

Iowa People and Events . . .

River Boats of Early Iowa

In the month of June, 1901, W. H. Lehman, Des Moines musician and piano dealer, displayed in his store windows his extensive photograph collection of steamboats making early trips on the Des Moines and Mississippi rivers. The one which attracted the most attention was the Alice, upon which Mr. Lehman and family came to Des Moines in 1857. The boat was originally a Mississippi river craft, but most of the last years of her life were spent on the Des Moines. She brought to this city many of its oldest residents, a number of whom became more or less famous. Among those who first stepped into what was then Fort Des Moines from the gang plank of the Alice were John A. Kasson, Simon Casady and D. O. Finch. The disposal or whereabouts of these pictures is not known.

Other Des Moines river boats of the early day that traversed the waters between Keokuk and Des Moines were the Agatha, bringing governmental supplies and soldiers from Fort Sanford to Fort Des Moines, in May, 1843, the Ione, Caleb Cape, Kentucky, J. B. Gordon, Globe, Colonel Morgan, Luella, Des Moines Belle, built in Des Moines in 1858, the Skipper, Des Moines Valley, Jenny Lind, Badger State, Time and Tide, Clara Hine, Add Hine, Flora Temple, Nevada, S. B. Science, Alex Rodgers, Light, Maid of Iowa, Revenue Cutter, G. H. Wilson, up as far as Croton, N. L. Milburn built at Iowa-ville, New Georgetown, Jennie Deans which went up as far as Croton, and Des Moines City.

Another interesting picture in the collection, was that of the Grand Republic, the gambling palace which cost over \$500,000. It is said to have been the grandest river boat ever built. It was erected by a ring of gamblers and within a year of her launching was burned to the water's edge by another ring of gamblers. She

was built at Pittsburgh in 1876 and was burned at St. Louis September 17, 1877.

Mr. Lehman also had pictures of the Robert E. Lee and the Natchez, the boats which participated in the famous race between New Orleans and St. Louis in 1876. Both boats were about 300 feet long with 45 foot beams. The Robert E. Lee won the race. Her time for the 1,300 miles was 3 days, 18 hours, 36 minutes and 37 seconds. From the start she led the Natchez, whose time was 3 days, 21 hours and 58 minutes.

The steamer Clara Hine, Captain H. M. Patten, which was built at Brownsville, Pennsylvania, and landed at Keokuk on July 4, 1856, was built for towing purposes, to tow barges and lighters over the Des Moines rapids, but in the spring of 1857, after making a trip up the Iowa river as far as Wapello, bringing out of the river with the barge in tow, a large consignment of bulk pork and tierce lard, which was shipped at Keokuk on St. Louis packets, her owner, Captain Add Hine, entered the boat in the Des Moines river trade, becoming popular from the start. The Clara Hine made more clear money, so it was claimed, than any boat that had previously been in the trade. She earned enough money the first season for the owner, Captain Hine, to go to Cincinnati, Ohio, and build the Des Moines City and bring the boat to Keokuk in the spring of 1858, when it entered the Des Moines river trade with Captain Robert Farris as master and part owner.

Unique Legislative Records

Recent issues of the ANNALS carried recitals of two very unusual and unique Iowa legislative records. One was of George Andrew Gordon, formerly a member of the Iowa house of representatives, who reached four years past his centennial year and died at 104 in Eureka, Kansas in 1925. Word of this remarkable life of a man who voted at every presidential election in the United States save that of George Washington, was re-

ceived from former representative, Claus Anderson of Stanton.

The second incident of note made the subject of acclaim concerned Sen. Arch W. McFarlane, whose remarkable legislative service in the Iowa General Assembly for 42 years was celebrated April 17 last, the event coming to pass in a strange way. It seems that former Sen. Henry L. Adams, a vice president of the Pioneer Lawmakers association of Iowa, before his death had inquired of a state employee how public men were selected as subjects of honor and distinction by the placing of their oil portraits in the galleries of the Iowa State Department of History and Archives, saying that McFarlane was fully entitled to such distinction.

Long after his death the inquiry and statement of Senator Adams was repeated to a resident of Waterloo. Upon reflection and approval of such move he conferred with friends, who organized a movement having such object. A fund was provided, Mr. McFarlane advised and induced to sit for the portrait and the presentation made as a birthday recognition months later. Adams' fond desire became a reality.

Perils of Travel Anticipated

In the spring of 1788, John Bredy, as he left Pittsburgh to make the perilous trip to Post Vincennes on the Wabash, made the following will:

In the name of God, Amen, this fourteenth day of Aprile one thousand seven hundred and eighty eight I John Bredy of franklin County and State of Pennsylvania Lay man being now on my journey from the mouth of the Yough River to Post Vinston on the Wabash River and Calling to Mind the Mortality of my body & Knowing that it is appointed for All men once to Dye, I Maick this my Last Will and testament, that is to say first of all I Recommend my Soul to God who give it not doubting. That at the general Resurrection I shall receive the Saime again by the mighty power of God and as tuching my Worldly Estate where with it hath pleased God to Bless me With, I do by these presants appoint John McKee my Whole and Soal Executor and I give him all my Wourldly Estate Real and Personal to his own and to be at

his own Disposal for Ever, if I should Die or be killed by the Indians before I Come Back only he is to pay All my Just Debts given under my hand this day and year above written.

John Bredy

presant

George Armstrong

John McLaughlin

Within the year following the making of the will, it was assumed that the fears of Bredy with respect to the ending of his life were unfortunately realized, for his is the first will to be probated in Allegheny county, Pennsylvania, March 31, 1789, as shown of record. Either the peril of hostile Indians or other dangers, were encountered and death overtook the maker of the will.

The instrument appears in an article by Ella Chalfant in the spring issue, 1956, of the *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* and also in her book, "A Goodly Heritage," where it is reproduced as a frontispiece. Both in language and style of expression this account of the "earliest wills on an American frontier," presents an interesting picture of the period.

Milly Rivaled Pocahontas

The feminine loveliness and character of the Indian girl Pocahontas is known throughout all America, and the incidents of her life, in connection with the early settlement of Virginia, recited in song and story. Not so well publicized is an instance and individual that paralleled the personality of Pocohontas and her celebrated plea in saving the life of a doomed white man.

From the pages of the "History of the Indian Tribes of North America" gleaned by the *Baltimore American*, is the story of the Indian maiden, Milly, daughter of Hillis Hadjo, in a similar act of mercy and human pathos, and related as follows:

The committee on Indian Affairs, in the congressional House of Representatives, reported a bill allowing a pension for life to Milly, an Indian woman, of the

Creek tribe, daughter of the celebrated prophet and chief, Francis, who was executed by order of General Jackson, in the Seminole war of 1817-18. The subject was brought to the notice of the committee by the secretary of war, in the instance of Lieut. Col. Hitchcock, who communicated the particulars of the incident upon which the recommendation of the favor of the government was founded.

Milly, the Indian girl, at the age of sixteen, when her nation was at war with the United States, and her father was one of the most decided and indefatigable enemies of the white people, saved the life of an American citizen, who had been taken prisoner by her tribe. The captive was bound to a tree, and the savage warriors, with their rifles, were dancing around him, preparatory to putting him to death.

The young Indian girl, filled with pity for the doomed prisoner, besought her father to spare him; but the chief declined to interfere, saying that the life of the prisoner was in the hands of his captors, whose right it was to put him to death. She then turned to the warriors, and implored them to forbear their deadly purpose. But she was repulsed; and one of them, much enraged, told her that he had lost two sisters in the war, and the prisoner must die. Her intercession, however, continued. She persevered in entreaties, and used all the arts of persuasion which her woman's nature suggested; and finally succeeded in saving his life, on condition that the young white man should adopt the Indian dress, and become one of the tribe.

It appeared from the information communicated by Col. Hitchcock, that sometime after the event, the white man sought his benefactress in marriage, but she declined, and subsequently married one of her own people. Her husband later died. Her father was put to death in the war of 1817-18, and her mother and sister afterward died. She became friendless and poor, residing humbly among her people in their new coun-

try, near the mouth of Verdigris river. She had three children, a boy and two girls, all too young to provide for themselves, and consequently dependent upon their mother for support.

The congressional committee thought that the occasion presented by this case was a suitable one, not only to reward a meritorious act, but also to show the Indian tribes how mercy and humanity are appreciated by the government. The grant of a pension, with a clear exposition of the grounds for its allowance, would have a salutary influence, it was believed, upon savage customs in the future. A bill was accordingly reported favorably, to allow Milly a pension of ninety-six dollars per annum, or eight dollars per month, for life, which she afterward received.

“Take It or Leave It”

An Iowa editor opines that political conventions will need be made more entertaining or TV owners will turn their dials to better programs. After all, are those conventions held for entertainment? Here in the Hawkeye state, where no such gathering has assembled, those interested may attend those held on the state level, and perchance participate in proceedings if they are delegates representing the voters of a party in any particular area. The occasion is the gathering of those of an organization having responsibility for the transaction of its business, and not for exploitation of the workings of the organization or the barkers for business firms who force business commercials upon the ears of listeners, who view the spectacle through curiosity or seeking entertainment, then turn from it with expression of criticisms and objections. Again the question, why regard political party conventions as entertainment?

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.