

and all times. The Board of Commissioners, after making settlements with these officers, adjourned *sine die*, and so ended that form of county government.

On the 12th day of August, 1851, Silas Osborn took the oath of office as County Judge; Thos. Given, as County Clerk; James Pumroy, County Treasurer; D. F. Gaylord, Sheriff; Hiram Fredrick, Supervisor of Roads; A. Brown, Coroner; and Joel B. Myers, County Surveyor. And thus the new organization went quietly and peaceably into operation, with the "single exception" above noted. This was the retention by the Probate Judge of the books and papers of that office for some two weeks, refusing in that time to recognize, as his successor, the newly elected County Judge. After proper reflection, however, his opposition was withdrawn, the contest relinquished, and the books and papers passed over to Judge Osborn.

[To be continued.]

BATTLE AT ATHENS, MISSOURI.

BY REV. G. C. BEAMAN, OF CROTON, IOWA.

Athens, Missouri, and Croton, Iowa, are small towns on the Des Moines river, directly opposite to each other.

Difficulties first commenced in Missouri, between the "Secesh" and Union men, on the 5th of July, 1861. The "Secesh" rallied at Kehoka, ten miles south-east of Athens, and commenced depredations on Union families. Home Guards were formed on both sides of the line, for the protection of Union people in Iowa and Missouri. Other preparations were made especially in Missouri, back from the river, some fifteen or twenty miles, where considerable depredations had been committed by the "Secesh;" and several little fights occurred, from the 5th to the 30th of July, at Luray, Etna, Edina and Memphis, Mo., in which the Union men were always victorious.

On the 1st of August, thirty-five tons of provisions came up on the cars of the Des Moines Valley R. R., for our

army in Athens, since by this date Col. Moore had collected a regiment of four or five hundred Union men. Also, there were sent up two hundred stands of U. S. arms, and ammunition in proportion.

On the second of August, two messengers from Etna reported to Col. Moore, that four thousand "Secesh" were near Etna, on their way to attack Athens.

On the 4th of August, the Sabbath, at four o'clock, P. M., the alarm was given, that fifteen hundred or two thousand "Secesh" were actually on their way to Athens. Despatches were sent out by Col. Moore, and preparations were made to receive them.

During the night of the 4th of August, Mat. Green, the commander of the "Secesh," sent two hundred men through the brush, between Moore's pickets, on the main road back and down the river; and one hundred, in like manner, up the river, forming his right and left wings, one just below town in the cornfield, and the other above town in the bushes, near a slough. All the Union men laid on their arms during the night, expecting an attack, but did not discover the right and left wings of the enemy in the corn and bushes. As daylight dawned, and as the night pickets on the main road back were just taken in, and before the day pickets were out to the extreme lines, and while Moore's forces were preparing for breakfast, the enemy rushed in on the main road, planted their cannon on the bluff just above and back of town.

Thus, on the 5th day of August, 1861, at half past five o'clock in the morning, the enemy began the engagement, firing a cannon shot as the signal gun. In two minutes after, their right and left wings commenced firing. At the same time, the cannon (a nine-pounder on the hill, and a six-pounder on the left,) boomed through and over both Athens and Croton; and, whizzing over our heads, the balls struck on the side of the bluff, back of Croton. This produced a general panic, and set women and children, crying and half-clad, to running into the ravines and forests back of town, for safety.

As the enemy had eaten nothing since the forenoon of the 4th of August, the alluring war-cry of their commander was, "You breakfast in Athens, dine in Croton, and sup in Farmington, or in hell." His plan was to take the town of Athens, capture our forces of four hundred men with their arms; release their own prisoners, to the number of sixteen, which the Union forces had taken; and also seize the thirty-five tons of army provisions, with two hundred muskets and the ammunition in the depot at Croton, and tear up the railroad there. They intended to do this by extending their main body of twelve hundred men, with a right and left wing above and below town, so as at a concerted signal to close up, surround and take the town.

But Providence seemed to direct and favor the Union forces; for Moreland of Athens, their guide of the left wing of one hundred men, was taken prisoner by our men, and sent to the guard house, which frustrated that wing, as they were ignorant of the rough ground in that direction. The right wing of the enemy, two hundred strong, lying in the corn-field, attacked our picket guards and forty men sent from Farmington to aid us. At first our men gave way, and retreated, some of them across the Des Moines' river, badly scared, and some were wounded. This occasioned a panic. Some soldiers, citizens, women and children, with wagons, fled back into the country, spreading alarm and terror all around. Some of them did not stop till they had reached Montrose, and even Keokuk. At the same moment, a score or more of Croton Guards and a company of sixty from Keokuk, sent the night before to guard the depot, went into the sugar camp, opposite to the enemy, across the river, in the corn field, and gave them a raking cross-fire; and in half an hour the right wing of the enemy fled for dear life.

By this time, Col. Moore had got his force of four hundred men into line of battle, in front of the enemy, but at too great a distance to do execution with muskets. Yet, having learned the condition of the right and left wings of the enemy, and finding that their cannonading did no injury, all the balls

passing some four feet over the heads of our men, as the cannonading began to subside, Col. Moore marched his forces near the enemy in front, opened a brisk fire, pouring in volley after volley from United States muskets, which, in twenty-five or thirty minutes, silenced the rifles, shot guns and horse pistols of the "Secesh," having butcher knives for side arms, and they took to their heels, or "skedaddled."

From the first gun to this time, one hour and a half had elapsed—all spent in hard fighting at some of the three points of attack. Our cavalry pursued the retreating foe for six miles, and a small part of our infantry for a less distance. Their commander tried to rally his men three or four times; but, as our men came up and fired or charged, they ran; and at last they scattered like sheep.

The whole engagement with the enemy, including the pursuit of the retreating foe, occupied over two hours. As our men returned, they had the pleasure of visiting the cellars and hiding places of the "Secesh," in Athens, and of feasting on the meats, chickens, pies, and cakes which they had prepared and hidden for their friends, the rebel army.

The following losses, on both sides, were ascertained after the fight:—

UNION LOSS.—Killed, 3; badly wounded (1 mortally), 4; slightly wounded, 20. Total killed, 4; wounded, 23.

REBEL LOSS.—Killed, 43; badly wounded, 40; slightly, 20 or 30, as near as could be ascertained. The enemy reported one hundred missing, in all.

The Union men captured sixty-three horses, three or four wagon loads of provisions, some few guns, one keg of powder, and sundry small weapons. I was present, with my rifle, during the engagement, and a tree in my yard was cut off by a cannon ball. This brief history of the battle is taken mostly from my journal, kept at the time.

Croton, Iowa, Aug. 24th, 1864.

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