

THE GARRY OWEN VOTE.

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There are many amusing incidents in the early settlement of Iowa yet unrecorded by the historian, particularly among the political struggles between the whig and democratic parties for supremacy.

The story of the "Woodbridge Sell" has been perpetuated in the April number of the ANNALS, and the tale of the "*Garry Owen Vote*" is now submitted as an episode of like character.

During the territorial days of Iowa, Jackson county, by her unswerving fidelity and large majorities for the democratic ticket, claimed and was awarded the high sounding appellation of the "Banner County," and, as a reward for her faithful services in that behalf, one of her aspiring sons, a stage-driver, was elevated to the commanding position of governor, to the entire satisfaction of his supporters, of whom none were more exultant than the unterrified voters of Garry Owen.

Now, as some of the readers of the ANNALS may not be particularly well posted in the topographical history of their own abiding places, it may be well enough to state that Garry Owen is, or was, a sort of *terra incognita*, situated in Butler township, in the north-western part of Jackson county, and that its inhabitants were composed exclusively of that portion of the Caucasian race known as Catholic Irish, who, it was said, refused to permit any but *whole-hog democrats* to settle within their boundaries, and it was also asserted that the only one among them who could read and write held the office of postmaster, and furnished the tickets for each of the hardy sons of Erin to vote at each periodical return of election day. These representations may, possibly, have been erroneous, but it was an incontrovertible fact that, at the closing of the polls, *that* precinct invariably made the return of a solid and undivided vote.

In the onward progress of events a state government was inaugurated, and the whig party had, to a great extent, succumbed to the strength and numbers of its opponents, when a new and startling phase appeared in the political hemisphere, in the advent of the "*know-nothings*," who, by some undiscovered system of their own, without visible means, silently appeared, grew, culminated, and became victorious, baffling and disconcerting all the schemes and wire-workings of time-honored politicians. Still, however, the usual party machinery was kept in motion, and in the spring of 1855 a regular democratic convention was held, and A. R. Cotton, Esq., of Clinton, duly nominated as their candidate for judge of the eighth judicial district, then composed of Muscatine, Scott, Cedar, Jones, Clinton, and Jackson counties, in which, as the party majority was considered perfectly reliable, and, with a candidate whose character was irreproachable, capability undoubted, and popularity well attested, it might well be supposed there would be no serious opposition.

The astute old whigs, after due deliberation, determined that it would be unadvisable to hold a convention, but suggested that one of their own number, a well known attorney or Cedar county, should be announced as an independent candidate. Of this resolve the ubiquitous "*know-nothings*," by some means or other, possessed themselves, with the further information that he would be warmly supported by the new temperance party, under the lead of Hiram Price, Esq., of Scott county, and sagaciously concluded to aid the movement, which, if successful, they would claim as their victory. The secret workings of the order have never been fully developed, but the machinery must have had skillful engineering, for it seemed to be a modern exemplification of the ancient *veni vidi, vici*, and the conclusion might well be drawn that, *great was America, and "Sam" was his prophet!*

One of the principal objects of their ambition being to demoralize the dominant party, it was a logical conclusion that the "*Banner County*" would be strongly assailed, and, as it afterward appeared, every effort that skill and subtility could

device was made to revolutionize the stronghold of democracy ; among others, the ingenious *ruse* practiced on the ignorant voters of Garry Owen may serve as a specimen.

Knowing their irreconcilable hostility to the know-nothings, a well known democrat (although, secretly, one of the dark-lantern gentry), was despatched to Garry Owen, and, in an interview with the postmaster, informed him, in strict confidence, that it had just leaked out that Cotton had joined the detested order, and that proof could be had of his assisting at the initiation of a candidate, adding that the discovery was made in consequence of the novice refusing to take the obligation, and, being indignant at the deception practiced on him, had divulged the whole proceedings.

This artfully concocted story, coming, as it did, from one of their own file leaders, so exasperated the faithful Hibernians that they at once positively declared that "divil a vote for Cotton" should be given in that precinct, the news of which resolve soon seached him, when, provoked by the audacious calumny, he very injudiciously (as it afterward proved) went before a notary public and made oath that he was not and never had been a know-nothing, and was totally opposed to them and their doctrines. Copies of the affidavit, duly attested by the notary, were forwarded to Garry Owen, and the vile slander was supposed to be fully and entirely confuted. But the wily followers of "Sam" were not so easily disconcerted ; for, the day before the election, the same agent *happening* to visit that part of the country, explained the situation, pointed out to his credulous hearers that it was a well known principle of these sacriligious wretches to deny that they were know-nothings, and, if necessary, to *swear* to it ; boldly asserting that the "affidavit" itself was incontrovertible evidence that their candidate *did* belong to the detested fraternity.

The faithful Celts were puzzled ; there was not sufficient time to obtain further information ; and when the returns of the election were canvassed, it was found that there was not a single vote for judge cast in Butler township.

This unprecedented result was accompanied by the startling announcement that Jackson county, for the first time in its history, had failed to support the democratic ticket.

The sequel is obvious. The Cedar county candidate was elected by a large majority, toward which Jackson county contributed her proportionate share, a result due, in some measure, to the absence of the Garry Owen vote.

PIONEERS OF MARION COUNTY.

BY WM. M. DONNEL.

CHAPTER IX.

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COUNTY OFFICERS — FIRST SESSION OF COMMISSIONERS' COURT — FIRST BUSINESS TRANSACTED — CHANGING THE NAME OF THE COUNTY SEAT — THE ROSE ANN MCGREGOR CASE.

The officers chosen at the first election (the first Monday of September, 1845), were the following:—

Conrad Walters, William Welch, David Durham, *County Commissioners*.*

*The election at which these officers were chosen was a *special* election, and their terms of office expired at the August election in 1846. Then, by an old act of the territorial code, regulating the terms of county commissioners, the one receiving the highest number of votes served three years, the next highest two, and the lowest, one. At the regular election (at the date above mentioned), Samuel Tibbet received the highest number of votes, David Durham the next, and Hugh Glenn the lowest. By authority of an act of the state legislature in 1846-7, the county was required to be divided into commissioners' districts, which was accordingly done at the April term, 1847. All that part of the county north of the river was made to constitute one district, and, in 1847, Thomas Pollock was elected therein to take the place of Hugh Glenn. All that part of the county south of the river and east of the line between ranges nineteen and twenty constituted the second district; and all south of the river and west of said line, constituted the third. Martin Neel was elected commissioner from the second, in 1848, and Miles Gordon from the third, in 1849, as will appear in a list of county officers in another place. At the same date, all of Warren county, which then belonged to Marion, was declared "Warren Precinct," and all the territory west of Warren, also belonging to Marion, was called "Black Oak Precinct."

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