

GOVERNOR LUCAS FORESAW CIVIL WAR

By JACOB E. REIZENSTEIN

Activities of Iowa's first territorial governor, His Excellency, Robert Lucas, have been recorded herein, but those mentioned, humble or lofty, were but few, compared to the many that contributed to the fame that was his. Some of the interesting facts concerning the career of Iowa's first citizen of 100 years ago are unusual, although not necessarily exclusively applicable to Mr. Lucas.

Among the men of prominence whose vision was wide and clear, the Hawkeye executive foresaw the coming of the Civil war, and his predictions that the land he loved was to be steeped in the blood of brave men, were verified. He was a devoted foe of slavery, and prophesied a decade and more before the Rebellion that it would create such a schism in the United States, between the "slave states" and the "free commonwealths," that war would follow inevitably.

Mr. Lucas departed from the scene of his earthly labors in 1853, in his seventy-second year, and eight years later his predictions "came true."

In his youthful days Governor Lucas joined the Methodist Episcopal church, and he remained a member of that institution for the remainder of his "three score and ten" years, to the end. Some of the beautiful and soulful hymns of his church (and others) that have endured throughout the century since he first occupied the gubernatorial seats in Ohio and Iowa, were his compositions.

He likewise gave utterance to his religious views and impulses in non-hymned poems.

In his young manhood Robert Lucas gave his allegiance to the Democratic party, but he placed the dictates of his conscience far above mere political obligations, or convictions. Hence, when Franklin Pierce, the democratic

candidate for the presidency, in 1852, failed to live up to the standards and ideals of Mr. Lucas (as the Iowan saw it) Mr. Lucas severed his connection with the campaign, and refused to support Mr. Pierce.

It is true that the New Hampshire candidate overwhelmingly defeated three rivals (including Daniel Webster). The great statesman, a Whig, received but 1670 votes out of more than three million. Winfield Scott, the main Whig, candidate, was only 220,896 in arrears.

When he ran for governor of Ohio the second time (in 1834, after a 2-year term) Governor Lucas beat Darius Lyman, who achieved fame (or notoriety) by running on an anti-Masonic ticket.

Governor Lucas was coincidentally in the executive chair in Ohio and Iowa, when the verbal fights over the boundaries of Ohio and Michigan; and Iowa and Missouri, respectively, were waged. They might have been bloody ones, but for his judicial poise and statesmanship. These qualities effected settlements.

Governor Lucas left his Ohio home in 1838 for Iowa, July 25, and reached Burlington, the temporary territorial capital August 13. Slowness of travel in the '30's did not explain that span wholly, as Mr. Lucas stopped off in Cincinnati to serve his former constituents, by selecting books for the territorial library of Ohio. The U. S. congress had dedicated \$5,000 to that end.—*Iowa City Press-Citizen*.

PREPARATIONS AT IOWA CITY

Walter Butler, the gentleman who is engaged in building the house for the reception of the next legislature, has it under cover and enclosed, (in which the Court is now setting) and is in a progressing state of completion. The building is large and commodious, and it will be finished long before the Legislature meets. And when they do meet, they will find Iowa City, as well as the house in which they assemble, very convenient and the hotels of the first order.—*Iowa City Standard*, Iowa City, 1841.

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