

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF NORTH-  
WESTERN IOWA.

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BY N. LEVERING, GREENWOOD, MO.

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[Concluded from page 459.]

EARLY in November, 1864, many of the hostile bands of Indians, who had been chased during the summer by Sully's forces, so that they were unable to lay up a sufficiency of provisions for the winter, and fearing that hideous want might stalk in their camp, became anxious to make a treaty of peace, with the hope, no doubt, of obtaining some provisions from the government for the winter. Various bands of these Indians assembled at Fort Sully at the time above named. Among the many speeches made by the chiefs on that occasion, we give the following, as a specimen of Indian eloquence, which was delivered by Bears Rib's son. It was translated on the spot, and the speech, as afterward published, was said by those who heard it delivered, a very correct translation:—

“Man is but mortal. He has but once to live and but once to die. A brave man is not solicitous whether his time comes sooner or later; but cares more to live in comfort and dignity as long as he is obliged to remain on earth, and to leave the prospect of the same prosperity to his children when he dies.

“The traders and other whites [agents] got us into this war in the first place, then we thought we could secure the blessings just spoken of by making war on the whites. We have tried it, and know we are fools; and our hearts are

heavy and sad. When the messenger came from the white camp to our camp he told us the General had left you to talk to us, and that you would tell us just the same things as he would have told us himself if he were here—that he wanted all the Indians who had been fighting to come into the fort—that all could come in and talk without being molested or punished for what they had done previously, and that our Great Father would make peace with those who were sick of fighting, and wished to be friends to the whites. When our people heard this their hearts were glad, and they have sent us down here to talk for them, not because we are better than they, but because it was necessary for some one to remain in our camp, to take care of the horses and women and children. We have come here to talk, in the name of all the Blackfeet and all the Unkpapas, and have peace made as speedily and as definitely as we possibly can.

“ We used to laugh when they said the whites were going to go through our country and fight us. Now we look upon the road through our country, made by large parties the last two years. We realize that the whites go wherever they want to—that nothing can stop them—that when they want to stay we can no more drive them away than a wall of solid rock. We used to think we could fight like men ; but now we know we can only fight like boys, when we fight with the whites. For when we are fighting, the whites never stop, but keep coming on, no matter how much we fire upon them. We think the white soldiers must be deaf and cannot hear our guns when we fire upon them, because they take no notice of our shooting. The whites go through our country fighting us, destroying our property, establishing posts, and driving off the game on which we live. The Tetens have not very many arms left, and but very little ammunition. We are sick of this war, and cannot fight the whites any longer, and want peace. We want you to tell us if the messenger that came to our camp told us the truth.”

On the 8th of February, 1865, many of the citizens of Sioux City assembled at the office of Judge I. Pendleton, for the purpose of forming a library association. Prof. A. R. Wright was called to the chair, and Rev. M. Tingley was chosen secretary. The object of the meeting was stated, when the following resolutions were presented and unanimously adopted:—

1st, That we proceed to organize a body corporate, for the purpose of establishing a public library, to be known and designated as the "Sioux City Library Association," having for its object the diffusion of general literature and science.

2d, That J. P. Allison, N. Levering, Dr. A. M. Hunt, O. C. Treadway, Wm. L. Joy, Isaac Pendleton, and G. R. McDougal, in the opinion of this meeting, are suitable and proper persons to act as trustees for the organization of the contemplated corporation, and are hereby respectfully solicited to prepare and file the necessary certificate for the formation of said association, as a body corporate.

This was the first library association organized in north-western Iowa. The vast importance of these associations to a community, and the incalculable benefits arising from them, are too little appreciated by most of communities, especially among our frontier settlers. Public schools were not neglected among our pioneers. As soon as there was a settlement sufficient to sustain a school, though small, a neat and comfortable house was erected, and was used for a double purpose, for church as well as school house, until the various denominations were able to erect church edifices.

At this time the public schools in Sioux City were in a flourishing condition. They were under the supervision of Prof. A. R. Wright, an accomplished educator. Some of the primitive settlers neglected the rudiments of an early education, as will be seen from the following eccentric letter received by me in an official capacity. I give it *verbatim et literatim*, except the name:—

“modail hanison countty Ioway february the 19, 1865.  
to the county gug of susity ioway iforbid you or enney on  
els given lisens or granten lisens too enne won to marey  
Evlina G—— the daughter off Reuben s. G—— and  
Elizabeth G—— And furthermor too notefi all the  
county guges off the same in nebrasca up and down the  
river. Reuben s. G——.”

Owing to the error in orthography, by the writer, in giving our title, we were obliged to don a more euphonious title—that of county “gug”—which was the rendering given by scholastic friends, learned in legal lore. Our new title was not sustained by the statutes of the state, but we bore it stoically when we reflected that this was a fast age, and an age of improvement, and that we were a *little* in the *advance*.

During this winter, N. C. Hudson, Esq., of Sioux City, deputy provost marshal, received an order prohibiting all citizens of Sioux City and vicinity from wearing soldier clothing. This was rather rough on some of the citizens, as their wardrobes consisted mostly of this class of goods, though they were worn by almost all classes, more or less. Mr. H. was a live, energetic, and efficient officer, but at times he was a little indiscreet in the discharge of his duty. Sometimes, on meeting a citizen on the street attired in Uncle Sam's goods, he would order him to disrobe, which order was not always obeyed, but met with stubborn resistance. Meeting one day a stalwart countryman on the street, who had on a blouse, marshal H. ordered him to shed. The countryman eyed him a moment, then pulling off his blouse threw it at the marshal's feet, and said: “Now, sir, if you are a better man than I am, you can take that blouse.” The marshal very wisely came to the conclusion that he did not want the garment, and retired in good order, while his plucky customer crawled into his blouse again, and went his way, feeling, no doubt, that for once he had bluffed the powers that be. Wm. Freney, publisher of the *Sioux City Register*, became the possessor and owner of a very nice pair of new soldier pants, and wishing to so alter and change

them that the marshal would not detect them, he employed James Hutchins, a merchant tailor of the city, to reconstruct them. After the work was completed, and the garment hung on a peg in the wardrobe in his office, meeting the marshal on the street, whom he was anxious to tease, he jocularly said: "Marshal, I've got a pair of pants in my office may be you would like to have. Come up and see them." They entered the office and F. presented his pants for examination, not thinking but they would escape detection. Marshal H., after carefully examining the goods, said: "I believe I'll take these," and tucking them under his arm walked off, much to the discomfiture and chagrin of the owner, who did not expect the joke to take that turn. He resolved on legal redress, and at once went before Justice J. C. C. Hoskins and sued out a writ of replevin. An officer was soon in hot pursuit of the aforesaid pants. He ransacked the marshal's office from top to bottom, but nowhere could he find them. When hope had vanished, Freney bowed in humble submission to his loss, and at the expense of many glasses of lager to his friends, who were inclined to twit him over the affair. He, however, took occasion to give the marshal quite an airing through the *Register*.

About this time we were so unspeakably happy as to find ourselves snugly ensconced in a pair of new soldier pants, which seemed to infuse a spirit of patriotism into us, and make us feel quite brave, so that we ventured down on Pearl street with impunity, and without fear of the marshal, when passing the store of T. J. Kingkaid, marshal H. stepped to the door and requested us to come in, as he had a little business with us. On stepping in, we found a number of ladies and gentlemen there. The marshal, as if to make a display of his authority, in a very commanding tone, so as to be heard by all in the room, ordered us to disrobe. Being rather modest, we felt a delicacy in vacating our soldier clothes in the presence of ladies, whose faces were now tinged with blushes, while our own was as red as a goose's foot in winter time. We respectfully declined to shed, and

asked for further time, which was granted us, on condition that we would deliver the aforesaid pants that evening to his marshalship. Having regained our liberty, we determined to trump the astute officer at his own game. Accordingly we at once repaired to the hospital, where we procured a pair of old discarded pants, that had seen much hard service, and were lightning proof, as they shone conspicuous in all the luster of grease. The owner of these veteran trousers, no doubt, when he cast them aside, gave them a lingering look, and heaved a sigh, as he gave utterance to the following :

Farewell, old trouserloons,  
Long time we've stuck together,  
And through many long moons  
We've braved all kinds of weather ;  
In wet and dry, hot and cold,  
My limbs you've protected,  
While graybacks, numbers untold,  
With me you've connected.

Turning them inside out, so as to give them a more respectable appearance, then rolling them up, and with a string tied around them, we tucked the bundle under our arm, and about dark started to make a delivery, as per agreement. Soon after reaching Pearl street, we met the marshal, and stepping up to him we made a surrender of our goods, which were received without inspection. Placing the package under his arm, he apologized for the necessity of such a course. We told him that it was not necessary, and we liked to see an officer do his whole duty. The next morning, doubtless, revealed to him the joke, and we were never troubled further about our soldier clothes.

In the spring of 1865, Gen. Sully made preparations for another campaign against the Indians, and about the first of June he set out on the war path with his forces, arriving at Fort Rice early in July, where he remained until the latter part of the month. While there, some two or three thousand Indians, men, women, and children, came to see him and have a "big talk." They all claimed to be "good Injin," and

were, apparently, while the talk lasted. After the big talk was ended, the General was so favorably impressed with their protestations of friendship, that he ordered a large amount of hard-tack and meat distributed among them, as they appeared to be in a starving condition. Had the General given them hard-tack in the shape of bullets, the result might have been better. Sully now took up his line of march for Devil's Lake, in pursuit of a band of hostile Indians, leaving the Washtodo (very good) Indians at the fort, which was garrisoned by some ex-Confederate soldiers and a portion of the Iowa 6th, numbering in all about three hundred. As soon as Sully and his command were out of reach, these good Indians undertook to repay a debt of gratitude, after their own manner.

Early one morning, before breakfast, the war-whoop was heard from the hill-tops around the fort; at the same time Indians were seen in great numbers, making a precipitate rush upon the fort, as if they proposed to make a breakfast job of the capture, and take their morning grub in the fort; but in this they were mistaken. The men were at once in arms, and soon in the midst of a fight. After a sharp resistance, the treacherous "reds" were driven back behind the hills, but soon rallied, and made a desperate attack, as if determined to take the situation at all hazards, when again they were repulsed, although they outnumbered our troops ten to one. The troops were then marched out and stationed on the hill-tops, in close proximity to the fort, and with two howitzers shelled the surrounding timbered ravines, where the enemy had taken shelter, driving them further back. About noon the troops were withdrawn to the fort, when soon after the enemy again appeared and made a furious and determined assault. Our troops were now ordered out, and for a short time met the enemy on an open plain, where a hand to hand conflict ensued, in which sabres and other close quarter arms were used freely. The "Long Tom" was soon brought out to the rescue, which was not a very pleasant sight to the "red devils," and when it spoke in thunder-

ing tones they speedily decamped. The loss on our side was small, only two killed, and two seriously wounded. Several horses were captured by the enemy. The loss of the Indians could not be definitely ascertained, for as soon as one fell he was thrown on a pony and carried to the rear. This was distinctly seen by many. Their loss must have been much greater than that of our troops. The Indians exhibited remarkable skill in horsemanship, making most rapid and continued evolutions while discharging their arrows and receiving the fire of our troops. Captain Moreland, of the Iowa 6th, is said to have fought with remarkable coolness and bravery, and, in fact, both officers and soldiers displayed a coolness and bravery seldom equaled. The above statement I obtained from an officer who witnessed the engagement.

About the middle of August following, some of the settlers on Brule creek, in the southern part of Dakota Territory, and about fifteen miles north of Sioux City, were engaged in making hay on Big Sioux river bottom, opposite Brule creek settlement, when they were attacked, about 4 o'clock p. m., by a small band of Indians, who crept upon them stealthily, and fired upon the party unobserved, killing Mr. E. B. Larimore almost instantly, and severely wounding Mr. T. C. Watson with an arrow, which passed through his left shoulder. A Mr. Fletcher also received a severe flesh wound in his arm, and his wife a slight wound from an arrow. Mrs. Fletcher, at the time of the attack, was upon a load of hay, and when the savages advanced upon her she fought them off heroically with a pitchfork, until she found resistance fruitless, when she spoke to them in the Indian language and told them to take the horses and let her alone, which they quickly did, taking four horses with them. Early next morning a party of the settlers started in pursuit. Taking the trail of the savages, they crossed the Big Sioux river, on the Iowa side, thence in a northerly direction up the river. As in most such cases, the people were much excited, and overlooked the



necessary preparation and requisites in an expedition of this kind. They followed the trail of the bloody villains until their small stock of provisions failed, and they were compelled to abandon pursuit without overhauling them, though indications clearly showed that they were pressing them closely.

We have not related half the bloody deeds and fiendish atrocities of these bloody savages. Volumes might yet be written, but we must stop, as we wish to close our sketches, for the present, with this number of THE ANNALS. This bloody mantle of crime does not rest upon the shoulders of the untutored savage alone, but upon many bad white men, who are *particeps criminis*, and in many instances the principals. The Indians unquestionably have deteriorated from what they were when white men first went among them. They were honest, unsuspecting, and humane; now they are treacherous, dishonest, inhuman, and their thirst for blood knows no bounds. Dishonest agents and traders among them are responsible for the murders of many of our pioneer people on the frontier. The smoke of hundreds of burning houses, murdered families, and massacres, villages scattered and exposed to the vengeance of these red fiends, have had to pay the penalty of the crimes of these heartless men, who are worse, if possible, than it is possible for the savages to be.

The blood of hundreds of victims of the merciless tomahawk and bloody scalping-knife cry out from the very earth against these dishonest men. It is strange that the cloud of God's wrath, surcharged with divine indignation, has not burst upon their guilty heads ere this, and wiped them from the face of the earth. The confidence of the Indian in the white man is forever lost, and will never be restored, and hence we are forced to the conclusion that extermination, or military force at least, is the *dernier* resort for protection against these merciless savages. The policy of the government, in forming treaties with them, and paying them large annuities, only adds fuel to the flame, and causes them to

think that the government is afraid of them, and does this to buy them off; and when they want an increase of annuities, or something more, there is a repetition of depredations, with the hope of again being bought off.

We are decidedly in favor of the present humane policy, if honest men could be employed to carry it out. So far it has proved a failure, and will as long as the government places these unfortunates under the care of a lot of political hacks and tricksters, who swindle them out of a large share of their so-called annuities. Hence the Indians retaliate on the white race. Since the base assassination of Gen. Canby, the government is beginning to think that a more rigid course must be pursued; that treaties, big talks, and hospitalities on our part have "played out," and that there seems but one remedy for a permanent peace—the same one tried by Gen. Harney at Ash Hollow on the Oggalallas Sioux. They have been peaceable ever since. Gen. Pat Connor tried it on the Utes, and pigeonized them in 1861. The Snakes, or Shoshones, were once the terror of the overland emigrants to California. Connor caught them at Bear river and subjugated them; they have been peaceable ever since. The Cheyennes were flogged a little by Col. Chivington, but not enough, and will have to have a little more. In 1865 the expedition to Powder river and Big Horn was projected and carried out, at an expense to the government of about \$2,000,000; a new wagon road for emigration opened from Sioux City to Bannock and Virginia cities; Forts Reno and Phil Kearney were built; the Arapahoes were defeated, and begged for peace. The government then suspended the military and substituted the thieving peace policy, which was soon followed by the Fort Phil Kearney massacre, and the reeking of bloody scalps of the settlers all along our western frontier. We have no hesitation in saying that if the Indian affairs were transferred from the Interior to the War Department, the Indian difficulty would soon be settled.

In taking leave of the readers of *THE ANNALS*, and before

throwing down the quill and making our best bow, we will say that what we have written since our connection with THE ANNALS was done in a very hurried and unsatisfactory manner to us. As we stated in the outset, we would have to labor under many disadvantages, not being able to see and converse with any of the old settlers; or see the county records, &c. Our own record of a few events, from memory, and some assistance from a few friends, to whom we here tender our thanks for their kindness. It has been our endeavor to confine ourselves to facts, and do justice to all, though errors may have occurred. There are many persons and events that we would like to have spoken of, but a want of knowledge of details and facts forbid. We trust, however, that we have opened the way for a much abler pen, that will take up the history of northwestern Iowa, which is replete with interest, and do it deserving justice. Though no longer a citizen of this beautiful and great state, we feel a deep interest in her early history, and are proud of her as having once been our adopted home. The fond recollections of her charming and fertile prairies, over which we have so often roamed, with feelings of delight, her crystal streams and pearly lakes, with her salubrious climate, and the pleasant remembrance of many kind and warm-hearted friends, make us feel as if we would like again to claim citizenship within her beautiful borders. Proud Iowa! And well may she be proud, standing second to one sister state alone in agricultural products, but in the intelligence, industry, and enterprise of her citizens, second to none. Well may she be proud of her fertile plains, so beautifully embellished as if by the hand of nature, of her teeming thousands who are making her broad bosom to bud and blossom as the rose, and have girted her from boundary to boundary with the iron sinews of the mighty railroad, that daily bears off her rich commerce, and brings to her lap the products of every clime.

Her educational interests are of the highest order, and are her crowning glory. Her success as a financier is without a parallel. By prudence and economy she has rid her-

self of that oppressive monster, debt, and now, with pride she points to an overflowing treasury, and her thousands of industrious and intelligent citizens, unoppressed by heavy taxation. Financially she stands among her sister states without a rival, and, like Saul, of Tarsus, head and shoulders above them all. Well may she be proud, and her citizens say, with unfeigned pride, "*I am a citizen of Iowa.*"

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NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF POTTAWATTAMIE COUNTY.

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BY D. C. BLOOMER.

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NO. 9.

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[Continued from page 351.]

WE commence our record of the year 1867 with the meeting of the board of supervisors, early in January. This was always an important event in the history of the county, as it brought to the court house a large number of people from all parts of the county, who, in common parlance, had "axes to grind." Edward McBride was elected chairman of the board, and the new members were Wm. Turner, from Knox; David Groom, from Macedonia; Richard Allen, from Rockford; Perry Reel, from Crescent; J. L. Felter, from James; and I. M. Sigler, from Boomer. A resolution was promptly adopted finally assigning all the interest of the county in its shares in the Council Bluffs & St. Joseph Railroad to Willis Phelps, in consideration of his having completed the road to the Missouri state line. It was also voted at this session to pay a large amount of swamp land orders, issued in 1857, by Judge Sherman, just prior to his removal from office by the decree of the district court. This claim had been for a long time before the board, and

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