

IOWA EAST AND WEST

By D. C. MOTT

The singular connection of Iowa with the East and the West in the development of the entire country, is illustrated in the annals of nearly every county in Iowa. The most notable instance is the well known aggregation of individuals the late George G. Wright characterized as the "Keosauqua Group of Famous Men." This title some years later was, by the present Curator of the Historical Department of Iowa, elaborated to "The Van Buren County Group of Famous Men" and illustrated through portraiture on the walls of the oldest of court rooms in the state—at Keosauqua.

Rivalry of state with state, and, in early days, settlement with settlement, often produced the inventories and appraisements of community advantages. In later years the catalogues of these claims formed the basis for much patriotic enthusiasm. A most interesting instance of this character came recently to our attention on the part of the city of Muscatine. So full is it of information usually overlooked and so well is it told by Hon. George M. Titus, of Muscatine, that we here set it out as one of the precious items of Iowa patriotic literature.

In the year 1912 Mrs. Titus and I visited Europe. We went in a party conducted by a tourist company. The parties were always limited to fifteen. When we assembled on the steamer it developed that six of the party were from Philadelphia; two from Camden, New Jersey; two from New Haven; four from Evansville, Indiana; one from Toledo, and Mrs. Titus and myself. It became necessary to make frequent explanations as to where Muscatine was located and what our principal industries were, and for the first time in my life I felt somewhat the embarrassment of residing in an ordinarily sized city. The embarrassment, however, wore away as we became better acquainted. One evening some one mentioned "Pigs is Pigs," and inquired if I had read it. I replied, "Oh, yes, that was written by Ellis Parker Butler, who was born and raised in Muscatine." On another occasion comment was made about the wonderful success of William Zeigler with Royal Baking Powder, which gave me an oppor-

tunity to say that the formula for the Royal Baking Powder was made by a steamboat cook at Muscatine, and that William Zeigler started his career as a drug clerk in our city. When we reached Amsterdam my wife and I excused ourselves from the party to make a call upon the United States consul at Amsterdam, who was Mr. Frank W. Mahin, a former resident of Muscatine, and we, of course, explained the reason for our call. As we passed through France on the train we observed a large sign out in a field, inscribed, "H. J. Heinz, 57 varieties." One of the gentlemen in the party called attention to this sign and remarked what a wonderfully large institution the Heinz company was and commented on its world-wide advertising. Here was another chance for me and I said, "That is a large institution, and the largest branch of that company, outside of Pittsburgh, is located at Muscatine," and they all expressed considerable amazement.

After arriving at Paris our names were published as an American tourist party, in the Paris edition of the *New York Herald*, and our names attracted the attention of a former friend of ours, who was then occupying a beautiful estate on the banks of the Seine, which she inherited from her mother, and we were invited to spend the week-end with her. That being impossible, we secured an auto which we had used in sight-seeing, and drove to this beautiful estate. The next day, as we were going to the Louvre our conductor said, "Mr. Titus, the driver told me that you and Mrs. Titus called at a very swell place yesterday afternoon." "Yes," I answered, "that is owned by a lady friend of ours who formerly resided at Muscatine." When we were in front of the Louvre the conductor said, "We are now approaching the statue of LaFayette, built with funds furnished by the school children of the United States, and designed by the celebrated sculptor, George Grey Barnard." I asked if he was in the city. He said he didn't think he was. I said, "I would be pleased to meet him; he formerly lived in Muscatine, his father being the pastor of the Presbyterian church of which I was a member." One of our party turned to his wife with the remark, "Wife, just as soon as we return to the States I think we should go and see that Muscatine. It must be a 'helva town.'" From that time on there wasn't any doubt in the minds of the party about the importance of the city of our home.

I told this story at a banquet given here recently for quite a number of strangers, and one of them who responded on that occasion, told a story of Mark Twain, and incidentally added, "who I suppose at one time lived in Muscatine." I responded, "He certainly did. Samuel Clemens lived within two blocks of this hotel and was employed on the Muscatine Journal."

In corroboration of the statement that Mark Twain lived for a time in Muscatine we quote from the *Muscatine Journal* of April 22, 1910, and give foot note references to his works, as follows:

FAMOUS HUMORIST ONCE LIVED IN MUSCATINE

Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain), whose death last evening at his home at Redding, Connecticut, has brought sorrow to the hearts of a nation, which mourns the loss of America's greatest humorist, for a time made his home in Muscatine, residing in the little gray house just east of the approach to the high bridge.

The Clemens family came to Muscatine in the early fifties, the widowed mother and her two sons, Orion and Henry, coming first, while Samuel¹ arrived later. In September, 1853, Orion Clemens purchased an interest in the *Muscatine Journal*, then published by Jacob Mahin and John Mahin, the resulting firm being styled Mahin & Clemens. In June, 1855, the Mahins sold their interests in the paper to Charles H. Wilson, and during the regime of Clemens & Wilson, in June, 1855, the first issue of the *Daily Journal* was published. In the same year Clemens disposed of his interest in the paper to James W. Logan.

During part of his residence here Mark Twain himself was employed on the *Journal*. Residents of Muscatine who lived in the vicinity of the Clemens home recall many interesting incidents in connection with the residence of the family here. At that time there was no such thing as the high bridge and from the steps in front of the house no doubt Samuel often watched the river and communed with his thoughts.

His description of the summer sunsets of which he speaks in his book, "Life on the Mississippi," shows that he pondered on the beauty of the natural scenery in this vicinity. To the back of the house there was a little grape arbor and a latticed porch. Here his mother performed many daily tasks; she had the true southern hospitality, and one citizen who was but a child when the family moved to this city, remembers distinctly the spirit of kindness with which the mother of Mark Twain was imbued.

In speaking of Mark Twain the person referred to said: "He was rather a tall boy when he came here, and took delight in playing with the children of the neighborhood. I used to sit on his lap and he used to tell me little stories. He wore a round-about and his trousers came to about six inches above his shoe tops, and his whole attitude was anything but graceful."

¹ In "Mark Twain, a Biography," by Albert Bigelow Paine, Vol. I, p. 102, Twain's arrival at the home of his brother Orion at Muscatine is told, and that their mother was there. This was in the fall of 1854.

During the residence of the family in this city, Henry Clemens clerked in Mr. Burnett's book store. Later he worked on a steamboat on the Mississippi, where he was injured in an explosion, the effects of which injuries cost him his life. Samuel Clemens had had trouble with the pilot of the boat, "Pennsylvania," and was on board the "Lacey." When the "Lacey" reached Greenville, Mississippi, the passengers received word that the "Pennsylvania" had been blown up at Ship Island and 150 lives had been lost.

At Napoleon, Arkansas, an extra issued by a Memphis paper was obtained and among the names of the injured appeared the name of Henry Clemens. The unfortunate ones were taken by steamer to Memphis, where a public hall was converted into a hospital and where the wounded received treatment. Here Mark Twain watched by his brother's side until the latter passed away on the evening of the sixth day after the accident.

One touching thing connected with this part of the noted humorist's life was the conversation which took place between the two young brothers a few nights previous to the explosion while they were on the same boat. They were talking of disasters on the water, and were pondering over the best method of action in danger. Both agreed that whatever happened the best plan would be to stick to the boat. A few days later Henry was injured.

Years after, as Clemens was visiting the different points on the river, he noted the changes that had taken place in his former home, Hannibal, Mo., and also in Muscatine. In his book² to which reference is made above, he wrote as follows:

"I lived in Muscatine awhile, but the place now has a rather unfamiliar look; so I suppose it has clear outgrown the town which I used to know. In fact, I know it has; for I remember it as a small place—which it isn't now. But I remember it best for a lunatic who caught me out in the field one Sunday, and extracted a butcher knife from his boot and proposed to carve me with it unless I acknowledged him to be the only son of the devil. I tried to compromise on an acknowledgment that he was the only member of the family I had met. But that did not satisfy him; he wouldn't have any half measures; I must say he was the sole and only son of the devil, and he whetted his knife on his boot.

"It did not seem worth while to make trouble about a little thing like that; so I swung around to his view of the matter and saved my skin whole.

"Shortly after, he went to visit his father, and he has not turned up since. I trust he is there yet.

2 "Life on the Mississippi," pp. 426-7, Am. Pub. Co.

"And I remember Muscatine still more pleasantly from its summer sunsets. I have never seen any other on either side of the ocean that equaled them. They used the broad, smooth river as a canvass and painted on it every imaginable dream of colors, from the mottled daintiness and delicacies of the opal, all the way up, through cumulative intensities, to blinding purple and crimson conflagrations which are enchanting to the eye but sharply tried it at the same time. All the upper Mississippi has these extraordinary sunsets as a familiar spectacle. It is the true Sunset Land. I am sure no other country can show so good a right to the name. The sunrises are also said to be exceedingly fine; I do not know."

BLACK HAWK'S REMAINS

I read your statement in the *Dollar Monthly* concerning the abduction of the remains of Black Hawk after his death. I have reason to know that your statement is correct. I became acquainted with the facts at the time, and immediately informed our mayor of what I had learned. It was through his agency the remains were returned to Governor Chambers, or the governor of Iowa Territory.

Black Hawk was a very extraordinary Indian, rather under size; he was compactly built, possessing the most pleasant face and features I ever saw in an Indian. In manner grave, dignified, and polite. He looked less the savage than any Indian I have ever seen.—H. A. in *Gregg's Dollar Monthly and Old-Settlers' Memorial*, Vol. I, No. 8, p. 9, December, 1873.

KEOKUK IN THE SPRING OF 1835

At Keokuk in the spring of 1835 there was not in sight from the landing a single house or cabin, except the long row of log warehouses at the foot of the rapids. Some of the old "voyageurs," or keelboat men, most of mixed Indian and French blood, still lingered there, drank whiskey and frequently had tremendous rows. It was the hardest looking spot on the whole earth.—H. A. in *Gregg's Dollar Monthly and Old-Settlers' Memorial*, Vol. I, No. 8, p. 8, December, 1873.

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