

the very point where a slight re-adjustment of the terrace materials, coupled with the waste and wash from the bluff, would cover them with a silt indistinguishable from that laid down by the older Wisconsin floods. That the deposit is old compared with the historic period of Iowa may safely be affirmed; but that it is preglacial or interglacial, as would at first sight seem to be the case, is highly improbable. Under what conditions and for what purpose the bones were accumulated where they are now found is a question for the ethnologist.

CORN AND HAY AS FUEL.

Along in the early seventies, chiefly in 1871-'72, corn was plenty and cheap, while coal and wood were scarce and dear. Some man tried the experiment of using corn for fuel and announced the result as a success. He found that from burning a dollar's worth of good Iowa corn more heat could be evolved than from the wood or coal that could be bought with the same money. Others had occasionally tried the same experiment, in Iowa and Illinois, even as far back as 1857, and reached the same conclusion. The writer of this item distinctly remembers seeing corn so utilized both in heating furnaces and in cooking and heating stoves. In many cases corn and bituminous coal were burned together, making hot fires. But cheap as corn was in those days it seemed a criminal waste to use it in this way. When one considers the amount of choice food for man and beast that is contained in a bushel of our magnificent Iowa corn, no matter how cheap it may become, there would seem to be no excuse for burning it for fuel except in some dire extremity. But with many people the question was merely one of dollars and cents. Which fuel was the cheapest?

During the same period, perhaps reaching down some years later, prairie hay was used for fuel in like manner in Northwestern Iowa. Large cylindrical heating stoves were constructed from thin sheet iron, expressly for burning hay. A machine was invented for twisting the hay into hard coils so that it should not go up in a flash and burn too rapidly.



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These machines were something like the cutting-boxes used by farmers for chopping corn-stalks or straw for fodder. A box three or four feet long, a foot or more in width, and a foot in depth, was attached to an iron gearing which gathered in and twisted the hay. The heavy iron balance-wheels which were used on corn-shellers were easily adjusted to these mostly home-made machines. One person was required to turn the wheel, and another to feed the hay into the box, from which it was rapidly drawn into the iron gearing. The product was large clumsy coils of hay which were fed into and consumed by the big stoves. Prairie hay would burn down to a live coal, and so remain for some time, constantly giving out heat. And then it was both plenty and cheap. On some "blizzard days," however, it required lively work to keep a large house warm with this evanescent fuel. It is probable that prairie hay was utilized in this manner for several years, until the extension of railroads enabled the settlers to supply themselves with bituminous coal from the mines of central Iowa. And even now, whenever a coal famine is abroad, whether due to strikes of operatives, lack of transportation, or a snow blockade, corn and hay may again serve as winter fuel. In fact, we believe they are still so utilized in regions farther north.

DOCUMENTARY MATERIAL RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF IOWA.

Some four or five years ago Prof. B. F. Shambaugh, of the Iowa State University, published the first of a series of pamphlets with the above title. These pamphlets received a cordial welcome at once, though they did not escape the criticism that the "material" presented was already sufficiently accessible. This opinion was wholly incorrect. The pamphlets were made up from laws passed by Congress relating to the Old Northwest and the organization of terri-

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