

ANNALS OF IOWA

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

"SKETCHES OF EARLY IOWA"

For the rapid settlement of the Iowa Territory of which the whole of the state of Iowa and most of Minnesota and the two Dakotas were formed, two causes engage the interest of the student more than any others. The "Congress lands" which were made available to the soldiers of the early wars as bounty payments was one, yet that was a cause also for settlements on "Congress lands" available in Illinois, Missouri and states south of these which of course bid for those valiant men as settlers.

Iowa Territory, however, with greater alacrity than the others advanced its superlative claims through the early newspapers and pamphlet publications. Of the latter none appear to have been of higher efficiency than "Sketches of Iowa and Wisconsin," by John Plumbe, Jr., 1839, and the map therewith. It is often mentioned in early and late comment. It has become so scarce that a copy is said to have been recently priced at \$500. The "Sketches," by setting out articles in the current newspapers of 1836 to 1839 printed in New Orleans, Cincinnati, Pittsburg, New York City, Toronto, Canada, and other places points the student to sources for facts of this region and for that time not usually observed. "Sketches" of course, made use of complimentary references. The newspapers published within the territory were silent upon the drawbacks to permanent residence. They did not blazon the advantages of other places in the west. But they captured the attention of a nation whose popular leaders were pointing to free homes in the west and "Sketches" diverted to Iowa thousands among the virile stock which so marked early Iowa and its institutions. We reprint the book and map as we have done many rare publications upon early Iowa, to make more accessible those invaluable aids to our earliest eras.

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