the old homestead was a crude affair: a pole with a "crotch" set up at each corner, others placed lengthwise and crosswise, and over all, hay or straw banked to a thickness of several feet. On top of the banked-roof was a layer of long "slough grass", to keep out the rain. Occasionally it did. The posts and poles were cut and hauled from the riverbank some fifteen miles away. This barn stood for many years and housed as many as ten teams at a time. Our cattle shed was built after the same fashion. They were exceedingly warm in winter, but oh, how unsanitary!

EARLY INDUCTION AS FARM LABORER

My earliest recollection of life on the farm is of dropping seed corn for my father, when he was breaking prairie on the homestead. The vivid part of the recollection is that I dropped about four times as much seed as was necessary. After planting two or three rows, father concluded it would be cheaper to have an older brother do the dropping. I well remember how the stalks in those rows grew so thick there was no room for "nubbins." They made a perfect windbreak, however. I must have been about four years of age at that time. The "weapon" used in breaking prairie was an old-fashioned, wood beam, sod plow with "coulter and beam wheel", drawn by two yoke of oxen. Two acres per day was an average day's work.

When I was six years old, and for several years following, I herded our own and the neighbor's cattle on the open prairies of Liberty township. A township consisted of thirty-six square miles. This became my annual job in the summertime.

In the winter I attended school in a one-room, unpainted schoolhouse, two miles from our home. As I recall, teachers were paid eighteen to twenty-two dollars per month and "board around." In that manner I learned the alphabet, the Three-R's and the Rule of Three, namely "Root Hog or Die." I walked the two miles to and from school in all kinds and degrees of weather, wearing a homemade cap with eartabs, wool scarf, homemade overcoat, knit mittens, high leather boots with red tops and brass-tipped toes. What a uniform for the battle with the elements! Within the schoolroom: a "potbellied" stove in the center, girls seated on one side, boys on the other; without, the two three-by-four cubicles located a safe distance from the house and from each other. What a layout in which to foster and promote the principles of democracy! On retrospect it appears to have done just that. McGuffey's readers, Ray's arithmetics, Swinton's spellers and Spencerian copybooks, together with a slate and pencil made up the implements of warfare against ignorance. We went to school for three or four months in the winter; the rest of the year was devoted to work on the farm.

I well remember now, at four score years of age, life as it was on the old homestead in the seventies and eighties. In that two-room house later enlarged to four rooms—there was no need to open doors or windows for ventilation. Mother had few conveniences for housekeeping. There were no inside sanitary features. The well of water was located three hundred feet from the house. Hers was a wood-burning stove. She used cobs and green wood for fuel. For light we had a crude, tallow-grease lamp. Mother's cookbook might have been labeled "Practice Makes Perfect." She did not matriculate in

any school of domestic science, but had there been a volume of "Who's Who," her name might well have appeared high on the list.

THE GRASSHOPPER PLAGUE

The day the grasshoppers came to Iowa—and to this family of eight children—stands out vividly in my memory. It had been a warm, sultry day in late August. Soon after the noontide a "haze" appeared in the west, quickly obscuring the sun. By midafternoon the hoppers began to fall, first a few, then in a perfect torrent. They covered everything. In an unbelievably short time every green thing disappeared. My mother covered a part of her small garden with mosquito netting, which they promptly ate. Bark from the trees, and paint from the house they ate also. They were in the drinking water and in the beds. The growing grains in the fields were not quite ripe enough to cut. They ate the grains and the green straws. They were so thick on the ground it was impossible to walk without treading on them. How the family survived, only the angels can tell. Those who have never experienced it, cannot appreciate the mental anguish of a family under such circumstances.

The hoppers liked the country so well they layed their eggs and decided to remain another year. Farmers tried all kinds of schemes to destroy the eggs, but without avail. Burning, plowing under, flooding—all were tried, but without the desired results. The following spring the hoppers hatched by the billions. If an old hopper is hungry, a young one is ravenous. They ate the new crops into the ground. The fight for survival of the settlers went on. Gradually the hoppers disappeared during the summer, and fortunately, Iowa has been free from a repetition of such a scourage ever since.

What can be more beautiful than a sea of native prairie grass gently waving in the breeze? Growing to a height of one to two feet on the uplands, and four to six feet along sloughs and marshes, it became a terrible menace

in the season of fires. Nothing is more inspiring—and terrifying—than a prairie fire at night when fed by such materials. Men with teams and plows worked at breakneck speed building firebreaks in an effort to protect stacks of grain and hay, and even farm buildings. I have often seen at one time, fires beyond control, burning on a score of hills at night. Often these fires travel at breakneck speed for fifteen or twenty miles before burning themselves out. Sad indeed was the plight of the farmers whose property fell prey to the ravages of the flames on such occasions.

There remain with me vivid pictures of the summers I spent herding cattle on the prairies of Iowa. On a pony, with a couple of dogs, I followed the cow paths over those rolling hills from early in the spring until late in the fall. Other boys herding cattle also, became chums—or enemies. We used to gather at “lookout” points, tell stories, whittle, chew gum gathered from the native weed, race our ponies, argue, and sometimes scrap among ourselves over trifles. Such was the life of a “herder” in pioneer days. Many times since I have had occasion to regret that while herding cattle I did not have access to some of the fine story books available to boys today. It was a real opportunity to store up useful knowledge, could it have been properly employed. I well recall my first story book, a copy of “Winning His Way,” being the life of Paul Parker. I remember how I was filled with emotion and blinded with tears as I read aloud to the family of the early trials and difficulties of Paul, the hero of the story. I have read that book at least a dozen times since. No volume, aside from the Bible, has made so profound an impression on my life. I wish that every boy and girl might read and reread it today.

During the grasshopper years when we had about a hundred head of hogs and no feed, I herded hogs on the prairie. Cattle have sense enough to know what you want them to do, but not so with a hog. They will neither

forage together, nor follow a leader. By the end of the summer they were real "razorbacks" and as swift as the wind. After a time they grew savage and resented being urged. A sizable club was the only effective persuader. It was quite remarkable that more than ninety of them came through the summer in fair condition. A pen was erected out on the prairie where they were corralled at night, thus obviating the necessity of making long drives. Every day the hogs were driven to a nearby stream of water.

A few years after settling in Iowa, father traded the oxen for a team of mares and a young colt. To part with them was like losing a friend. They had pulled us, and others, out of many mudholes on the overland trip to the new homestead, foraging for their own food en route. I still confess admiration for a yoke of oxen.

COMMUNITY AMUSEMENTS AFFORDED

There being no public amusement anywhere near, it was necessary for each community to provide its own entertainment. This was done in part, through dances, spelling bees, lyceums, and debating societies, all of which, except the dances, were held at the schoolhouses and were largely attended by men, women, and children. The literary programs put on by "would-be stars" were something to be long remembered. Many a time "the boy stood on the burning deck" until the poor fellow must have welcomed the flames. Amateur orators debated pro and con such questions as: Resolved, that fire is more destructive than water; that there is more pleasure in pursuit than in possession; that a man will do more for money than for honor; that the horse is more valuable to man than the cow; and many others equally profound—or silly. Usually a "box supper" followed the feast of soul and wit, each box being auctioned to the highest bidder, the purchaser to share the contents with the "fair" owner. Many weird and gorgeous creations were devised by the ladies to attract the attention of the eligible men and

boys. Thus was democracy being fostered and stabilized for the more turbulent days ahead.

My father and his two brothers all played the "fiddle", and each having large families, it was only natural that they should be leaders in fostering musical affairs and dances. Due to the fact that the seats were permanently fastened to the floor, dances were not permitted in the schoolhouses; consequently these were held in private homes, sometimes in haylofts and frequently as "house-warmings," for every new building of sufficient size. The old-fashioned square dance was the vogue. I recall how horrified we were when a "city slicker" danced a "round dance" at one of these affairs—even though he and his partner held hands at arm's length, and allowed sufficient room between them to have cleared a truck. I wonder what some of those pioneers would say if they could see a modern "hugging bee" dance today. Your guess is as good as mine.

The old-fashioned "protracted meeting"—and they were indeed protracted—was a religious institution of those early days which made and left its mark on our civilization. A series of meetings, continuing for weeks, would be held in the schoolhouse. Each service lasted from three to six hours of an evening. They were "blood and thunder" affairs, where men and women "got religion at the mourners' bench." Often community feuds were thus settled; old debts were paid; Tom, Dick, and Harry, —yes and Alice, Jane and Sue were on "speaking" terms again. Occasionally a lot of "dirty linen" was washed in public, about which everybody knew.

I once saw forty men and women, converts of such a meeting, baptized by immersion in a creek pond in below-zero weather, a three-inch covering of ice on the pond having been broken for the occasion. These converts then rode home without a change of clothing, wrapped in blankets, some going as far as ten miles in wagons. I never heard of any bad after effects in health because

of these baptizings. Verily, the American constitution is healthy and vigorous in more ways than one. They used to tell of the man who wore out the knees of his trousers getting religion and the seat of his trousers "backsliding". I confess I never saw him.

DESOLATION FOLLOWS PRAIRIE STORMS

A genuine cyclone on the prairies of Iowa in the seventies was something no boy who has experienced one can ever forget. I vividly recall one of the worst to visit our homestead. About three o'clock in the afternoon of a hot day in late August, an ominous cloud appeared on the western horizon, and as it rapidly rose, the wind died down and there was a breathless stillness. Our cattle and horses in the corrals seemed to sense impending danger and were restless. Hastily such stock as could be sheltered were provided for. Doors and windows were securely closed and fastened. The storm cave was made ready for the family's safety. Suddenly the wind veered and came out of the northwest, accompanied by flashes of chain lightning and deafening roars of thunder. The clouds came on at tremendous speed. This was the signal for all to seek safety in the cave. Soon the "twister" burst upon our little homestead. Shingles were seen flying from roofs, bundles of grain flew through the air, fences were leveled, windows were blown in, farm machinery was overturned, trees were uprooted, feathers were stripped from some chickens roosting in trees, uncut grain was flattened, and all growing crops severely damaged. Providentially no living thing was harmed, except a few fowls.

Next morning scenes of desolation met the eye. Strange stories circulated as to the doings of the storm: how a baby in its crib was carried a quarter of a mile by the storm and deposited in a haystack—without the slightest injury to the child; how the water was funneled from a twenty-foot open well; how a frame barn was blown completely away, leaving a team of horses tied to the

manger in their stall, unharmed. This storm gave rise to the story of the man and wife being blown out through the roof and carried several hundred yards down the road. Neighbors remarked that it was the first time in ten years this couple had "gone out together."

I remember many incidents as to Indians roving through our settlement. Sometimes they came singly, but more often in groups of three and four. It was a standing rule at our house, prompted no doubt by a sense of self-preservation, that no Indian asking for food at our door was to be refused. No one knew when such a group might turn upon an offending household and destroy the whole family. Such tragedies in our county were not numerous, but they did occur. An early settler's wife who had been captured and held for several years by a tribe of Indians, was an object of wonder to children. I have often seen her. Naturally each one expected to be the next "captive", and was always at a safe distance and "all eyes" when Indians were about. I recall going with father to the river grist mill and there seeing a roving tribe of Indians in their winter quarters. There must have been several hundred of them, and with their ponies and tepees, they made a most impressive sight. I clung to my father's coattail most of the time we were waiting for our "grist." I have had trouble keeping my hair down ever since. There at that river grist mill I saw for the first time the great flat stones, one whirling upon the other, which ground the grain into flour and meal. As payment for his services the miller took "toll" from the grain before grinding. This recalls the story of those days about the farmer who took his grain to the mill and lacked one sack of having enough to pay the "toll."

THE FEAR OF THE FRONTIER

Looking back I have often wondered at the apparent wave of superstition and fear which seemed to pervade the early settlements. If a newspaper reported that a

patient from some asylum, or a prisoner from some penitentiary had escaped, then for days every pedestrian on the highway was presumed to be that fugitive, and all women and children were carefully guarded. Rumors that someone claimed the world would "come to an end" on a certain day in the near future; that some supposedly dead person had suddenly reappeared, or that some traveler had suddenly disappeared, were sufficient to fill a community with a fear of impending disaster. Such silly notions were long since dispelled by the general dissemination of news and information. Religious fanatics often made the most of these rumors.

The strong ties of friendship built up between families in the early settlements were of the most warm and lasting kind. Also feuds between families, engendered often by the most trivial matters, sometimes grew to large proportions. The inclination of neighbors to take sides in such bickering often developed into a community "scrap." The new settlements in northwest Iowa experienced these periods of "growing pains." For the most part they were harmless and relieved a lot of otherwise monotonous lives. An extraordinary example was the famous "Jones county calf case." Newspapers were a scarce article during my boyhood days. There were practically no dailies, and few magazines. We received a newspaper once week, though often delayed.

In no way is the "March of Progress" more evident than in a comparison of the machinery used on the homestead in the seventies and eighties with that in use on the farms and ranches today. A typical example is that of the harvester. I well recall our Marsh harvester, of those pioneer days. It was supposed to be the last word in efficiency, a reaper, on the side of which two men stood on a platform, and with "bands" fashioned of straw bound into sheaves the grain as it came from the sickle. To do this binding efficiently, was in reality a "he-man's job." These sheaves were then gathered and placed in

shocks. When the grain had sufficiently "cured", they were placed in a stack. In due time they were fed into the cylinder of a "thrashing" machine, and the grain therefrom hauled away to the barn or granary for storage. Today a combine, being a reaper and thresher in one, is motor-driven across the field and the sacked grain is hauled away to the warehouse or market—the operation being almost entirely mechanical. During the first few years our grain was cut with a cradle. That was a back-breaking job. It was a common subject for debate as to who could cradle the most grain in a day of twelve hours. It goes without saying, I never tried it.

I have occasion to remember our first hand-powered corn sheller. It was a strange contraption operated at the expense of muscle and brawn. I ran my finger through the exposed gears more than sixty-five years ago, and still carry the scar. It was our rule to shell all corn before feeding, in order to have the cobs for fuel. I recall the time we hauled two hundred bushels of shelled corn sixteen miles to town and with the entire proceeds bought an Indian pony worth about thirty-five dollars. A farm problem? Yes, but the Iowa homesteader never heard of "price control," "farm subsidy," "crop priority," nor the "eight-hour law." These are modern inventions by which some people hope to earn more by doing less—by proxy.

Weather on the Iowa prairies in the seventies and eighties was something to talk about. It was never "unusual,"—it was always either "good" or "bad." Before the planting and growing of trees for windbreaks, a winter blizzard was something never to be forgotten. Livestock not properly protected was sometimes driven miles by the storm, finally perishing in some exposed field. Skeltons of animals dotted the hills in the spring and gave mute evidence of the fury of an Iowa blizzard. No traveler seeking shelter from the wrath of such a storm would be denied lodging in any home. Sometimes

a snow storm that obscured all vision would develop in less than an hour. Woe to the traveler caught in such a storm far from human habitation. I recall one instance where a traveler lived for three days in a haystack, without food or water, before relief could reach him.

Because of the fury of the elements, it was necessary to build for stability rather than for appearance. Barns and sheds must be constructed low and compact. Ricks of hay were placed near-by both for easy access and added protection. In the winter of 1881, a winter of unusually heavy snows, I saw our cattle walk on snow over the tops of haystacks ten feet high, the snow having drifted and packed to that depth. So thick was the crust formed on the snow it was necessary to wrap the horses' legs with "gunny sacks" to protect them on the road. A cutter, a sleigh, and a bobsled were indispensable equipments in such times.

TRIUMPHED OVER ADVERSITY

I would not have the reader infer from a recital of these incidents that life on an Iowa homestead in the seventies and eighties was overshadowed by hardships and difficulties. The freedoms and associations possessed and acquired by the settlers, together with the joys engendered by their triumphs over adversity, far outweighed these occasional hardships. Picture, if you can, a Sabbath afternoon gathering of neighbors and friends at some convenient home, each bringing baskets of home grown and home cooked food, which when spread upon an improvised table, gave ample proof that Providence and a frugal people had combined to provide the temporal materials to maintain "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." And listen to some mother tell with great pride how she prepared that tureen of food which everyone was saving was so delicious. After the table was relieved of its burden of food, and the remnants of fried chicken cleared away, the menfolks gathered in the nearby shade of a tree, leaned back their chairs, and

with a plentiful supply of "Horseshoe" and "Climax Plug" discoursed long and loud on the relative merits of policies and principles. If you think democracy was in danger of extinction in those days, then you do not understand the mental fibre of the Iowa pioneer.

The recreations enjoyed by the youth of those days were not unlike those of today, minus the modern equipment. "Two ol' Cat," "Blind Man's Buff," "Pussy Wants a Corner," "Drop the Handkerchief," and "Hide and Seek" might have been found among the games and activities of any group of boys and girls. Young men went "a-court-ing" with horse and buggy, buggy whip, lap robe and all the usual accessories. Unlike the automobile, driving with one hand was permissible. The quilting bee, barn-raising, husking bee, and the camp meeting each in its way offered opportunities for social intercourse among friends and families.

Notwithstanding the hardships and inconveniences endured by the Iowa pioneers, there was a strong religious fervor that pervaded the settlement. Such a spirit was most evident in the deep sense of personal responsibility displayed in the everyday lives of the people, in their dealings with each other. To get the better of your neighbor in a horse trade may have been good business, but to tell an intentional untruth to do so was unthinkable. Based upon such a foundation of character, the future of the race and country appeared to be safe.

FARM ACTIVITIES SEVENTY YEARS AGO

To the reader who has never had the privilege of living on a farm in pioneer days, I extend an invitation to journey behind the scenes for a close-up of the activities on an Iowa homestead some seventy years ago. As we look back from methods and facilities employed in operating a farm or ranch today, we marvel that so many of the pioneers failed to adopt more of the simple conveniences which are so easily constructed, or cost so little, in vogue at the present time; though I "tip my hat" to those who

accomplished so much "by main strength and awkwardness." In our corncribs—there were two of them with a driveway between—the opening through which corn was shoveled from the wagon into the crib was always six or eight feet above the floor of the wagon. I now wonder why we did not have several holes extending from the wagon upward, which could be closed as the crib filled up. Our old Peter Shettler wagon, the first wagon we ever had, in which we picked corn, hauled litter from the yard, gathered up crops and delivered feed to the stock, had a bed four or five feet above the ground to keep it out of the mud, of which we had a superabundance. Later we discovered that a wagon two feet from the ground, with wide tires, was much handier. At little added expense dairy barns could have been arranged to be more convenient and sanitary.

For a considerable time, during which we walked two miles to school, two of us boys milked twice a day and otherwise cared for sixteen to twenty-four cows. We were the original milking machine. If you have never learned to milk a cow surely you have missed something, and "gained a lot." A long-horned cow tied to a manger by a rope around the horns can create a lot of havoc at both ends. You may get kicked across the barn, but always you "come back for more." It is another method of developing "a pull."

The two-mile hike to school was on "shank's horses." No free bus came for us. I ponder sometimes when I realize that children of today are carried to school by bus, and at the same time professional instructors are employed to give them "physical exercise." I guess I must be old-fashioned! After school there was a multitude of chores to do. In winter young stock must be especially protected. Farmers failed to appreciate the need for "controlled" breeding. Young animals were born at all seasons of the year. At various times in winter we had young calves and pigs housed in our cellar

to keep them from freezing. A new colt was similarly saved. All doors and gates had to be securely closed and fastened, water and fuel brought in, including a supply of corn cobs. With the cobs we played on the kitchen floor after supper. That is where perpetual motion was started.

On our homestead I think we had every known kind of domestic animal and fowl, except a mule. I do not know why we never acquired a mule, unless it was that with their small feet they can so easily flounder in the mud. We fought constantly to protect young stock and fowls from the wild animals. The prairie wolf or coyote, the red fox, the wildcat, the skunk and the hungry marauding dogs were always a source of trouble. They could also scare the "daylights" out of some boys that I knew.

IOWA COUNTY SEAT FIGHTS

County-seat fights were quite the order of the day in early Iowa. I speak with some hesitation concerning a bitter county-seat fight which developed in our county. Our county-seat town, although located in the very center of the county, had no railroad and at that time none was contemplated. A city to the north on a railroad, desired to be the county-seat town, but could not muster the required number of votes to obtain it. Instead of biding their time, they gathered a group of men, and with a heavy truck, came in the nighttime, cut a hole in the side of the court house, loaded the county treasurer's safe on a truck, and departed for their aspiring city. Aroused citizens of the county-seat town overtook and surrounded the truck about three miles out, cut the harness to shreds and stalled the truck. In the morning the alarm was given in our part of the county and a group of men on horsesback organized and departed for the scene of action. My father joined them, taking his Civil war musket along for argument. To the young folks, it was the thrill of their lives, as they contemplated all the

dire things that were sure to happen. Needless to add, the safe was returned to its proper place forthwith, and without argument. I doubt that there is anyone still living who had part in that transaction.

Blessed is that man who remembers with pride his childhood days in a pioneer home. My mother's resourcefulness in caring for a large family with our limited facilities, can only be explained at the "Pearly Gates." That two-room house without plaster or wallpaper, needed no open windows for ventilation. The attic was reached by a removable ladder, and two or three children always slept there. Later a lean-to was added and became kitchen, dining room and bedroom. There was a complete absence of other facilities. The only well of water was operated by a wooden pump. In winter all sorts of schemes were adopted to prevent it from freezing. When in spite of all we could do it froze, a kettle of hot water was the only recourse. When the pump "ran down," it had to be "primed." Occasionally the well went dry, necessitating the hauling of water from the spring about a mile distant. Some task in freezing weather!

The smokehouse played an important part in farm life. Butchering day did not require a presidential proclamation to make it effective. Nine hungry kids made that superfluous. No boy can forget such a day on a homestead. Hams, bacon, sausages, headcheese—enough to last a year for the family and hired help. Although my mother never took a course in household economics, she matriculated in, and graduated from the "Hard School of Experience." With washing, ironing, baking and mending days, each taking their regular toll of time, she had little opportunity for bridge clubs and teas.

BOYHOOD MEMORIES DISTURBED

On a recent visit to the old Iowa homestead, I must confess I was somewhat disappointed. The hills which to my boyhood eyes—and legs—were so large, steep and

important, seem to me now, after my many years' residence near the western mountains, to have dwindled down to less than a fair-sized molehill. Distances have melted away until that 160 acres of ground looked like not much more than a garden patch. The Big Rock ford where we went swimming "A-la-nude" in the summertime is now, and no doubt always has been, too small for a frog pond. Our big red barn with its tremendous hay-mow now appeared not much larger than a Ford garage. Even the cow I saw on the place looked like a yearling, in comparison with "Old Whitey," the bossy I used to wake up at four o'clock in the morning and invite to a "four-in-hand" milking contest just between us two.

I wonder what has happened to so reduce and cut down our boyhood pictures of pioneer objects?

Yes, I might have been wiser had I stayed away from the old homestead and thus allowed those pictures, so definitely fixed in my childish mind, to sleep on, undisturbed, in the "mirror of the soul." Who knows?

In my humble opinion the Iowa pioneers were exceptionally practical people. Nothing was ever so bad, but it might have been worse. Nothing seemed to them to be entirely destroyed. There was always a way to salvage and make the best use of what was left. A lesser spirit of optimism in the souls of the pioneers would have meant utter defeat and the rewriting of American history.

I do not advocate that the pages of history be turned back a hundred years in order that the youth of today might come under influences similar to those encountered by the pioneers. Those days are gone forever. There are "frontiers" today, however, just as real and just as exacting as those of a hundred years ago. We are now confronted with great social, economic, spiritual and political frontiers, the proper solution of which in the days to come will tax to the uttermost the resources of men

and women in every walk of life. The courage with which these obstacles are met, and the devotion to duty displayed in their solution should, and no doubt will, climax all previous records toward the building of a "Greater America" and greater civilization.

SPOKE FOUR DAYS LATE

"It might be urged that these people (west of the Mississippi) do now possess all the advantages which a territorial government can give by their connection with Wisconsin; and to those [not] acquainted with the country and the facts, this would be conclusive. But when we cast our eye over the vast extent of the country embraced within these territorial limits, and when we know the fact, as every man in the territory does know it, that the local interests and feelings in the two sections which are separated by the Mississippi are so totally dissimilar that they can never harmonise; and when we reflect that within a very short period Wisconsin will be admitted into the Union as a state, thus producing a necessary separation, it appears to me that no really good and just reason can be urged against the separation now. Knowing as I do, the sentiments of the people on both sides of the Mississippi to harmonise, at least in this one point, I beg leave to state that fact."—"BADGER," in the *Iowa News* (Dubuque), June 16, 1836.

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