

The tenor of the public press seems to be leveling down in the popular mind the eminences of public life. Yet of her native governors all were farm born and country bred.

We have felt that it would contribute to the public good if we would put up in Iowa at appropriate points permanent markers among the people that will tend to establish the conviction that our state is governed by those who by birth and breeding are essentially as those they govern, and hence of like probity if of greater power. Democracy for ages has been an ideal. To realize that it is here that it actually exists has been almost as difficult as its establishment. To celebrate its existence and to promote a realization of it in the public thought through appropriate and imperishable form and text in granite and bronze, is fairly within the scope and purpose of this institution and is one of our chief ends.

In conformity with this thought this department designed, and on September 6, 1926, dedicated the tablet marking the birthplace of former Governor B. F. Carroll, as shown in the accompanying illustration. Tablets to mark the birthplaces of Governors Harding and Kendall are in course of preparation.

THE NAME "LACEY-KEOSAUQUA STATE PARK"

As warrant for applying the name Lacey to Keosauqua State Park we have to suggest:

Much has been said of the pioneering of Major John F. Lacey in circles usually slow to give attention to science or sentiment. But there is a more substantial reason for applying the name of Lacey to the large state park in Van Buren County, notwithstanding there are in Mahaska County in which Major Lacey lived areas which equal or excel it. If the state ever fully pays its debt to Major Lacey these Mahaska County areas will be retrieved from destructive forces and will ultimately receive the name of John F. Lacey.

In the initial period of the Board of Conservation the Curator of the Historical Department served as chairman of the committee to name parks. Doctor Pammel was his associate. Doc-

tor Pammel submitted and moved the report of the committee fixing the name "The Lacey-Keosauqua State Park."

When Iowa was admitted to the Union December 28, 1846, it had been by Congress divided into two congressional districts, substantially like the two present federal district court jurisdictions. The first congressman from the southern, or First, Iowa District, was Syranus C. Hastings, a Democrat, of Bloomington, renamed Muscatine. The district embraced both Van Buren and Mahaska counties and remained unchanged through the succession of Hastings by William Thompson, a Democrat, of Mount Pleasant; Daniel F. Miller, a Whig, of Fort Madison; Bernhart Henn, a Democrat, of Fairfield; Augustus Hall, a Democrat, of Keosauqua; Samuel R. Curtis of Keokuk, and James F. Wilson of Fairfield, both Republicans. Wilson was elected representative in 1862 when the two Iowa districts were reformed into six districts, Van Buren County remaining in the First, and Mahaska falling into the Fourth.

Major Lacey's birth occurred in 1841 in what is now West Virginia. He was of the purest and most valiant colonial stock. With his parents he removed to Mahaska County when it was part of the old First Iowa District. He was then fifteen years of age. In Mahaska County and in the First Iowa Congressional District he matured his education, discovered his literary and artistic instincts, and studied law in the office of Attorney General Samuel A. Rice of Oskaloosa. With Rice as his colonel he entered the Civil War at twenty. He gave full and loyal service for almost the whole period of that conflict. So the Lacey nature was impressed the most during the time when Mahaska was one and Van Buren another unit of the old First Iowa Congressional District. He was as much the beneficiary of First District traditions and examples as were the men who later represented the present First while he represented the Sixth Iowa District. It is not surprising then that in Lacey's congressional career he found it easy to be in harmony with First District congressmen. Brought up in the school of affairs of James F. Wilson and his First District predecessors, he was largely one in thought and action with those later representing the First District, namely, George W. McCrary, M. A. McCoid, John H. Gear, Sam M.

Clarke, and Thomas Hedge, Republicans. And he merely encountered in Congress his boyhood friends as adversaries, in the Democrats, Hall and Scerley.

In 1862, then, when the state was made from two into six districts, Mahaska County fell into the Fourth. Young Lacey, with mounting courage, supported for Congress Josiah B. Grinnell, Republican, from Grinnell; William Loughridge, Republican, from Oskaloosa; and Madison M. Walden, Republican, from Centerville, of the Fourth District—a ten-year period which carried through and effectually closed the congressional history of the Civil War.

In 1873 the second change in Iowa congressional districts occurred. Nine congressional districts from the previous six were made. Mahaska County was put in the Sixth District where it has ever since remained. Lacey was a force from the very first. William Loughridge was again returned from Mahaska County, this time in the new Sixth District, a Republican lawyer. Ezekiel S. Sampson was twice elected, a Republican lawyer from Sigourney. James B. Weaver was then elected and served one term as a Greenbacker, a lawyer from Bloomfield. M. E. Cutts, a Republican lawyer of Oskaloosa, was elected to succeed Weaver, but his seat was contested and awarded to John C. Cook, Democrat lawyer of Newton. Cutts was a second time elected, but died in office and John C. Cook by election succeeded him. Then Weaver, now a Democrat, served two terms, to be displaced in the first election of Major Lacey. It was a transient victory. After one term Major Lacey was defeated by Frederick E. White, Keokuk County Democrat farmer. Lacey then defeated White in 1892, and continued his service by re-election in the Congress until 1907.

The collateral relation of Major Lacey is of great interest. There need be named but the period from '95 to '99, the only two congresses in which Iowa representation has remained unchanged. Sam M. Clarke represented the First District, George M. Curtis the Second, David B. Henderson the Third, Thomas Updegraff the Fourth, Robert G. Cousins the Fifth, John F. Lacey the Sixth, John A. T. Hull the Seventh, William P. Hepburn the Eighth, Alva L. Hager the Ninth, Jonathan P. Dolliver the

Tenth, and George D. Perkins the Eleventh. This was the era of the war with Spain. Iowa in Washington in this period, or growing out of it, had the speaker, Henderson. In the Cabinet were Shaw and "Tama Jim" Wilson. In the Senate Allison, Gear, and then Dolliver. In the Smithsonian Institution W J Magee and Dr. Charles A. White. Two other lifelong scientific friends of Mahaska County in New York were William T. Hornaday and George K. Cherry, who was with Roosevelt on the River of Doubt, and with Roosevelt's sons the present year on the Asian Roof. Two other figures are enough to suggest the effective view of "the Iowa group"—John F. Dillon of the New York bar, and Grenville M. Dodge of the railroad world.

Acts of Congress accredited to Major Lacey and executive orders of like tenor were talked out of evenings in the home of Allison, and elsewhere cordial meetings were held, actually attended by the men named, and often by others. The migratory bird laws, the national parks and monuments, and the transfer of conservation functions to James Wilson's Department of Agriculture came out of these meetings as is revealed by correspondence of these and other leaders of the time which the Historical Department possesses.

It is most appropriate then that the Van Buren County park is named in memory and to the honor of John F. Lacey.

HIGH WATER IN 1858

From all parts of the state we receive accounts of swollen rivers and great difficulties in traveling. The stage from Iowa City was brought last Friday to a perplexing pause on the bank of Skunk river, and many hours elapsed before the mail could be *rafted* to the west side. It is stated that Skunk River has never been known hitherto to take such an impetuous splurge; and many other streams—among which are those respectable dignitaries, the Coon and Des Moines—have gone up to a bewildering elevation. Occurrences of this kind are somewhat singular in the latitude of Iowa during the winter.—*The Iowa Citizen*, Des Moines, February 2, 1858. (In the newspaper collection of the Historical, Memorial and Art Department of Iowa.)

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.