

## MEMORIAL SPEECH BY JUDGE GRANT.

THE Scott County Pioneer Settlers' Association, of Scott county, held their fifteenth annual festival at Davenport, on the evening of January 9th, 1872, on which occasion the Hon. James Grant pronounced the following eloquent eulogy on some of the pioneer dead of Scott county:—

There is always a sadness attendant on our annual meetings. This association was created to preserve from oblivion the memory of the early settlers of this county, and to make some permanent record of past events, which otherwise would be forgotten when our day and generation had departed.

We have all lived so many years in this community that we are now old men and old women. Long before our organization was created, a large majority of the settlers of this county—prior to December 1, 1840—had passed out of existence, without a record of even their names, much less their history.

Every year since our organization we have been called upon to mourn the death of some members of this body whose lives had been passed in usefulness among us, and whose memory was endeared to us by fond recollections. Antoine Le Claire, Ebenezer Cook, Willard Barrows, and Charles Metteer, who had held high positions in society, and been presidents of this body, have all died and been buried by this society, with the honor and respect due to well-spent lives.

Never, in the last fourteen years, have we met, in this hallowed congregation, without performing the melancholy duty of funeral honors to some brave men or women, who had periled their lives in the wilderness, and had been co-workers with us in all these honest and honorable labors

which made this the garden of the valley, and filled it with intelligence, luxury, and refinement.

But in the past year, our associates greater in number and personal character and influence than ever before have died; and the year 1871, from its beginning to its close, has gathered from our midst a harvest of death without a parallel in our history. During that period, eighteen men and women — whose lives had been long, useful, and honorable among us — have been taken from earth to a life immortal. They are numbered as follows: —

Thomas Jones, Leroy Dodge, Jabez A. Birchard, Ebenezer Cook, James Davenport, Rodolphus Bennett, Alanson Noble, Michael Cooper, William Wilson, Isadore Dapron, Jas. Jack, Mrs. Isabella Maclof Wallace, Mrs. Charles H. Eldridge, Mrs. Ephraim Lane, Mrs. Wm. H. Gabbert, Mrs. J. M. Dunn, and Miss Lucy Campbell — daughter of Andrew W. Campbell — and Mrs. Milo Pollock.

You do not expect me to give a short history of the life of each or any of our deceased friends, but in this large array of names, the mention of every one of which will carry our memories to days long vanished, and recall characters and events which had years been forgotten, there are some who occupied the very front ranks in the march of civilization and order which created this county.

Thomas Jones died early in the year. Leroy Dodge, James Davenport, Ebenezer Cook, Jabez A. Burchard, and Rodolphus Bennett, all died between the harvest and the fall of the leaves of 1871. They were among the greatest of the great men of Scott county, in days of yore; they continued tall trees in the forest of talent, industry and energy which has honored Scott county since its habitation by the whites. They trod on and literally rubbed out the receding footprints of the red man, when the Caucasian wave rolled its white crest west of the Father of Waters in Iowa.

Leroy Dodge was, for a long period of his early life, a steamboat pilot and owner, on the river which runs from us to the gulf. He settled in this county and became a lead-

ing and prominent farmer, in 1839. He was elected to the legislature in 1852. No man in his township was more intelligent or useful. In private life he was a good husband, a kind father, and an exemplary neighbor.

✓Ebenezer Cook has occupied as large a place in the confidence of the inhabitants of this county as any other man. He was first clerk of the district court after its organization in this county. He held various places of trust and honor—was in the constitutional convention of 1845—was alderman and mayor of your city, and was connected with the Rock Island railroad from its organization. He was a banker, and at one time the leading one in the state. As clerk of the court, he signed my license to practice law in Iowa. One of the first citizens of the county that I ever saw—my calling and his own brought us in constant intercourse for over a quarter of a century. He deservedly held a high place in your esteem, and his loss to you, as a people, will be long and deeply deplored. This is not a place or occasion for indiscriminate praise or general adulation, much less for censure.

We knew Ebenezer Cook as well as any man outside of his own family, and few men have lived a more useful life—few have done more to give this county and this city the exalted position which they hold in the state of Iowa. In private life, who was his superior?

✓James Davenport was a man who possessed many elements of character in common with Ebenezer Cook and ✓Leroy Dodge. He was a well informed man—perhaps, like those early settlers, not well educated; a man of generous impulses, great prudence and circumspection in affairs. He, with John ✓Sullivan and a few others like them—among them, Dr. ✓Barrows—undertook to build the town of ✓Rockingham, as the county seat of this county, and no greater compliment can be paid to their ability than to say, that for four years they kept it an open question. They contested the palm of place and pride against the most beautiful town site on the river, with a little neck of sand surrounded by a

swamp — against all the odds of wealth and talent scarcely inferior to their own, until the whole territory was convulsed with the contest.

√Jabez A. Birchard was of the most intelligent — perhaps I shall offend no one if I say he was *the* most intelligent farmer that honored the early history of Scott county. In those days it was my privilege to see him often — to know him well. His knowledge not only of farming, but of those general affairs which interest the masses, was very great and very exact. He only lacked the confidence which is needed to make a public speaker, to have been as distinguished in public assemblies as he was the acknowledged leader of his neighborhood.

√Rodolphus Bennett was once connected with a great publishing house in one of the eastern states. He was the first mayor of the town of √Davenport, and would have held many places of public trust, but office-holding and office-seeking were not congenial to his nature.

If time permitted, I should speak largely on the excellent characters of the other old settlers, men and women, who have died during the past year.

It has been to us a year of sadness, “days to be remembered, for they shall be many.” It comes home to our hearts’ core — it follows our waking hours, that death has demanded a hecatomb of offerings from our once numerous, but now little, band of pioneers.

Our pale faces have erased the land-marks of the red son of the prairies; we have cultivated where he hunted; we have supplanted his wigwam with the dwelling, the church, the seat of justice, and the school; we have banished his barter trade of skins, and made depots for commerce and trade by river and rail; we have built up — with the help of our dead — a little republic, where the plow has superseded the bow and arrow, in earning a livelihood, and where intelligence and virtue have driven away barbarism and vice. And, so far as is proper, we may congratulate ourselves and our children, upon the heritage we have

created. But death has stricken both leaders and people of the ancient days. We who live, are being swallowed up and absorbed by a later generation, and we are now on the utmost verge of time.

When we look over the long funeral array of 1871, we involuntarily look each other in the face, and the anxious thought of who shall go next, betrays itself without utterance. We are old men and women, fast tottering to the grave; we must soon follow the large concourse of 1871. A few years like the past and none of us will be left to condole or congratulate.

In the past history of this society, its members who now survive have been afflicted with many sorrows. Scarcely one among us has not lost a connection or relative—a father or mother, a husband or wife, a brother or sister, a son or daughter. Each one has had the piercing iron of anguish enter into his soul, and his life obscured by shadows, clouds, and darkness. Other misfortunes—the loss of estate, the destruction of business, the waste or loss of labor—have been endured at some time of our now long life, by nearly every one now present and absent who belongs to this goodly company.

But the clouds do not always flit between us and the sun. Calamity has been the exception, not the rule of our lives. We have been, and those who survive now are, useful men and women. Our lives have been, in the main, happily and profitably lived, and the future has no perils for us beyond what are common to our nature.

There is a future in this world to the memory of the dead of 1871, and we to-night record it. A life of energy, industry, and truthfulness, has been rewarded in their case by honor and respect in old age and death. Their labors have lived after them. Ours, in common with theirs, will survive us. We were all, like our county, new men. We began with frontier life, with privations and hardships. Our greatest efforts of either mind or body were little things. We planted a prairie, with a field here and another there;

a log cabin in this place, another miles away; we settled a village on the banks of the river; we organized a society first, a neighborhood, then a county, then a village, and then a state.

We can now behold a county with nearly all its land under the plow. Every township has its village, the county-seat the largest city in the state, and the state one of the greatest in a great Union.

We have lived in the age of progress, and we have kept in the fore-front of civilized advancement. We are not now frontiersmen, cut off from civilization, fighting with savages and wild beasts for the land; but we are in the center of a continent of civilized life. Whatever in the progress of art and science contributes to the usefulness and happiness of man, we enjoy. Railroads, telegraphs, steam engines, machinery, everything that lightens labor and gives it value, is ours.

We have created the first city and county of the state. We have the best cultivated fields, and the largest number of any county in Iowa; and we have the most comprehensive and best organized system of public education in the state, and one which will bear honorable mention in any state.

We organized society in the desert. We who survive enjoy civilization in its highest form, and whatever is found to be most useful in the arts. Whatever of happiness there is in morality, and in intelligence, in the school and church, in education and refinement, in constant and easy intercourse with our fellows, in confidence and cheap transit of trade, and sale of products of labor, in the telegraph and printing press — is ours to-day, and to the end of our lives.

Most of the old settlers of this county survived the privations, the wants, the perils, and poverty of frontier life. They endured most suffering from 1833 to 1834, but they lived to greet the dawn of a better day for themselves. They

saw the bright sunshine of the rosy-fleeced morn of prosperity, and lived to feel its meridian splendor on themselves and their families.

“Surely goodness and mercy attended them all their days, and they shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

---

THOSE LINDEN TREES.

BY ELIPHALET PRICE.

---

○ MAY my memory cherish long  
 Those days when down the lane I strayed,  
 With ardent gaze to watch for him,  
 Where falls the linden's evening shade ;  
 And when his manly form appeared  
 Where twilight fringed the distant hill,  
 The fire-fly flashed her brightest spark,  
 The evening minstrels piped with skill.

I listened to the clattering hoof,  
 As swift, more swift his sorrel flew,—  
 A timid country girl was I—  
 And he was from the country, too.  
 How often in that lane we met ;  
 The kiss he gave none ever knew,  
 While loitering homeward on the side  
 Where trees their evening shadows threw.

Each with a hand the bridle held,  
 And sorrel knew each grassy place,  
 For there he'd fetch us half around—  
 Which always brought us face to face.

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.