

THE VISIT OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN TO COUNCIL BLUFFS.*

In the month of August, 1859, Abraham Lincoln in company with Secretary of State Hatch of Illinois rather unexpectedly visited Council Bluffs. Mr. Lincoln had closed a campaign in Kansas on the issues involved in the coming Presidential election of 1860. Arriving at St. Joseph as he expressed it, "all fagged out," they were induced by the Captain of the boat to go up to Council Bluffs and back as his guests, to see the "up country." They accepted the generous offer and arrived at our steamboat landing early one morning and at the "Old Pacific House" about 10 o'clock A. M. It was soon noised about our city that "Old Abe Lincoln" was in town. N. S. Bates (afterwards Mayor of our city) and Mr. Pusey of the firm of Officer & Pusey, Bankers, were old neighbors of Mr. Lincoln during their residence in Springfield, Illinois. The boat had left our landing on its way to Omaha, and as our distinguished guests expected to return homeward that evening Messrs. Bates and Pusey procured an open carriage and took them sight-seeing over our bluffs. While standing at a point looking from the extreme elevation of "Fairview," at the termination of Oakland Avenue, Mr. Lincoln was shown the projected route of the U. P. Railroad west of the Missouri River, and was told that up the Platte River a distance of over four hundred miles there were but few obstructions to overcome in constructing a railroad at low grades and with few curvatures. He had all manner of questions to ask one of his guides (who had been over the proposed route) and

*One day a year or two ago, Hon. W. H. M. Pusey and the late Hon. D. C. Bloomer of Council Bluffs had a conversation concerning the visit of Abraham Lincoln to that city. A stenographer who was present took down this article which was sent to the Editor of THE ANNALS by Mr. Bloomer who attributed its authorship to Mr. Pusey. The latter, however, gives that credit to his deceased friend, Mr. Bloomer. The reminiscence is both interesting and historically valuable and evidently was the result of their joint recollections.—EDITOR OF THE ANNALS.

afterwards said to the writer in his office at the White House, that when he as the President (and as provided by the charter), came to fix the terminal point of the road in Iowa he "had no difficulty in fixing it on the section of land overlooked by us that August day from your bluffs."

As we returned from the ride at the summit using our large field glass, we could clearly see Lincoln's steamboat at "Hardend Bend" on a sand bar vainly trying to get to Omaha.

We said to our guests, "Now we have you as prisoners for two or three days. That boat will have to light up and unload before it can get into water where it will float." Our prediction was verified, for it was three days before we heard the prolonged whistle which was the signal of the Captain to our guests to join him at the lower landing. So the citizens of our town did everything to make the enforced stay of our distinguished guests endurable. A great desire was expressed to hear Mr. Lincoln talk. He consented to do so. That evening hand-bills were scattered over our city as notices of the meeting. "Palmer's Hall" was rented, lit up with candles about the walls—the floor had been covered with saw-dust ordered previously by the sheriff to deaden the noise while our District Court was in session. (Pottawattamie county was not then indulging in the luxury of a court-house.) When the hour arrived Mr. Lincoln was greeted by an overflowing house. He was then known by our people only as the great political debater in his memorable contest with Stephen A. Douglas.

The next evening a public reception was given Mr. Lincoln at the residence of one of our private citizens, where many hundreds met him socially, who to this day recall with pleasing recollections the privilege they enjoyed in meeting in free, open, social life the great man who soon thereafter occupied so conspicuous a place in the stirring events of American history. Among the married people (aside from the long list of our then young society people who met Mr.

Lincoln that evening) we recall as still living, Hon. D. C. Bloomer,* Gen. G. M. Dodge and wife, Thos. Officer and wife, N. P. Dodge and wife, Sam'l Haas and wife, Jno. T. Stewart and wife, Wm. H. Robinson and wife, E. McBride and wife, Rev. Geo. Rice and wife, and Mesdames Everett, Deming, Nutt, Porterfield, James, Blaine, Baldwin, Badolett, Knepper, the host and hostess Mr. and Mrs. Pusey, and many others not enumerated.

A pathetic instance occurred during Mr. Lincoln's visit, known to but few outside his own family, showing a peculiar phase of the great man's inner life. One day while talking to a friend in a confidential way about their lives in Illinois he drew from an inner side pocket an old parchment, wrapped in a newspaper, which proved to be an old United States land warrant for one hundred and sixty acres of land, issued to Abraham Lincoln, Captain in the Black Hawk War. His friend exclaimed chidingly: "Mr. Lincoln, why did you not years and years ago enter this in the Danville Land District as your friend Judge David Davis did, which was the foundation of his great wealth?" "I know you are right about this as a business proposition," he answered, "but Davis always knew how to make money and I never did. I was so poor that I was afraid I could not pay the taxes on the land if I got it. So I put it and my discharge papers with other little souvenirs in Bob Irvin's Bank Vault, where it has been until Hatch and I a month ago started on our junketing trip through Kansas, when I went and got it and put it in my pocket thinking I would like to have one hundred and sixty acres of land in free Iowa or Kansas." He saw his reason was not satisfactory and added, with the emotion of the great father that he was: "When in after years (and the warrant was almost forgotten) my little boys Bob and Tad came, a great desire sprang up that I would give the boys the warrant, that they would always be

*Since deceased.

reminded that their father was a soldier!" The warrant was located in Crawford county, Iowa, and if the present owner of the land honored the great man's memory as the writer does, how highly he must prize the muniments of title to his farm!

A HISTORICAL PROCLAMATION.

BY GOV. JAMES A. MOUNT, OF INDIANA.

IN THE NAME AND BY THE AUTHORITY OF
THE STATE OF INDIANA.
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT.

At a meeting of representative citizens of Indiana, held in the Governor's office on the 26th day of March, 1900, it was decided to call the attention and enlist the interest of the people of the State to the pressing need for the collection and preservation of early historic incidents connected therewith. This important work has already been too long delayed. Many of our pioneers who had witnessed events and were participants in scenes of thrilling moment have passed away with their valuable experiences unpreserved. It was the consensus of opinion and expression at the meeting aforesaid that it would be wise for the chief executive of the State to formally invite the co-operation of all citizens of Indiana in putting into effect the purposes herein outlined, the appropriateness of the occasion being emphasized by the fact that this is the centennial year of our territorial organization, and, therefore, an opportune time for the taking up of the long neglected work of systematically collecting historic data. It was further agreed that our national holiday could be observed in no more appropriate way than in reviving and gathering facts appertaining to the early growth of our State and its subsequent progress in splendid achievements.

Therefore, I, JAMES A. MOUNT, Governor of Indiana, in compliance with the foregoing expressed sense of said meeting, do hereby designate the

FOURTH DAY OF JULY, 1900,

to be devoted, so far as practicable, to the promotion of this work. It is recommended that the public addresses in the various counties of the State be given to the discussion of early incidents connected with each county; that these addresses be printed and finally aggregated and bound for preservation by the State. It is further recommended that meetings be called and that some competent person be designated to collect from the recol-

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