



CHARLES WESLEY TOLLES

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By DAVID C. MOTT

The death of Charles Wesley Tolles, February 8, 1923, marked the passing of a man whose life spanned almost a century, and whose early career was filled with the adventure and romance of the frontier. When a mere boy he wandered across Illinois into Missouri, spent a few years in an Indian mission near where Fort Leavenworth, Kansas now stands, and finally reached southwestern Iowa, became a county officer, was active in Underground Railroad operations, and contributed patriotic pioneering services to that section in the period just before the Civil War.

He was born at Geneva, Ontario County, New York, December 2, 1823, and was a son of Dr. Roger B. Tolles, a physician and circuit preacher of the Methodist church. His mother was Mariah (Gunn) Tolles. His father died when he, Charles, was but seven years old. Most of his boyhood was spent in the home of his mother. In late life he tells that when only a boy he went to Edgar County, Illinois, to live with his half brother, Lewis, his mother consenting to let him go at the request of the brother. He soon ran away from his brother, not because of ill usage, but because of his love of adventure. Although eastern Illinois at that time was practically the frontier, yet he had had a taste of travel and he wanted to follow the western trails. He became acquainted with the stage drivers, made himself useful to them, became a favorite with them, so could ride free at any time. Writing three-quarters of a century later he says:

I started for the West. The first driver would say to the next one, "Take him on," so I worked my way to Springfield, Illinois. Arriving there I engaged to take care of horses. I had had some experience in this line. The American House was the largest and most popular hotel in Springfield. It was run by Bliss & Lashure. Mr. Bliss came to me one day and offered me a position as table waiter in the hotel. I accepted and liked the position much, was well treated, and was soon

¹We are indebted to Mr. F. G. Day of Glenwood, a nephew by marriage of Mr. Tolles, for the materials from which this sketch is written. They consist of a short autobiographical sketch written by Mr. Tolles, of many letters from Mr. Tolles to Mr. Day covering a period of about ten years (1913-1922), of the Parsons letter, of the receipts and other official documents issued in Mills County in the 1850's, etc.

promoted to head steward. About this time a circus came to town. Some of them got around me and in some way induced me to go with them. I went with them as far as Jacksonville, Illinois, and found they were not the kind of company to suit me, so left them there and made my way to Alton, on the Mississippi River. Here I boarded the Eagle Daily Packet running between Alton and St. Louis. Arriving in St. Louis I struck for the Planters Hotel, the largest hotel, perhaps, in the West at that time. I thought I was capable of running any hotel I had seen before. On my way to the hotel I met a French boy about my own age named John Batteese, cabin boy on a steamer lying at the wharf. He said they were short a cabin boy, so I went with him and engaged as cabin boy on the steamer Thames, Captain Dennis, old Moses chief butler, Sandy, a Frenchman, second steward, all bound for the Missouri River next day. All went well for a time. It was in the fall of the year, the river was low and we ran only in daytime. We were six days making what was called 500 miles to Liberty Landing, Clay County, Missouri.

Before we arrived at Liberty John and I agreed that we had had our treatment from Sandy as long as we could stand it. Captain Dennis and old Moses were always kind to us, but Sandy was as mean as a Frenchman or any other man could well be. Well, we landed and walked four miles to town. As we had but little money so we must get a job soon. I do not remember what John got into. I engaged to a one-legged man to drive his team. After a time I came in contact with a man named Duncan who owned a steam sawmill, gristmill, and distillery. I soon got to be head engineer and then I thought I was "it." I remained four years with this man, sometimes in the mill, sometimes in the store. He finally sold out and we went to the northwest part of Missouri, what is now Atchison County, made a claim, built a cabin, broke prairie, and raised a crop of corn and other stuff. Mr. Duncan became dissatisfied, his wife refusing to come there. We had some stock—oxen, cows, and horses. We had insufficient feed to winter them, so we concluded to part with some of them. There was to be a payment to the Pottawattamie Indians, so we took some oxen and cows and a wagon and went up to what is now Council Bluffs, then a small Indian village. There were no whites there then, only a few Indian teepees, I think not more than ten or twelve. An Indian lived in part of a steamboat cabin, don't know how he got it, perhaps it had been wrecked on the river. He had in some way obtained a portion of the cabin.

On going we did not cross Keg Creek where Glenwood is, but followed the ridge up through where Sidney is, on to Tabor's location. Kept the ridge on up, crossed Keg about four or five miles before reaching the village. There was a small block house near by on a raised piece of ground. I did not see it occupied by any of the soldiers.

There were no more than fifteen or twenty of them, nice, civil fellows, under command of Sergeant Powers, also a good fellow.

We sold our stuff and returned, sold our claim, took the remainder of our stock and went back home to Clay County, Missouri. Mr. Duncan broke up. I went with him, having only a nice little mare and saddle and bridle left.

The government about this time had completed a mill for the Delaware Indians on a tributary of the Kaw [Kansas] River. Duncan got the contract for running the mill one year and I was to be helper. All went well for a time, but finally I took the ague and became quite low. The Mission doctor happened that way, saw my condition, gave me medicine, and next day sent a spring wagon with bed in it to convey me to the Mission. He said I would die if I staid there. On becoming better I had an offer to remain there for a time, which I accepted, and I was with them three years.² I was not identified with the Mission except as a helper, sometimes on the farm, sometimes on the new Mission building, and often in charge of the small boys in the school. I took an active part in all mission work the same as the missionaries, sometimes when a teacher was absent or sick I had charge of classes, for which I had teacher's pay, yet I don't suppose the Mission Board at Boston ever heard of me. Though the son of a preacher I did no preaching.

A Mr. Pratt, a missionary, and a Mr. Blanchard who was a missionary to the Delawares, conceived the idea of writing the history of the four Evangelists in such form as the Indians could understand its real meaning, hence the book is supposed to contain all of that inestimable history translated so as to conform to the then idioms of their language. It is easy to learn, no spelling, every character having its own sound, and but one sound. I learned it in less than three months at odd spells so I could read readily. It was an unknown tongue to me, but I could read to the Indians so they could understand. That has been more than fifty years, and I can read it now only as a boy beginning in the first reader.³

One little incident while at the Mission I forgot to mention. We were building a new church, were short of lumber, so someone had to go across the river into Missouri for more lumber. I was just out of a sick spell, was feeling quite well but not strong, and I said, "Send me." The doctor said, "Take my horse and go, it will do you good." The horse was a good saddle horse, though wild as a roebuck, and the doctor and I were the only ones that pretended to ride him. I took

²This was the Delaware Mission School established in 1837 by Ira D. Blanchard and was where Edwardsville now is, some ten miles west of Kansas City, or fifteen miles south of Fort Leavenworth, on the north side of the Kansas River. (See Kansas Historical Collections, Vol. XII, p. 183.)

³John G. Pratt graduated from Andover Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, in 1836, and was licensed to preach, was sent out to this vicinity by the Baptist Missionary Society for work among the Indians. He was also a printer and assisted in printing the Gospels, hymns, etc., in Indian languages. (See Kansas Historical Collections, Vol. XII, p. 183.)

two teams, one horse, and one ox team. The horse was driven by a colored man, the ox team by a Mormon boy. I rode to the river, crossed at the mill, purchased the lumber and had it ferried over. By this time the teams were there. The boy was driving along close to the river where the bank was straight down to the water. A Shawnee Indian rode up to the boy and tried to crowd the oxen off the bank. I rode up to him and tried to persuade him to desist. He paid no attention to me, so I told the boy to give me his whip. I wound it around the Indian's head and when the cracker came to his face I think he felt it. He then came at me with his tomahawk, my horse would jump every time he would strike, and that is what saved me. I told the black man to give me a club, but he was too frightened to do anything. I finally got a great unwieldy stick and hit the Indian across the back. He was off, I after him. I ran him about one-fourth of a mile and tried to knock him from his horse, but I was weak and the stick was heavy, but I think if I had had my usual strength, poor Lo would have gone off with a sore head, if he had gone off at all.

While I was in the Indian Country there was to be a great pow-wow. I had always wanted to visit one of these, so off I went. Arriving I found about two hundred bucks and squaws seated in two semicircles, the bucks on the inner circle. They had constructed a kind of drum by stretching a deer skin over the end of a hollow log. I can not describe the noise it made, I think something like the bellowing of a buffalo bull mixed with many other discordant noises. Now the fun begins, first a low tap on the drum, barely could hear it, and low guttural sounds from the bucks and squaws. Two seconds and another tap, this time a little louder, and so on, a little louder until they produced the most unearthly sound conceivable. I don't think his Satanic Majesty could outdo it. Then they go down to a mere whisper. This was kept up for about fifteen minutes and then the decks were cleared for a dance. None but the bucks took part in the dance. They danced and danced some more, and they soon got warmed up so they began shedding their garments, and then danced and shed more garments until nothing remained but a long-tailed shirt and breach clout. Hold on, don't be alarmed! It was common in the hot days of summer for bucks to come to the Mission church with only a shirt and breach clout on. It is nothing when you get used to it. It put me in mind of a story of Burns's guests in Galaway Church who pulled off their coats and danced in their shirts. Well, all things earthly have an end, and so did the pow-wow. As near as I could learn this was some kind of a religious incantation. Well, two braves got out their ponies and escorted me home. The ponies did not buck so I arrived home safely.

There was to be a dog roast up in a grove about ten miles away. I had always wanted to say that I had eaten dog so I went. But lo and behold I was too late, the dog was all eaten, plenty of buffalo meat, but I had that at home. I wanted dog. Too bad, if I had gotten a taste

of that pup I could tell you today all about how good it was, but such is luck in the Middle West.

About this time I heard the Pottawattamie Indians had sold their lands in Iowa and that their reserve was open for settlement. I had seen some of that country a few years before and liked it, so I gathered all my odds and ends together, went to Fort Leavenworth, bought a wagon, had three horses, and started for the "Promised Land."⁴ We went straight for what is now Council Bluffs. There was quite a settlement of Mormons there. They called it Miller's Hollow. After a time as the Gentiles settled there they called it Kanessville. I met a man there I had met when I was there a few years before at the Indian payment. He had an Indian wife and family. He advised me to settle down about the crossing of Keg Creek where Glenwood is now. I think there were two or three Mormon families there then. I camped in the Wabonsie timber and next day found a bachelor who had a good cabin and he invited me to share his home with him, which I gladly accepted.⁵

It seems this temporary home was in the Wabonsie neighborhood, likely in the northwest portion of Fremont County. Mr. Tolles says there was an Indian town called Wabonsie. He says "Chief Wabonsie was not a Pottawattamie by birth, but many years before had been identified with that nation. He died before the Pottawattamies left Iowa and, not being a member of their tribe because of their superstition they would not bury him in the soil, but made a huge box of split logs, put him in it and hoisted it about twenty feet in an oak tree. He was there when I came. I suppose the settlers, when they came, took him down and buried him."

Speaking of the first time he saw the present site of Glenwood he says: "I think there were not more than four or five houses there. There was no bridge across Keg Creek. Later others came, a Mr. Coon, and Mr. Coolidge and others in time. Mr. Coolidge finally built a mill east of town, at the bluffs. This was during the great California gold excitement. Everything was on the rise, cattle, horses, and feed of all kinds were in demand and very high. Coolidge started the mill and it made him

⁴In his letters and writings Mr. Tolles variously states the date of this removal to Iowa, ranging from 1846 to 1849. Mr. Day writes us that from his personal knowledge of the family history he is confident it was in the fall of 1846 that Mr. Tolles and his small family came to Iowa and wintered in the timber between Sidney and Tabor, and in the spring of 1847 settled in Mills County. This corresponds with Mr. Tolles' allusion to the Pottawattamie Indians leaving Iowa, as their treaty ceding their lands was made June 5, 1846. (See Alonzo Abernathy in ANNALS OF IOWA, Vol. VII, p. 443.)

⁵Here the connected account written by Mr. Tolles ends, and the additional facts that are here related are gathered from his various letters, documents, etc., and from information furnished by Mr. Day.

money fast. He soon started a little store over by the mill and after a time moved over into town. I think the building is standing yet. This was the first store in Coonville."

Mr. Tolles finally selected 320 acres of land near the center of Mills County. This was before the county was surveyed, and he built his log cabin so that it would be as near the public highway as he could calculate, but he missed it about a quarter of a mile. This is now in section 13, township 72, range 42 west. Mr. Tolles says that in building the cabin "the Mormon neighbors turned out freely and helped me raise the log hut. It was a good comfortable home. I could get no prairie broke that year. I cleared the brush in an open place in the grove, raised some garden and some corn, plowed up a weed patch down on the creek bottom and planted potatoes, put up plenty of hay in proper time, bought corn of Mormons and wintered through all right, although I think it was the hardest winter I ever experienced, I am sure the most snow. The next spring I had twenty acres of prairie broken and planted to sod corn."

The next two or three years were doubtless busy times in further breaking the land and making improvements. People were coming in and settling in considerable numbers, especially in the central part of the county along Silver Creek, and at and near Coonville. Many of these were Mormons who had started on the great hejira from Nauvoo to Utah and, stopping to recruit by the way, were so pleased with the country there that many of them remained permanently, forsook Brigham Young's leadership, and they and their descendants eventually became part and parcel of the best people of Mills County.

The organization of Mills County was effected by an election held on the first Monday in August, 1851. At that election Mr. Tolles was elected recorder and treasurer,⁶ and served in that capacity for the two following years. He continued to live on his farm, and collected the taxes once a year by traveling on horseback to the homes of the settlers and calling on them personally. He carried his office in his saddlebags. Most of the people lived along Silver Creek, in Rawles and Lyons townships, and in Coonville. Azor Richardson was his deputy for a time,

⁶"History of Mills County, Iowa," State Historical Company, Des Moines, Publishers, 1881.

and N. J. Sharp part of the time. Among the interesting relics turned over by Mr. Day to the Historical Department is the bond of Mr. Sharp. It is as follows:

We the under signed N. J. Sharp and J L— Sharp Isiah Cox acknowledge our selvs indebted to C. W. Tolles County Treasure in the penal sum of five hundred dolars to the payment of which we bind our selvs our heirs and assigns

The condition of the above obligation is such that if the said N. J. Sharp should faithfully perform all the duties of the office of dept Treasure & Recorder according to law to which office he has this day been appointed, Then this obligation is to be nul and void Otherwise remain in full force and virtue

June 20th 1852

N. J. Sharp Seal

J L. Sharp Seal

Isaiah Cox Seal

Following are copies of two receipts which seem to be from Mr. Tolles' successor:

Received of C. W. Tolles the Tax List for the year A. D. 1852. The Personalty of which amounts to Sixty three thousand three hundred and twelve Dollars, for Collecting the Taxes Assessed, as follows, for the Current year Vis,

State Tax, three Mills per Dollar
 County Tax Six Mills per Dollar
 School Tax, one Mill per Dollar
 Road Tax, two Mills per Dollar
 County poll Tax fifty cts per poll
 & Road poll Tax, one Dollar per poll.
 Azor Richardson

Glenwood September 9. 1853

Received of C. W. Toll the former Treasurer and Recorder one deed Silas Hilmon to Samuel Martin—one Samuel Martin to Boyd & Moss one W. W. Noyes to Tootle & Fairley one to W. W. Noyes to A Ford one W. W. Noyes to Tootle & Fairley one article of agreement Wm Smith to Samuel Martin one Receipt in favour of W. W. Noyes

Azor Richardson

Treasurer & Recorder

Speaking of the office of county treasurer Mr. Tolles says: "There was but little money the first year, and but little the next. I never realized but little for my time, so was glad to get rid of the office with all its honors."

When the first settlers came into Mills County they could not obtain title to the lands on which they settled, as the surveying

had not been done and the lands were not on the market. Mr. Tolles states: "When the land was on the market at the land sales all the neighbors went together, and each helped his neighbor prove up his claim. We all got our 160 acres for \$200. The 80 south of my 160 had some good bottom land along a small creek and I wanted it. Some of the Taborites had brought from Ohio one of the neatest one-horse wagons I had ever seen and I bought it. Old Peter Sarpy,⁷ an old French and Indian trader, took a shine to it, so I sold it to him, not sure, but I think, for \$75, and I hustled around and raised \$25 more and entered that 80. The next 80 south had a small grove on it, mostly basswood, just what I wanted to use in burning the brick I intended to make. I had a chance to purchase a land warrant cheap, so I did and laid it on that 80, and then I had 320 acres with plenty of timber." Following is doubtless the land warrant he mentions as having purchased:

Glenwood July 7th 1853

For value received I garrantee to C W Tolles, the Land warrant No 19262 to hold the Land on which it is Located

S F Nuckolls
Pr Bourn

From a tax receipt signed by Azor Richardson, Mr. Tolles' successor in office, as well as from other receipts and documents in the collection, it is painfully evident they had few office supplies, for no printed forms were used, only plain, unruled paper.

For the next few years we find but little to throw light on the

⁷Concerning Mr. Sarpy the "History of Pottawattamie County," by O. L. Baskin & Co., Chicago, 1883, page 14, says: "Farther down the river, and near the southwest corner of the county [Pottawattamie], was another celebrated post for Indians and traders to meet, known as Traders Point, where Peter A. Sarpy, a noted character in all these regions in early days had his headquarters, and accumulated a fortune. Mr. Sarpy, like many other Frenchmen, married an Indian woman." In "Iowa under Territorial Governments and the removal of the Indians," by Alonzo Abernathy, ANNALS OF IOWA, Vol. VII, p. 443, it is said that Col. Peter A. Sarpy at Traders Point on the Missouri River, Mills County, made the treaty with the Pottawattamie Indians, June 5, 1846, which ceded their lands and provided for their removal to Kansas.

F. G. Day states: "Traders Point was located in St. Mary Township, Mills County, Iowa. Part of the old trading post was there a few years ago. It was made of brick and we have seen its ruins, which are all removed now. Peter A. Sarpy spent his time between Traders Point, Iowa, and Bellevue, Nebraska. These places are nearly opposite each other. As to Peter A. Sarpy marrying an Indian wife, this was stated to me as not so, that he had several Indian wives and was known as a "squaw man," but the only wife that he ever married was an own sister to Freeloove Turner, a very early settler in southwestern Iowa, who was a reliable man and gave me these facts personally, and stated that when his sister died she was buried in St. Mary Township, Mills County, Iowa, not far from Traders Point. It is stated to us that Colonel Sarpy erected a log cabin over his wife's grave, which afterwards we are informed was washed away by the change of the Missouri River, which is near Traders Point. Freeloove Turner died about one year ago at Council Bluffs, but is buried in the cemetery here [Glenwood]. He was very old."

activities of Mr. Tolles, except that in the Mills County History we observe his name among the grand jurors, and we have no doubt that he did his full share in helping to establish good government and high standards in the new community. Among his settled convictions was antipathy to human slavery. This feeling doubtless helped make a bond between him and the people at Tabor, which was about fifteen miles southwest of his home. As Tabor came to be a well-known station on the Underground Railroad, we find Mr. Tolles co-operating with its operation. In "Early Settlement and Growth of Western Iowa" by Rev. John Todd of Tabor, pp. 134-5, is an account of the opening of the Underground Railroad through Tabor, and of how the people there separated five slaves from their master, who was camping in the town. This master was a Mississippian who had been converted to the Mormon faith and was on his way to Utah. The account says, "G. B. Gaston, to avoid the appearance of evil, took some ladies in a buggy and made a visit to C. W. Tolles', on Silver Creek, where arrangements were made to care for the fugitives." Mr. Tolles evidently cared for the slaves a day or two, when they were conveyed on northeast, and eventually to freedom, while the irate master searched for them in vain.

Mr. Day states that Mr. Tolles many times helped escaping Negroes in their flights northward; that John Brown stayed over night in his cabin, he thinks, in February, 1859, with Negroes and eight white men, three wagon loads in all; that Brown stayed in the log cabin with Mr. Tolles and family, and all left early in the morning, going northeasterly in a bad snow storm; that this was the only time John Brown ever stayed over night in Mills County; that Mr. Tolles personally stated these things to him, saying these eight men were the best armed men he ever saw, and were the same men who went with Brown to Harpers Ferry.

Concerning John Brown, Mr. Tolles in recent years said: "I cannot altogether agree with Hawthorn's description of Brown's physical or spiritual character. I did not see him as a tall man, but only of medium height, and rather skinny. Not round shouldered but slightly stooping, perhaps from age and hardships. I did not see a savage but a determined countenance, an eye that

looked straight down in to your very soul. Some may blame him for his acts, if they will, but I believe him to be like Napoleon Bonaparte, a man of destiny. He could not if he would, avoid the general course which he pursued. Though unlike Napoleon, he did not rely wholly upon his own genius or ability. At one time we were discussing the difficulties attending his course. In answer to my question, he said, 'I put my trust in God.' He was a man of but few words, but when he did speak it was a text for a volume."

As showing Mr. Tolles' activity and feeling in the anti-slavery movements, he says: "During the Kansas troubles I started east to visit my brother Harry who at that time lived in northern Indiana. Two young men wishing to go to Michigan, their home, were with me. We had a covered wagon and were on our way to Mount Pleasant, Iowa, the then terminal of the B. & M. R. R. Somewhere about this town we stopped at a farm house to get feed for our horses. There were a lot of Pro-slavery Missourians there well stocked with booze, very impudent and saucy, cursing the Northerners and John Brown in particular. They asked us where we were going and what was our business. We told them we were going to Burlington to get some cannon and ammunition for Kansas. This fired them and we thought for a while the situation was getting serious. But the farmers said to them that they had better go away and let these men alone or they would get in trouble. We put up a bold front but were mighty glad to see them go. Some writer has said that an iron front is no evidence of grit backing. That was so in our case. I don't think we mentioned John Brown's name again that day."

In his later years Mr. Tolles got in communication with Luke F. Parsons, one of John Brown's men, and we here append a letter from him:

Salina, Kas. Oct. 18th [1913.]

Friend C. W. Toolles [Tolles],
Ottumwa, Iowa.
My dear Sir:

Your favour of the 13th inst. is before me in which you ask questions of so long ago that I fear I will not be able to answer all correctly, but will do the best I can.

John Brown made two trips through Iowa from Tabor east by N. One in fall of 1857, the other in Feb. 1859. I was with him on the first

trip but not on the second. The first trip we had only one slave, one team of mules and wagon. We crossed the Mo. River I think at some ferry below Neb. City. We left Tabor late in the day and camped after about ten miles. We were loaded heavy for the team and poor roads and most of the men walked. We all slept in camp. Made a fire of logs, poles, &c., had a large canvas that we put up on the side of the cold wind slanting from the ground up towards the fire, we all slept there side by side and were tolerably comfortable, barring the smoke. We had in our company Brown, Kagi, Stevens, Tidd, Cook, Leeman, Realph, Owen Brown, Slave, Luke F. Parsons.

I don't remember the exact route we took or where we camped. I think we passed through Des Moines. We went to Springdale in Cedar Co., Iowa, and spent the winter there, drilling and studying military tactics.

On the Feb. trip, 1859, Brown had three ox teams and twelve slaves. On the 29th of Jan. after Brown had left Topeka and before he reached the Nebraska line he came to Spring Creek. He found the creek too deep to ford, and while waiting for the creek to run down, he discovered across the creek a company from Atchison commanded by A. P. Wood, which barred the way to liberty, said to be 80 men. Brown with twenty-two men, black and white, crossed the stream above, slipped down along the timber, and burst all unexpectedly on the foe. They made off as fast as they could, with a loss of one killed, three prisoners, four horses, pistols, guns, &c., &c. Such was the terror of his name. This has been called the "Battle of the Spurs."

On Feb. 1st John Brown left Kas. never to return. He crossed the Mo. River at Neb. City. Besides the 12 slaves he had Kagi, Stevens, Tidd, and Gill and one or two others whom I did not know. I do not know the route they took but they passed through Cedar Co.

Never heard of Brown being at a meetin[g] where a reward was offered for his scalp. Brown got those slaves in Mo. the night of Dec. 20, 1858. The men who went with him were Kagi, Stevens, Tidd, Gill, Anderson, and probably some others.

You ask where these men are or what became of them.

John Henri Kagi was in the Armory at Harpers Ferry, swam out on the rocks in the Shenandoah River and was shot from the railroad bridge. John Edwin Cook escaped from Harpers Ferry, but was afterwards captured and hung. Richard Realph served in Union Army, but afterwards jumped off a ship in San Frisco bay and was drowned. Aaron D. Stevens was terribly wounded with Brown at Harpers Ferry but afterwards hung. Charles P. Tidd escaped from Harpers Ferry but died while fighting at the Island of Roanoke under Genl. Burnside. William Leeman was shot at Harpers Ferry from the railroad bridge. Owen Brown escaped from Harpers Ferry with Tidd, but later drifted to Pacific coast and died near Pasadena. Richard Richardson, a Negro slave, we left in Canada. Charles Moffat died at Montour, Iowa, about

10 years ago. Luke F. Parsons [is he] who has written this long letter to an old friend whom he has never seen.

I am the last John Brown man in Kansas, the sole survivor of the Battle of Osawatomie. Now I hope you will take pleasure in reading this and not lose either as you did my other letter, for I am in my 82nd year and don't like to write very well.

Yours Truly

Luke F. Parsons.

Mr. Tolles remained upon his farm in Mills County until sometime in the early '60's when he removed to Morning Sun, Louisa County, where he ran a sawmill and gristmill for a good many years. During his later life, which was lengthened to almost one hundred years, he lived with his children in Ottumwa, in Hedrick, and in Washington. His mind was active, his memory good, his interest in public matters keen, his sympathies for humankind active, and his presence must have been like a benediction. He was a life-long member of the Baptist church, was a temperance man and prohibitionist, and lived a life worthy of emulation. He died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. P. C. Woods, in Washington, Iowa, and was buried at Hedrick beside his wife.

ANIMATION IN DES MOINES

Des Moines has been for the past few days a scene of bustling animation. Governors, senators, representatives, candidates for office in the gift of the legislature, and miscellaneous visitors, have congregated at this point; and the city, hitherto suffering with sympathy for other localities, has thrown aside its air of depression. Omnibuses thunder along the streets; and assisted by bridges and accommodating conveyances, the East and West sides have easy communication with each other. A new era in the history of Des Moines has been inaugurated. New responsibilities crowd upon our citizens; and we trust that every man of us, whether his home be near the State House or remote from it, will consider that he has something to do in directing the destiny of the Capital City.—*Iowa Citizen*, Des Moines, January 12, 1858. (In the newspaper collection of the Historical, Memorial and Art Department of Iowa.)

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