

exploited for the first time near Richmond about 1750. From there it was shipped to Philadelphia, New York and Boston.

In conclusion, is it not curious to think that we have possessed all these great deposits of coal in the Upper Mississippi? Bonaparte dreamed of establishing a vast colonial empire, but the failure of the expedition to St. Domingo changed his plan, and he settled by selling Louisiana to the United States for 60 million francs (1803). The territory then ceded extended from the Mississippi river to the Pacific ocean; it comprises the states and territories of Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon, Colorado, the Dakotas, Idaho, Utah, Montana, Washington, and Wyoming. Thus vanished all of the Congo, all of Morocco, all of the Tonkins of the world.

One does not doubt at this time the tremendous importance of the question of coal especially in a country where timber has been abundant.

We learn today of these facts from our colleague, Mr. Keyes, engineer of Des Moines, Iowa, and we tender him our sincere thanks for the interesting communication.

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#### HOW LE MARS WAS NAMED.

Through the kindness of my wife's mother, Mrs. W. W. Walker, who was one of the party from whom the city of LeMars obtained its name, I am enabled to round out into completeness the story of the naming of that city, as given in that valuable work, "A History of the Origin of the Place Names connected with the Chicago & North Western and Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railways."

LeMars was platted in 1869. Its first railroad connection was built eastward from Sioux City to connect with the Iowa Falls and Sioux City Railroad, now part of the Illinois Central system. When the road was completed to the point above-mentioned, in June, 1870, its promoter, John I. Blair, arranged an excursion party which included a number of ladies.

On arriving at the eastern terminus of the road, Mr. Blair gallantly offered to let the ladies name the new town. The ladies caucused and were unable to agree upon a name. Mrs. Ford, a member of the party, then suggested that one be made from the initial letters of the ladies' Christian names. This was done, and from the jumble of initials two names were

manufactured, namely, "Selmar" and "LeMars." A vote was taken and a majority favoring LeMars, Mr. Blair adopted that as the name of his town site.

The "History of Place Names" says: "as nearly forty years have passed since the name was made, it is impossible to be positive as to the women whose names were used, but it is known to be true that the initials used were as follows."

The Christian names then given are correct; but the name "Elizabeth" should have been given to "Miss," not "Mrs.," Underhill and the title of "Judge" was attached to the name of "Mrs. W. W. Walker," whose husband was not a judge but was the engineer who built the road.

Mrs. Walker writes that otherwise the published account agrees with a recently discovered memorandum which was made not long after the visit. The memorandum for the first time accounts for the use of the capital letter "M" which gives the title the suggestion of a French origin. It came about in this way:

Because there were two married ladies of the party with given names beginning with "L," and two with given names beginning with "M," it was proposed that in the name chosen, "M" as well as "L" should be capitalized. The ladies drew cuts as to which letter should come first in the final choice. The straws they had used in the lemonade were utilized for the drawing. Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Walker won. The plan (with the names of the ladies who worked it out) was as follows:

*L*—for *Lucy*, wife of Judge Ford, and *Laura*, wife of W. W. Walker, of Cedar Rapids.

*e*—for *Ellen*, wife of John Cleghorn, of Sioux City,—or *Elizabeth* Underhill, of New York City.

*M*—for *Martha*, wife of John Weare, of Cedar Rapids, and *Mary*, wife of George Weare, of Sioux City.

*a*—for *Adeline* M., wife of James Swain, of Fort Dodge.

*r*—for *Rebecca*, wife of Dr. W. R. Smith, of Sioux City.

*s*—for *Sarah*, wife of Dr. Reynolds, of Clinton.

Johnson Brigham.

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