

HISTORY OF JOHNSON COUNTY, IOWA.

BY CAPT. F. M. IRISH, IOWA CITY.

[Continued.]

[ERRATA FOR THE ARTICLE IN JANUARY NUMBER.—On Page 26, for Samuel Sturgis, read William Sturgis; page 27, for Jos. McCallister, read James McCallister; page 30, for \$15,000, read \$75,000; page 31, for Samuel McCrary, read Samuel H. McCrary; and for Mr. Fence, read Rev. Mr. Ferree.]

Before taking leave of the first settlers of our county, I will attempt a brief description of them as a class, although many of the readers of the ANNALS are as familiar with the subject as the writer; but the time is fast approaching when this class of men will be spoken of as something of the past, and they will become as completely extinct as are now the keel-boat-men of the Mississippi and other western rivers. The pioneer settlers of a new country may be compared to the vanguard of an army, the majority of them being young men without families, who have left the parental roof in the older settlements, and set out in search of a home upon the frontier, there to commence the great battle of life. The representative of this class is not encumbered with extra baggage, often performing the journey on foot, provided with a gun and ammunition, an axe and an auger, he penetrates into a region recently abandoned by the savage, and selecting a location where wood and water are convenient, he erects his cabin, and from the nearest trading post or town he procures his furniture, consisting of a water bucket, two or three tin cups, as many plates, knives and forks, a cast-iron bake oven, with cover, a coffee pot and frying pan. His provisions consist of as much corn meal as he can pack at one time, together with a side or shoulder of bacon. With this load upon his back he frequently travels thirty or forty miles before reaching his cabin.

He is now ready to commence the staking-off of his claim and preparing for improvements; and notwithstanding the great labor required to procure his little store of provisions, he shares it most freely with any one who may come to him destitute. There is a custom universally observed among them, namely, when leaving the cabin in the morning, they

leave provisions cooked for the benefit of the way-farer who may call during the day. The writer of this article has often realized the benefit and convenience of this custom. After traveling fifteen or twenty miles on foot, it was with pleasure I came in sight of a bachelor's cabin. My guide, who was acquainted in this region, said, "Now we will have something to eat." On entering, we found the owner absent; but my guide, examining the bake oven, found that it contained a fine "pone" well baked and yet warm. He then went to the cupboard, which had once done service as a dry goods box, finding there coffee. Putting that to boil, he cut and fried some bacon. We sat down and ate a hearty meal with as good an appetite as is enjoyed by any epicurean visitor of Delmonico's. Then, by the use of a piece of chalk, we left our names accompanied with our thanks, upon the door, and went our way. This was a universal custom among the pioneers, who were proverbial for their hospitality.

When any considerable number had settled in one vicinity, the first act towards the organization of civilized society was to form a "claim association" for mutual protection in the possession of their new homes. They drew up a constitution and by-laws, elected a president, secretary and treasurer, and kept a proper record in which each member's name was entered, and the number of his claim recorded, in the possession of which the association were bound to protect him until he had an opportunity of purchasing at the government sales. There has been much said in certain quarters against these claim associations; but it is evident this was the only means by which the pioneer could secure his home and receive any compensation for the many hardships he had endured; and as an evidence of the justice of the custom, Congress has from time to time passed pre-emption laws, and more recently the "Homestead law," all of which are virtually legalizing the principle upon which the "claim associations" were founded, and serve to protect the early settler against the rapacity of the speculator and the more wealthy emigrant, who are sure to follow when the way has been opened and improvements commenced.

The pioneers of our county are fast passing away. Those that are left often look back with pleasure upon the happy days of the early settlements when our real wants were few and simple, and our pleasures and enjoyments had not the drawbacks of older communities, when there were no doctors, and very little sickness, no lawyers, and disputes and quarrels very rare, those that did occur being justly settled by arbitration, without cost.

In the autumn of 1839, the location of the seat of government at Iowa City, attracted many travelers from the east and north to this point, and there being no roads, strangers found it difficult to keep the course they wished. In crossing our large prairies, they often became lost and wandered far out of their way. This was especially the case in travelling from Iowa City to Dubuque. To remedy this, the citizens employed Lyman Dillon, Esq., to plow a furrow between the two points, in as direct a line as practicable. Mr. D. started from Iowa City with his large breaking plow, drawn by five yoke of oxen, accompanied by his driver. He had also with him a two-horse wagon containing cooking utensils and provisions for the trip. Through the day they would plow, and at night turn the oxen upon the prairie to feed, sleeping in the covered wagon. In this way they continued until Dubuque was reached, a distance from the starting point of 100 miles. This is believed to be the longest furrow on record, and served as a guide to travelers, and a well beaten road was soon made along side of Dillon's furrow.

During the autumn of 1839, his excellency, Robert Lucas, Governor of the territory, visited Iowa City, accompanied by two of his daughters, and Gen. Fletcher of Muscatine, who acted as their guide. The whole party were on horseback, this being the most comfortable mode of traveling at the time, the roads being very rough. The Governor and his party met with a most cordial reception from our small community, his party being quartered in the most commodious cabin in the city, and the only one boasting of an attic for a lodging room. This apartment was not reached by a spacious

stair-way, but by a ladder made in the most primitive style, by which a person ascended through a very narrow aperture in the upper floor. Here the Governor and his party were very comfortably lodged. During this visit the Governor purchased a claim near the city, and had the same recorded, becoming a member of the association. A few years later he built a comfortable residence upon this property, removed his family here, where he resided until the close of his life.

Gov. Lucas was most emphatically a man of the people. He belonged to that noble band of statesmen and patriots, who, during the first half of the present century, contributed so much by their labors in placing the United States in the most elevated position in the scale of nations. He was truly a western man, and took the greatest interest in her advancement. He was a firm friend to the system of common schools, holding it to be the duty of all parents to give their children a substantial English education, and that the State governments should enable them to do so. I have often heard him say, every boy at the proper age should be taught the art of swimming, taking care of a horse, and acquire the faculty of riding well; that he should learn the use of a rifle, and practice with it sufficiently to become a fair marksman. The thousands travelling over our western plains and mountain slopes will realize the correctness of Gov. L.'s theories.

In August, 1839, the second election was held at Napoleon for the choice of county officers, at which time the following named gentlemen were elected: Abner Woolcot, Nathaniel Fellows, Philip Clarke, County Commissioners; Cyrus Sanders, County Surveyor; A. D. Stephen, Justice of the Peace. This brings us to the close of the year 1839.

On the first of January, 1840, about twenty families were living in Iowa City, who had prepared as best they could, to spend their first winter in their new home, and though no one suffered for the absolute necessaries of life, yet all were compelled to live very plainly and to observe the strictest economy. No flouring mills were nearer than the Mississippi, and most of our flour and meal was brought from Warren county,

Illinois, a distance of seventy miles. The few settlers of 1837-38, had raised good crops of corn, and had there been mills to grind it, we should have done very well. As it was, hulled corn or lye hominy was a common article of food. Two gentlemen of my acquaintance learned that Mr. Charles Jones, residing three miles east of the city, had a very large coffee mill in which corn could be ground. They concluded it would be a fine speculation to go out there and grind their own meal. They shelled a bushel of corn, took it upon a hand sled, and early in the morning started for Mr. Jones'. As there was no beaten track, they found the traveling rather heavy; but, upon reaching the mill, they found the grinding more laborious than the traveling; but, working faithfully until late in the afternoon, they succeeded in converting a half bushel of the corn into very coarse meal, and giving the remaining half bushel to Mrs. Jones as a compensation for the trouble they had given her, they returned home very tired and hungry, being completely disgusted with the milling business. It was most fortunate for this new settlement that the winter proved a mild one, and if the houses were not perfectly air-tight, an abundance of fire wood was within a short distance, and cost nothing but the cutting, so that, considering all things, the winter was passed very comfortably.

Our mail facilities were not favorable to very rapid communication with the outside world, there being no mail route yet established to this place. Our letters and papers were brought from Muscatine by any of our citizens having business there, and the writer of this has often brought out the Iowa City mail in the crown of his hat, and when that receptacle was not large enough to contain the mail, it was securely tied in a pocket handkerchief.

The first Territorial Legislature of Iowa was convened at Burlington, Nov. 12th, 1838. Adjourned January 25th, 1839. The district, comprising Cedar, Johnson, Jones, and Linn counties, was represented by Charles Whittelsey, Esq., in the Council, and by Robert G. Roberts, Esq., of Cedar, in the House. The second session of the legislature convened at

Burlington, Nov. 4th, 1839, adjourned Jan. 17th, 1840. In this body, the district composed of Cedar, Jones, Linn and Johnson counties was represented by Charles Whittelsey, Esq., in the Council, and the district formed by Johnson and Muscatine counties was represented by T. T. Clark and S. C. Hastings, both of Muscatine, in the House. An extra session of this assembly was also held at Burlington, July 13th, 1840.

Pursuant to an act of the Legislative Assembly, approved January 11th, 1840, Chauncey Swan, Esq., the acting commissioner for the location of the seat of government, during this session of the legislature and in connection with that body, entered into a contract with the firm of Rague & Co. for the erection of the capitol at Iowa City. The above named company was the same that had built the capitol of Illinois at Springfield. These gentlemen came on in April, 1840, with a large gang of hands and commenced clearing the ground, and digging out for the foundation of the capitol. This work, together with the tide of emigration that now began to flow in, gave to our embryo city a lively and business-like appearance. Every variety of mechanical labor was now in good demand; a large number of buildings were in process of erection, displaying every variety of architecture, from the most rudely constructed log cabin to the well finished two-story frame house. The difficulty in procuring lumber was most severely felt. Mr. Henry Felkner had erected a saw mill (the first in the county,) upon Rapid Creek, near where the Dubuque road now crosses that stream; but this mill could supply but a small portion of the demand for lumber, and many of the first houses built in the city were sided up with clapboards split from trunks of large white or burr oak trees. These boards were from four to six feet in length, and from six to eight inches in width, and split as thin as the timber would admit of. They were then smoothed upon one side with a drawing knife, shaved down to nearly an equal thickness, and after this preparation, they constituted a weather boarding, answering a very good purpose, and in many instances lasting for twenty years. At this time the

hardy lumberman had not found his way to the immense pine forests of the north, and their deep and quiet shades had not been disturbed by the ringing blows of his axe. The most of our pine lumber at this time was brought down the Ohio river, and up the Mississippi to Muscatine. The contrast between then and the present period is very great, as now the immense rafts of pine timber and sawed lumber annually floating down the Mississippi can be more conveniently estimated by the acre than by any other method.

Our citizens were at this time supplied with a very important article of building material. For this they were indebted to Mr. Sylvanus Johnson. This gentleman having purchased one of the southern tiers of out lots, opened a brick yard upon it, and on the 15th of April, 1840, Mr. J., with his own hands moulded the first bricks ever made in Iowa City or Johnson county. Mr. J. continued to carry on the brick making business, and supplied our citizens with a most excellent article of this important material in building. It was from his kiln that Mr. Bostwick procured the brick for the erection of the first building of that material erected in Iowa City. This building was spoken of in the previous number. Mr. George T. Andrews was the mason who built the above mentioned house, and who afterwards erected many brick buildings here, more spacious than this one, and whose substantial walls will long remain as monuments of his mechanical skill, and as mementoes of that good and kind hearted man.

About this time certain events transpired that caused considerable excitement and general gratification among the people,—the appointment of Samuel H. McCrory as postmaster, and the establishment of a mail route from Muscatine to Iowa City, the mail to be carried weekly. Mr. Edward Foster and his son Charles, who had opened a stock of goods the past season at Napoleon, now rented a rough log building fronting on Capitol street, upon the first block north of Capitol, now University square, and moved their goods hither. In this building Mr. McCrory established the post office; and

the arrival of a hack containing the mail, and loaded with passengers, created a greater interest and was hailed with more general satisfaction than is evinced on the arrival of our express mail train of to-day. Johnson county was now in communication with the whole world "and the rest of mankind," and the gratification manifested on that occasion was akin to that shown by the people of the two continents on the successful completion of the Atlantic telegraph cable.

The different bands or communities of Fox Indians who had resided in villages upon the banks of the Iowa river, south of Iowa City, now removed north some sixteen miles, and there united in building a town upon the east bank of the river, in what is now Monroe township, in this county. In 1839 the General Government employed men and sent them some twenty miles west of this point, into the Indian territory. There they selected and broke up a section of prairie land—six hundred and forty acres—and fenced it with a good substantial rail fence, secured by stakes and riders. To this place Powesheik and his whole band were removed. But the land so nicely prepared by the government did not seem to meet their ideas of agriculture, and they realized but little benefit from it. They permitted portions of the fence to be burnt down, and their crops to be destroyed, and in consequence of this neglect they frequently suffered for lack of food during the winter months. It was but a few years from this time that the government obtained the title to all the lands as far west as the Missouri river by purchase from the Indians, and they were removed into what is now Nebraska, where a small remnant yet remains. The Sacs and Foxes were two powerful bands or tribes of Canadian Indians, who early in the present century united their forces and commenced making incursions south and westwardly into the territory of the United States. They were powerful and warlike, and much dreaded by their red and white neighbors. They say that when they left Canada they could bring four thousand warriors into the field. They moved on westward as necessity or inclination led them, always retaining their

attachment to the British government, returning and taking an active part against the United States in the war of 1812-14, and always evincing a bitter hostility to the white settlements on our western frontier. They at length reached the eastern bank of the Mississippi, and established themselves at Rock Island and at other points along Rock river. At this time the Iowas, a rather mild and peaceful tribe, occupied this portion of the country, and from them our State takes its name. The Sacs and Foxes soon subdued the Iowas, they not being numerous, and those that were not slain became incorporated with their conquerors. In 1828, the outrages committed upon our frontier settlements by these savages compelled the government to take up arms against them. Hostilities thus commenced continued with little intermission until 1832, at which time a small force of United States troops, together with a number of companies of Illinois and Indiana volunteers met the entire force of the hostile Indians, under the command of their celebrated war chief, Blackhawk, and after a severe battle, the savages were defeated and their chief taken prisoner. This engagement is known as the battle of "Bad Axe," having been fought near a stream of that name, in the north-west part of Wisconsin. The Indians now buried the hatchet, and retired to the west side of the Mississippi, this being their last hostile movement. Blackhawk was divested of all power in his nation, and Keokuk, a brave of the tribe, was installed as head chief by order of our government authorities. This caused great dissatisfaction among many of the bands. Black Hawk did not long survive his defeat and degradation. After his death, his friends became reconciled to the rule of Keokuk, and he remained the principal chief of the Sacs and Foxes until his death. The elder members of these tribes always declared themselves to be English, and not subjects of the United States government, and up to the time of the battle of "Bad Axe," they drew their annuities, consisting of blankets, muskets and ammunition, from the British government; and whenever these old savages became excited with whiskey, they would boast of how many

scalps they had taken with their own hands from the defenceless inhabitants of our frontier settlements.

The above is a brief history of what was once a powerful body of red men, and I think furnishes abundant proof that they are a doomed race, and that the march of civilization is as surely destructive to them as to the buffalo or other wild game upon which the Indian relies for subsistence. As to the noble traits in the Indian character, of which we read in romance and poetry, upon close investigation, if found at all, they will be discovered to constitute the exception and not the rule, and the few redeeming traits in their composition will be found buried beneath an overwhelming mass of cruelty and revengefulness. Our citizens were heartily rejoiced when they were removed from our midst, beyond the borders of our territory.

Up to the month of June of this year (1840), the foundation of the capitol had been carried as high as the top of the basement windows, ready to receive the water table. Here the contractors, Skean & McDonald, of the firm of Rague & Co., abandoned their contract on account of the bad quality of the stone furnished by the commissioner. The work, however, was carried on by the acting commissioner, Mr. C. Swan; but the difficulty in regard to the building material not having been obviated, it progressed but slowly. Early in the summer a quarry had been found in Cedar county, distant some twenty miles, which, being a hard sandstone, was pronounced suitable for a water table, and during the summer the rock for the sills of the east and west entrances, and for the water table, was transported over the prairies crossing Cedar river at Esq. Sutliff's ferry, the wagons being drawn by from four to six yoke of oxen. The teamsters engaged in this work long remembered the hospitality with which they were received by Mr. Sutliff and his family; and to his excellent lady were they especially indebted for many a bountiful and well prepared meal, after the fatigues of the day; these and the dessert of most glorious watermelons usually following, have often been participated in by the writer of these pages.

The first settlements, and by whom made, in Johnson county, were at different points, as follows: In Fremont and Pleasant Valley townships, William Kelso, Mr. Sweet, Robert, Samuel and Joseph Walker; in Scott township, John Parrott, Mr. Teneick, Charles Jones, John Mathews, Isaac Bowen, Dr. Jesse Bowen, and Green Hill; in Graham township, Nathaniel and E. K. Morse, and James Nolan; in Cedar township, James Buchanan, Allen Sutliff, and James Cavanagh; in Big Grove township, Mr. Pratt, Mrs. Lyon, Warren Stiles, Warner Spurrier, and Mr. Lingle; in Monroe township, Major McCallister and Billy Dupont; in Penn township, Martin Harless, George Wein, Evan Dollarhide, John Azlein and David Crozier; in Clear Creek township, Nathaniel Fellows, John Hawkins, Bryant and Isaac Dennis, James and Richard Douglas; in Union and Washington townships, James Seahorn, Allison Davis, the elder Mr. Fry with his family of sons, giving to this locality the name of the Fry settlement; William Ford and Smiley H. Bonham; in Liberty township, Pleasant Harris, Jacob, Henry, and John Earhart, Jacob and Joel Overholtzer, Jonas and Carr Hartmann. The wide spaces between the above named settlements were now being rapidly filled up by the daily arrival of emigrants, and at the close of the year 1840, the inhabitants of Johnson county numbered 1,504. At the annual election, held on the first Monday of August of this year, Henry Felkner was elected a representative to the territorial legislature; and this was the first time that Johnson county was represented in that body by one of her own citizens. I have now before me the first volume of the "Iowa Standard." The second number was issued at Bloomington, Muscatine county, Friday, October 30th, 1840, and purports to be published simultaneously at Bloomington and Iowa City, for the sum of \$2,50 per annum. Published by Wm. Crum and W. D. Bailey. The office of this paper was subsequently removed to Iowa City, at which time I shall have occasion to refer to it again.

On the 2nd of November, 1840, the third legislative assembly of Iowa convened at Burlington. This body passed a

great number of important bills, and among them acts for the incorporation of Iowa City, and granting a charter to Walter Terrell for the erection of a dam across the Iowa river, above the city. The board of commissioners for Johnson county, having made an arrangement with A. D. Stephen, Esq., who held the claim and resided upon the north-west quarter of section 15, immediately south of and adjoining the city, and having purchased the same of Mr. S., pre-empted and located the county seat upon it. This quarter was afterwards incorporated with the city.

The first of January, 1841, found the county with a population greatly increased during the past year, and all being much better prepared for the winter than they were one year before. Most of the farmers having raised fine crops, provisions were plenty, thus obviating the necessity of going abroad for them. The want of mills to grind the grain raised the previous summer was the greatest difficulty our citizens now labored under. Since the departure of the Indians, the wild game was becoming very plenty, and those of our citizens understanding the use of the rifle could supply themselves and neighbors with a fine haunch of venison at any time they wished; and it was not an unusual thing to see the deer coming up from the south part of the county, and passing over College Hill, and down near where Dr. Bowen's residence now stands, crossing Ralston and travelling leisurely over Rose Hill, taking their course towards Rapid Creek and Big Grove. This was a favorite runway for them, and upon it the flight of many a noble buck has been suddenly stopped by the unerring ball from the rifle in the hands of our old fellow-citizens, Mr. E. Duel and Dr. S. M. Ballard. The prairie fowl were also abundant, and could be obtained with but very little trouble.

During the spring of this year the work on the capitol progressed but slowly owing to the continuation of the difficulty respecting the building material. On the 20th of June, 1841, the steamboat Ripple arrived at Iowa City, being the first boat that had waked the echoes of the Iowa's wooded banks

with the shrill steam whistle. This event was hailed with delight by all the citizens, the captain and crew of the boat receiving a hearty welcome. The proceedings on this occasion we copy from the "Standard" of June 24th:—

"According to previous notice, a meeting of the citizens was held at the City Hotel, and was organized, C. Swan being called to the chair and J. Bowen appointed Secretary. The following resolutions were adopted:

"*Resolved*, That a committee of six persons be appointed by the chair, consisting of Jesse Williams, Jesse Bowen, Silas Foster, Cyrus Sanders, John Powell and Horace Smith to invite the captain and passengers of the steamboat Ripple to partake of a public dinner, to be given by the citizens of Iowa City.

"*Resolved*, That a committee of three persons be appointed by the chair to make arrangements with some of the innkeepers of Iowa City to provide a dinner. Whereupon Walter Butler, H. G. Jones and Horace Smith were appointed as such committee.

"*Resolved*, That a suitable person be selected to accompany the steamboat Ripple down the Iowa river, so far as may be necessary, to ascertain the principal obstructions, and the best mode and the probable expense of removing said obstructions. On motion of Jesse Williams, Capt. F. M. Irish was appointed that person, unanimously.

"*Resolved*, That Major J. B. Newhall be requested to circulate a subscription in the city of Burlington and the intermediate ports to assist in defraying the expenses necessary in removing the obstructions that now exist to navigation of the Iowa River."

Captain Jones having accepted the invitation to partake of a public dinner, the company, consisting of about seventy-five gentlemen, met at the National hotel, on June 21st, at two o'clock, and partook of an excellent dinner prepared by Jonathan Lawrence, Esq. After the cloth was removed, spirited remarks were made by Major Newhall and Capt. Jones. The latter said:—

“Gentlemen: I am neither an orator nor the son of an orator, but merely a son of Neptune, a son of the five oceans. From such a one you will not expect a fluent speech; but lest you be disappointed, permit me, however, to make one or two plain and unvarnished remarks on the present occasion. Exploring has been my study and delight from a boy. To accomplish this object I have sacrificed the comforts of the social hearth. To this end I have endured the rage of the five elements. I have endured the smiles and frowns of heathen monarchs. I have grappled with the lion and tiger. I have contended with the cannibal’s war-club and tomahawk when my comrades were cut down by my side. I have also been an almost only survivor in shipwrecks. But, gentlemen, I have the gratification to say that the reverse has been my fortune in exploring the Iowa river. Providence smiled on the enterprise; instead of the red man’s war club, I have been saluted by the hunter’s rifle echoing from bluff to glen; instead of the roaring lion, the loud hurrahs of my well wishers welcomed me up your river. Encouraged by the generous and *spirited* feelings of my passengers and officers, with confidence in the suitability of my boat, I have surmounted every obstacle, and have come here to prove beyond contradiction that the Iowa river is navigable. It is true, gentlemen, that I have been somewhat presumptuous in thus risking my all to the accomplishing of this object without a guarantee that I could clear my expenses, or that I should be able to return with my boat out of your river. But, gentlemen, I am here, and congratulate you on this occasion in this little queen of Iowa, hoping that the rising generation who so beckoned me up your river, may enjoy the benefits of the enterprise, and make it a bright page in the *annals* of the history of Iowa City. And now, gentlemen, your river is navigable, the boat is ready, your obedient servant is at your service whenever the public spirit and generous enthusiasm of your growing city is ready. Permit me to acknowledge the honor you have done me, and with gratitude believe me to be ever your obedient servant.”

The foregoing speech shows that the adventures of Capt. Jones completely overshadow the hair breadth escapes of Gordon Cummings and Gerard, the celebrated African hunters and lion slayers; but as he was a member of the community of Mormons or Latter Day Saints, this may account for his facility in drawing the long bow. He was a native of England, and at this time resided at Nauvoo, but on the removal of the Mormons to Salt Lake City, he removed thither, where he died a few years since.

The following are some of the toasts given on the occasion of the dinner: By Jesse Williams—"Iowa, bounded on the east by the Father of Waters, and interspersed by interior natural channels of navigation, her future prospects are unsurpassed by any portion of the great West." By Cyrus Sanders—"Johnson County, her prospects of future prosperity, as unfolded by the event we celebrate, are unsurpassed by any of her sisters in our lovely territory." By James F. Hanby—"May the steamboat Ripple be successful in obtaining a sufficient quantity of freight and passengers to justify her in paying us a visit on the fourth of July next." By Wesley Jones—"Capt. Jones of the Ripple, may his success be properly appreciated by the citizens of Iowa." By Jas. W. Nealy—"May the steamboat Ripple return in safety to this city, prepared to carry freight and passengers to the very borders of the ground now inhabited by the Indians."

On the 22d of June our citizens were gratified by a visit from his excellency, John Chambers, Governor of the Territory. He took rooms at the National, where he was waited upon by a large number of our citizens, on which occasion Dr. Jesse Bowen welcomed his Excellency in a neat and eloquent speech. The governor in reply expressed great satisfaction in witnessing the prosperity of our city and county. A committee of our citizens was appointed, consisting of the following named gentlemen: P. H. Patterson, W. B. Snyder, H. G. Jones, J. F. Hanby, and Geo. T. Andrews, to wait upon his excellency and tender him the following invitation:

“IOWA CITY, June 22d, 1841.

“GOVERNOR CHAMBERS.—Sir: On behalf of our fellow-citizens we have been selected to tender to you a public dinner at such time as may suit your convenience. Permit us therefore to tender to you in their behalf a public dinner, and to assure you that your acceptance will be gratifying to our fellow citizens, and to none more than your humble servants,
P. H. Patterson, W. B. Snyder,
H. C. Jones, J. F. Hanby,
Geo. T. Andrews.

To this the Governor replied:

“IOWA CITY, June 22d, 1841.

“GENTLEMEN: I have received your letter of this date, tendering me on behalf of the citizens of this city, a public dinner at such time as might suit my convenience; and I beg you to be assured that under other circumstances than those which exist at this moment, it would give me great pleasure to participate in the hospitalities of my fellow-citizens of this city; but the recent death of the late President, and the relation in which I stand to him, render it incompatible with my feelings at this time to engage in scenes of festivity; my public duties, too, require my attention and would forbid me at this time to accept the mark of kindness and respect which you have tendered me on behalf of your fellow-citizens.

“I am, gentlemen, your obed't serv't,

“JOHN CHAMBERS.”

Governor Chambers was a man past the middle age of life, plain in his exterior, and wholly free from any affectation. A native of Kentucky, he possessed the fervid, ardent passions peculiar to natives of that State, which was made manifest in his strong political bias, notwithstanding which, he was a man of sterling integrity, and his straightforwardness made him a favorite among the honest, outspoken backwoodsmen.

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