

Sioux City, to mark the grave and point out to the traveler the spot where now slumber the ashes of the only man of Lewis and Clark's expedition who died during their long and tedious journey of three years up the Missouri river, and of the first white man who was buried in the northwestern country.

(To be continued.)

PIONEERS OF MARION COUNTY.

CHAPTER IV.

GOING TO MILL—TALLY'S FORD—ORIGIN OF ROADS—FIRST ROADS LOCATED—RETURNING FROM MILL.

But when breadstuffs were needed, they had to be obtained from the "Old Purchase," and hauled, mostly by ox teams, a distance of from sixty to eighty miles; some had to go even as far as Burlington to get a supply of wheat and corn and have it milled. Wheat could be had at fifty cents per bushel; cheap enough compared with present prices, but dear enough then, considering the scarcity of money, the inferiority of the grain and the distance it had to be hauled. Owing to the want of proper means of threshing and cleaning it, wheat was more or less mixed with foreign substances, such as dirt, smut and oats. The price of corn was from fifty to seventy-five cents per bushel. It was mostly bought in the ear, and shelled by the purchaser before taking it to mill. Those mills usually resorted to were at Brighton, Washington county, and at Keosauqua and Bonaparte, Van Buren county.

But the difficulties to be encountered in reaching these distant places, were not the least among the tribulations endured by the pioneers during the first two years of settlement. The slow mode of travel by ox teams was made still slower by the almost total absence of roads and bridges, and such a thing as a ferry was hardly even dreamed of. In dry weather, common sloughs and creeks offered little impediment to the

teamsters; but during floods and the breaking up of winter, proved exceedingly troublesome and dangerous. To get "stuck" in some mucky slough, and be thus delayed for an hour or more, was no uncommon circumstance. Often a raging stream would blockade the way, seeming to threaten swift destruction to whoever would attempt to ford it.

To those living south of the Des Moines, Tally's ford was the usual place of crossing that river. This ford was at what is now Bellefontaine, a little east of the county line. During low water, no difficulty was experienced in fording; but when it was too deep for this, the means of getting over were certainly trying to any wayfaring man. The only ferry-boat was a small canoe. Wagons had to be unloaded and taken to pieces, and both they and their loads shipped in small cargoes at a voyage, till all were over; then the teams had to be unharnessed or unyoked and made to swim, the horses being led by the halter at the side of the canoe, and the oxen by the horns.* Sometimes they were permitted to take their own course in swimming.

An "old settler," to whose "sketches" we are indebted for these statements, speaks thus eulogistically of the disinterested generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Tally, who kept the ferry:

"In this work the early settlers were much indebted to the kind assistance of Mr. and Mrs. Tally, who labored faithfully for their accommodation, usually without adequate compensation, and frequently without any whatever, very generously refusing any reward for their timely aid;" and also acknowledges, for himself and others, "a debt of gratitude for favors bestowed in times of real necessity;" for the good Samaritan offices of this worthy couple were not confined to the ferry: in cases of sickness, or want in other respects, they were neighbors to all within their reach. It is therefore due to them that their names should be preserved to memory, as among the benefactors of mankind in a sphere not less im-

*Mrs. Tally has been known to lead an ox by the horns whilst her husband managed the canoe, which must certainly be regarded as an act of extraordinary heroism for a lady.

portant because limited to a locality. Their present residence is in Decatur county.

With regard to roads, as we have said, there was nothing of the kind worthy the name. Indian trails were common, but they were unfit to travel on with vehicles. They are described as mere paths, about two feet wide, all that was required to accommodate the single-file manner of Indian traveling. Riding, or walking in companies, it seems to have ever been a national custom with them to follow each other singly.

An interesting theory respecting the origin of the routes now pursued by many of our public highways, is given in a speech made by Thomas Benton, many years ago. It possesses a spice of romance, which, however, does not render it a whit less probable. Indeed, the truth of it is practically demonstrated in many instances. He says the buffaloes were the first road engineers, and the paths trodden by them were, as a matter of convenience, followed by the Indians, and lastly by the whites, with such improvements and changes as were found necessary for civilized modes of travel. It is but reasonable to suppose that those monster beasts, the buffaloes, would instinctively choose the most practicable routes and fords in their migrations from one pasture to another. Then the Indians, following, possessed of about as much enterprise as their predecessors, the buffaloes, made no improvements, and were finally driven from the track by those who would.

Among the many roads in this county known to be only Indian trails at the period of which we are writing, is one from Red Rock to Knoxville, and those traversing the bottoms on either side of the river above and below Red Rock. Under the cliffs south of the river, above town, this trail was so narrow as to barely permit the passage of a horseman between the bayou and the rocky wall. Would it be a great stretch of the imagination to suppose that these paths were made and trodden by thousands of buffaloes passing and re-passing between pastures, long before the Indians came to drive them from their haunts? If so, Red Rock must have

been their fording place hundreds, if not more than a thousand years ago. So, perhaps, were the other fords that have since been in use. The imagination might here paint a wild scene: Standing upon the abrupt bank of the river at Red Rock, on some sultry summer day when the air is still, and the clear, shallow water moves slowly down the sand-margined channel, our ears catch a low, rumbling sound like that of distant thunder, only continuous, and each moment growing more distinct, mingled with the lowings of the herd. Suddenly a grand panorama bursts upon our astonished vision. Emerging from the thick forest, crowding each other as though driven by fright, or impelled by heat and thirst, comes the immense multitude, and without a moment's halt in their peculiar rolling gait, down they plunge over the worn sandy bank and into the river, where they assuage their thirst and lash the waters about them as a protection against annoying insects. Then the advance passes on as the rear presses it, and it soon disappears. Thus for hours they continue to move; and if we grow weary of what may at length become a monotonous scene, we may exchange it for another equally if not more imposing, by stepping out upon the open prairie, a few miles northward, where we find it almost covered by the vast herd, who have sought it as a pasture after having exhausted some other range.

Whilst speaking of roads, it may be deemed proper, though at the risk of being considered tedious, to state that the first county road that we have any record of as being legally established, was established in 1845, and is thus described in the petition asking for it: "To commence at the house of Samuel Nicholson, thence running in a northerly direction so as to strike John Conrey's claim near the south-west corner of it; thence by the nearest and best route to Knoxville." Viewers, John T. Pierce, Reuben S. Lowry and Garret W. Clark; surveyor, Isaac B. Power. The next one was petitioned for in January, 1846, and is described to run "from McPherson's, by way of Durham's ford, to Knoxville;" and the next related to the "re-location of a territorial road where it crosses the

lake in Lake Prairie; thence to the termination of it." About the same year the road from Red Rock, via Burch's mill, to Knoxville was established. The want of technicality in the descriptions of these roads was owing to the fact that the country had not yet been sectionized, which was not done till 1846-7, and then only so far as the west line of that part of the purchase open to settlement in 1843, as described in the introductory; therefore the points named in the descriptions were the best known of any that could be named. Several more road transactions followed these, but they are not of sufficient interest to record here. It was not until a much later period than this chapter is mainly intended to treat of, that road matters began to be looked after with any considerable interest. Next in importance to the possession of a homestead was a good and convenient way to pass to and from it; and its importance became greater as the country increased in population, villages and cities sprang into being, and the lands around them began to be fenced into farms.

At the time of which we are speaking, when the early settlers were compelled to make those long and difficult trips to mill, a portion of the way to be traversed was on the prairie, between Oskaloosa and Blue Point, a stretch of about forty miles, where there was not a house. During the summer, when grass was plentiful, the passage of this comparative desert could be made without much difficulty, by traveling till night, then camping out and feeding the teams on the range; but in winter, an attempt to cross it, without sufficient time to do so by daylight, was attended with no little danger. The road was too obscure to be safely followed at night, and there was no object in the dim horizon to guide the traveler in any certain direction. Though the utmost economy of time was necessary for persons going so far to mill, and who had families at home to feed, they were compelled to time their travel so as to stay a night at either of the points above named going or coming.

When the goal was at last reached, after a week or more of toilsome travel, attended by more or less exposure, the details

of some of which we propose to give in other chapters, and the poor man was impatient to be soon on his return with the needed staff of life, he was often shocked with the information that his turn would come in a week. Then he must look about for some means to save expenses, and he was lucky who could find employment at whatever he could do by the day or by the job. Then, when his turn came, he had to be on hand to bolt his flour, as in those days the bolting machine was not an attached part of the other mill machinery. This done, the anxious soul was ready to endure the trials of a return trip, his heart more or less concerned about the affairs of home; and, as this feeling increased, the miles seemed to grow longer, and the journey proportionately tedious.

These milling trips often occupied from three weeks to more than a month each, and were attended with an expense, one way or another, that rendered the cost of bread-stuff extremely high. If made in the winter, when more or less grain feed was required for the team, the load would be found so considerably reduced on reaching home, that the cost of what was left, adding other expenses, could be safely estimated at from three to five dollars per bushel. And these trips could not always be made at the most favorable season for traveling. In spring and summer so much time could hardly be spared from other necessary labor; yet, for a large family, it was almost impossible to avoid making three or four trips during the year.

CHAPTER V.

AN UNPROFITIOUS SEASON—PRIMITIVE MODE OF CLEANING WHEAT—DIRTY BREAD—WOLVES AND OTHER BEASTS OF PREY—FAILURE OF CROPS—BETTER TIMES IN PROSPECT—ERECTION OF FIRST MILL IN THE COUNTY.

The winter of 1843-4 was one of great severity and length, followed by a late spring. The Des Moines river remained closed till the middle of April; then, about the last of May, heavy rains began and continued till the middle of July, so

that what could be planted was but indifferently cultivated. Finally came a keen September frost that cut short what was already much curtailed by late planting and poor cultivation. Some wheat had been sown, but it not only yielded poorly, but was more or less affected by rust and smut; and, owing to the rude manner of threshing and cleaning it, it became compounded with a grit not pleasant to masticate and hard to digest.

As the time may come when the simple modes of threshing and cleaning wheat in use by the pioneers, for the want of better means, may be forgotten, it may be well to preserve a description of them here. Possibly it may never be needed as a recipe, but may some day be regarded as an interesting scrap of history. The plan was, to clean off a spot of ground of a necessary circumference, and, if the earth was dry, dampen it and beat it so as to render it somewhat compact; then unbind and spread the sheaves in a circle, so that the heads would be uppermost, leaving room in the centre to be occupied by the person whose business it is to stir and turn the straw in the process of threshing. Then bring upon it as many oxen or horses as could conveniently "swing around the circle," and keep them thus moving till the wheat was well trodden out. After several "floorings," or layers, were threshed, the straw was carefully raked off, and the wheat shoveled into a heap to be cleaned. This was sometimes done by waving a sheet up and down to fan out the chaff as the grain was dropped before it; but this trouble was frequently obviated by the strong winds of autumn, when all that was needed was the necessary exposure to permit the chaff to blow away.

By such imperfect modes of preparing the grain for flouring, it is not surprising that a considerable amount of black soil got mixed with it, that unavoidably went into the bread. This, with the addition of smut, often rendered it so dark as to have less the appearance of bread than of mud; yet upon such diet the people were compelled to subsist or do without; and

it may be a matter of wonder that this wholesale consumption of dirt did not result in an epidemic.

It may be worthy of record here, that in those days the wheat crop was much more subject to rust than it is now. The reason of this we will not venture to give, but leave it to those whose experience and observation much better qualifies them to do so.

Among other things calculated to annoy and distress the pioneers, was the prevalence of wild animals of prey, the most numerous and troublesome of which was the wolf. While it was true in a figurative sense, that it required much care and exertion to "keep the wolf from the door," it was almost as true in a literal sense. There were two species of these animals,—the large, black, timber wolf, and the smaller gray wolf that usually inhabited the prairie. At first it was next to impossible for a settler to keep small stock of any kind that would serve as prey for these ravenous beasts. Sheep were not deemed safe property till years later, when their enemies were supposed to be nearly exterminated. Large numbers of wolves were destroyed during the first two or three years of settlement,—as many as fifty in a day, in a regular wolf hunt. When they were hungry, which was not uncommon, particularly during winter, they were too indiscreet for their own safety, and would often approach within easy shot of a dwelling. At certain seasons their wild, plaintive yelping would be heard in all directions, at all hours of the night, creating an intense excitement among the dogs whose barking and howling added much to the dismal melody. It has been found by experiment that but one of the canine species, the hound, has both the fleetness and courage to cope with the wolf. Attempts were often made to take them with the common cur; but this animal generally proved himself totally unreliable for such service. So long as wolf would run, cur would follow; but wolf, being apparently acquainted with the character of his pursuer, would either turn and place himself in a combative attitude, or else act upon the principle that "discretion is the better part of valor," and throw himself upon his back in token of

surrender, which strategical performance would so win upon the generous nature of Mr. Cur that peace was instantly made. Not unfrequently dogs and wolves have been seen playing together like pups. But the hound was never known to recognize a flag of truce; his baying, when upon the scent, that sounds like music to the sportsman's ear, seems to say "no quarter!" and the terrified wolf understands it.

Smaller animals, such as panthers, lynxes, wild-cats, catamounts and polecats, were also sufficiently numerous to be troublesome. Of these, as well as of the wolf, none remain except an occasional straggler in the wildest sections of the county, where they may still find a hiding-place. We must except the polecat, who has a strong proclivity for domesticating himself wherever there is a chicken-roost, much to the abhorrence of many farmers' wives, who claim special if not exclusive proprietorship of the feathered stock on the premises.

We think it hardly fair to conclude this list of troubles without mentioning one more that might seem too insignificant to be noticed. But small and contemptible as the mosquito is, she always succeeds in attracting attention, and often very feelingly. This was particularly the fact during the early times of which we are writing, when they came up in such pestiferous swarms, demanding blood in the most imperative tones, that at times neither man nor beast could labor or rest comfortably, except under the protection of smoke. Persons have been driven from the field by their unmerciful charges. But since the country has become thickly settled, and many of the ponds and water-courses that bred them drained, or dried up by cultivation, these little tormentors have been greatly diminished in numbers.

The partial failure of the crop of the summer of 1844, compelled many to resort to the Old Purchase for another year's supply of provisions. A few fortunate ones may have grown enough and some to spare, but the supply came far short of the demand. This discouraging circumstance, together with others already but briefly described, was calculated to drive the struggling pioneers from their purpose; but, so far as we

know, but few abandoned their new homes to return to their old ones. With all their hardships and discouragements the country possessed attractions that fixed their choice, and a fortunate choice it eventually proved to be.

As though dame fortune had repented of the burdens she had imposed upon the people, and was now seeking to make amends, a more prosperous state of things began with the winter of 1844-5. It was one of such unusual mildness that the ground was but little frozen at any time, and plowing could have been done in January. Then came an early spring, and grass enough in April for grazing. That season an abundant crop rewarded the labors of the husbandman. There was no more dependence on the Old Purchase for grain, though it was still necessary to resort to those distant mills to get it ground.

In due time, however, this trouble was also shortened by the erection of flouring mills in Mahaska, and at length in our own county. About the year 1844, Duncan's mill, on Skunk river, north of Oskaloosa, came into operation, and was for several years the most convenient flouring mill. Afterwards Warren's, on the same stream, north of Pella, shortened the distance materially. Then in 1844 Andrew Foster built a saw mill on English creek, in what is now Clay township, to which he afterwards added an apparatus for grinding corn, and this proved to be a great convenience in that department of bread-stuff. To throw a sack of corn on a horse, take it to mill and get home again with the meal, all in one day, was the beginning of a comparatively happy period in the history of that settlement.

About the same time, or probably at a little earlier date, a Mr. Babcock erected a "corn-cracker," near the present site of Bussing's mill. It was afterward moved to Coalport. There was also one on Cedar creek, built and owned by H. Haymaker; and in 1844 or 1845, L. J. Burch erected one on White Breast, that still stands and is used occasionally.

Many others, both for sawing and grinding, were erected in various parts of the county, at later dates. But the most of them were rudely constructed, designed to relieve the press-

ing demands of their neighborhoods. Being water mills they could not be run at all seasons; so, when better accommodations could be afforded, they were abandoned, and some of them are now in ruins. Of these we shall speak more definitely hereafter.

Now, with an increased population and an adequate supply of home productions and machinery, the people of Marion county began to deem themselves sufficiently self-sustaining to support an independent municipality. To this end they applied to the territorial government for a distinct county organization and a name, which were granted in the year 1845. This event marks an epoch in its history, at which we must close this chapter for the purpose of noticing other important events of an earlier date, after which we shall refer to it again with as complete an account as we have been able to obtain.

(To be continued.)

ROBERT LUCAS, THE FIRST GOVERNOR OF IOWA.

We publish as a frontispiece to this number of the Annals, a steel-engraved portrait of Robert Lucas, the first governor of Iowa. To those of our readers who settled in Iowa in her territorial days, this bare announcement will be sufficient to recall the romance of pioneer life as it existed thirty years ago, before railroads and telegraphs were in requisition to maintain magnetic sympathy between the western squatter and his eastern kin. Frontier life, such as it was then, is past and gone forever,—swept away by modern ingenuity and innovation. The log-heap blazing in the clearing, the ax-man's strokes re-echoing in the forest, the yoke-galled ox straining before the unhewn log which, "like a wounded snake, draws its slow length along," to form the settler's cabin, the log house in the grove, the variegated prairie scene of fire, flower or flock, the lazy Indian strolling over the trail or plying the canoe, the prairie sod-house,—these and the like, indeed still have a transitory existence, but are so soon erased by the encroachments of impatient civilization, that all the spice of

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