IOWA CITY : A MINIATURE FRONTIER OF THE FORTIES

Cold census figures for 1840 placed the western edge of settlement about sixty miles west of Fort Armstrong on the Mississippi River. In the interior, on the Iowa River and near the present Iowa City, lived the Sauk and Fox Indians. Among them was the trading house of John Gilbert, an agent of the American Fur Company, who had located there in 1836. While at Fort Armstrong in the fall of that year he induced two young Hoosiers, Philip Clark and Eli Myers, to come to the Iowa River Valley where they staked their cabins and claims. Revisiting Indiana they spread the news of their discoveries, and the next spring, accompanied by four neighbors, they returned to their claims with teams, plows, and seed. These men were the spray thrown in advance by the tides of migration.

Forsaking the American Fur Company, Gilbert decided to erect a post of his own. Twenty-eight men — eight with families — came during the next year and Gilbert engaged workmen to cut and fit logs, dig the cellar, lay the puncheon floors, and finish the clapboard roof for the new trading house. The structure, twenty by sixty feet, contained two cabins with a roofed space between them. At the dedication on July 4, 1837, the thirteen or fourteen men joined in a celebration of songs, stories, and speeches. Some time before one of the builders had hauled up from Bloomington (the present Muscatine) three barrels of whiskey. But only two barrels of this had been given in trade to Poweshiek, the Fox chief.

In the fall the Indians left for their winter hunts. Some

of the white settlers went to Bloomington on the Mississippi River and others located along that stream to chop wood for the steamboats. Others went to Rock Island and a few were retained by Gilbert and by Wheaton Chase, who had taken charge of the American Fur Company post. The winter found the score of settlers without mail or news from the outside world and with no place to go. Bridges and roads were lacking, no reading matter was at hand, but all had longings for the friends and relatives left in Indiana. Life was monotonous, relieved only by ambitions for the future.

To break this monotony six persons met at Gilbert's house in January, 1838. Resolutions adopted at this "large and respectable meeting" asked for roads, bridges, mail facilities, and a post office and postmaster. Pleasant Harris and John Gilbert as delegates walked to Burlington to present these wants to the legislature there in session. Governor Henry Dodge treated the men kindly and in reply to his question as to the number of people on the Iowa River was told there were about 1500. The Governor was greatly surprised and Gilbert's friends were amazed, until the delegate explained that the Governor had not asked what color the people were!

But events were outrunning the resolutions. Johnson County was created in December, 1837, and the Territory of Iowa the next July. Thirty-eight men came to the county in 1838 — about half of them with families. The widely scattered settlers generally located near timber. A grist-mill, a ferry, a sawmill, and various cabins sprang up. Rival towns were created on paper. In the fall fevers and ague visited the settlers. Eight or ten families formed the ebb tide of emigration by returning to Indiana. Money was subscribed for a courthouse and a frame house of two stories, twenty by thirty-two, was put up at a place called

Napoleon. Here the first election of the county was held on September 10, 1838.

"The Commissioners shall proceed to lay out a town, to be called Iowa City." This fiat in a law of January 21, 1839, created a village. Without the magnetism of mines, without shipping facilities, without factories, railroads, or trunk routes for travel — without any resources except the latent wealth in the soil — Iowa City was born. After the meeting of the commissioners in May, the capitol grounds were laid out, the town platted, and the first lots sold — all within less than four months.

Raw and unkempt as it was, the village did not hide its new fame. The mild winter had invited immigration. Over a hundred men — about half with families — settled in the county during the year. Among them was Chauncey Swan, one of the commissioners who located the capital. Crowds of visitors, entertained at Wheaton Chase's trading house, selected claims for their future homes. Poweshiek's band moved up the river to hunt and trap and gradually migrated to the westward. Interest in furs, trading houses, and Indians was shifting to public lands, immigration, markets, roads, homes, and the new capitol.

Demands for county roads increased with the quickening tide of incoming farmers. Samuel H. McCrory located the first road from Iowa City to Napoleon — a distance of less than two miles. At almost every session of the county commissioners petitions for new roads or for the extension of old ones were presented. "To view, mark and lay out a road" became an oft repeated form in the minutes of these commissioners. Road viewers and supervisors were allied with surveyors, chainmen, and flagmen in opening travel routes between farms and the village.

Four territorial roads linked Iowa City with the Mississippi River ports in 1840, according to John B. Newhall,

pioneer publicity man. To the northwest the old "Military Road" led to Dubuque and its 1200 people — a distance of seventy-five miles. To Davenport containing 513 people another road ran eastward fifty-two miles. Over the thirty odd miles of road to Bloomington with its 530 people mail, passengers, and freight were carried. From Burlington, a city of 1200 inhabitants, a road led northwestwardly to Iowa City, the new capital of the Territory — a distance of sixty-five miles.

New ferries furnish another index of immigration. South of the village Benjamin Miller's ferry had been in operation since 1838. In 1840 Sturgis and Douglas paid $5.00 for a license to keep a ferry "acrost the Iowa River". Single footmen were charged 12½ cents. The rate was 37½ cents for one horse and wagon and 50 cents for one yoke of oxen or two horses and one wagon; a man with a horse paid 25 and 12½ cents respectively for each additional horse or yoke of oxen; cattle in droves were ferried at 6½ cents each; the ferriage for sheep or hogs was 3 cents per head. Other ferries were established with somewhat lower tolls but at higher license fees.

Taverns and stores were also responding to the needs of the increasing immigration. South of the hamlet at Napoleon, Wheaton Chase's tavern was set up. His bond and license of April 20, 1839, required him "to suffer no disorder nor unlawful games to be used in his house." Edwin Forter's license of $20.00 permitted him "to sell Goods" for a year. During the summer Asaph Allen and G. T. Andrews had connected two log-cabins to be used for a tavern. The roofed space between was a barroom. In the fall Walter Butler and Asaph Allen were each granted a license to keep a tavern. Allen's place, sixteen by eighteen feet, contained but one room. The jovial landlord directed his lodgers up a ladder to the loft where many

aristocratic and fashionable visitors spent their first night on the Iowa frontier.

Would that we might have heard the talk at the taverns and on the sprawling streets. The location, survey, and price of lands, distances, springs, timber, and roads made up much of the speech of land-seekers. The roads to Burlington and Bloomington, the navigation of the Mississippi, the fever and ague of 1839, news from distant relatives, and the price of bacon, flour, seed, and pork were topics of concern. Hundreds were impatient for the opening of land offices where they might purchase lands and change their titles from squatter claims to fee simple. Great ox-teams brought in supplies of farming tools from the Mississippi River posts. On the prairies the thud of the axe — a conquering implement on this frontier — could be heard as the farmer chopped holes in the sod to receive the seed. Occasional Indians watched the heavy plows drawn by yokes of oxen and heard the crack of whips and the hoarse voices of the drivers. More entertained than instructed the Indians learned little about farming, but adopted quickly the short exclamations of the drivers at the heavy "red roots" when the plow jolted against them.

Religious outposts were quickly planted on the Iowa frontier to further the influence of Methodists, Catholics, Presbyterians, and Baptists. In 1839 the Methodists held their first services in a residence, and by the next year were fully organized. Father S. C. Mazzuchelli, a young Dominican missionary priest, celebrated the first mass in December, 1840, at the home of a German mechanic. Long missionary tours took the priest to Dubuque, Galena, and Burlington. At the public sales of lots in Iowa City he had purchased a fine building site and on June 12, 1841, Bishop Loras laid the first corner stone of the church building. "A pile of earth", described the priest, "left by the

workmen after digging the foundation served as pulpit for the orator.'' It was with joy that the young priest the next year reported that in ''the Mission of the Capitol City of Iowa may be counted five hundred Catholics''.

But some darker hues appear in these fugitive frontier pictures. Oliver Atwood, a Methodist preacher, was murdered in 1838 on the nearby prairies — supposedly by Indians. In the next year fines were imposed for the sale of whiskey to the Indians and Elizabeth Skinner was indicted for breaking one of the ten commandments. Andrew J. Gregg, an intelligent and athletic looking man and a jail-breaker from Michigan, had fled to Iowa City where he was soon arrested and indicted for ''passing counterfeit money''.

The county had no place to confine him, so Gregg, who was without any sureties, became a prisoner without bail or jail. Thirteen or fourteen men, besides the sheriff, took turns at furnishing a watch over him. The expenses for the county mounted as it paid bills for ''attending prisoner'', ''guarding prisoner'', ''services as guard'', ''board and attention'', ''boarding'', and ''committing said prisoner''. Such costs were almost equal to the revenues from taxation, and in desperation the county finally committed the prisoner to Jonathan Harris under oath. ''You do solumnly sware in the presence of All Mighty God that you will well take the body of Andrew J. Gregg into your Custody and there safely keep him so far as your abilities until the next session of the District Court in and for the County of Johnson Territory of Iowa.''

Gregg was boarded, chained, tied, guarded, and hand-yoked, by turns — but finally escaped. Later his name was vaguely linked with Bowie knives, pistols, horse thieves, and counterfeiters. He became a legendary figure but the contemporary description of ''a fine-looking fellow'' gradu-

ally faded into that of "a gentlemanly cut-throat" forty years later.

Other rough aspects of the frontier appear. In 1840 prisoners were "teamed" to Bloomington for safe-keeping and the costs included board, candles, guards, and irons for the prisoners. A tavern keeper was allowed $1.75 for "dieting" United States prisoners. Ludwig C. Hartz hanged himself at a tavern where he lodged — and perhaps had boarded. An infant child was found dead at the house of Mason Vail. The county paid a doctor for medical services to a "Miss Merrit", a charity patient, charitably called a "pauper".

Doctors and lawyers had meanwhile joined the streams of farmers, storekeepers, laborers, and freighters to the new village. A century and a half earlier in William Penn's frontier colony such professional men had not been so welcome. "Of Lawyers and Physicians", wrote a Quaker there and then, "I shall say nothing, because this countrey is very Peaceable and Healthy; long may it so continue and never have occasion for the Tongue of the one, nor the Pen of the other, both equally destructive to Men's Estates and Lives."

Dr. Henry Murray, arriving in 1839 fresh from a medical school of Kentucky, ministered to the needs of the sick people of Iowa City for forty years. Dr. Isaiah P. Hamilton was the first county recorder. Dr. Jesse Bowen, six feet six inches tall, rode his favorite charger "Charley", like a grenadier. Next to his profession he was devoted to Henry Clay and Whig principles. From Bloomington came lawyers attracted to the town by the business growing out of land sales and by its political atmosphere. In 1841 in Iowa City and from adjoining counties sixteen lawyers were ready to counsel, to prosecute, and to defend — as well as to collect for and from clients in the hamlet.

Chauncey Swan was authorized to lay out the village and the capitol site. In June, 1839, he bought tools and a large scraper at Dubuque. Surveyors, laborers, and workmen with teams were employed and a stone quarry was opened near the Iowa River. Advertisements for bids for the building of the capitol were placed in territorial newspapers. The sale of lots was advertised in eastern papers and hundreds of maps of the village were distributed. Colonel Thomas Cox, portly and dignified, was the chief surveyor and supervised the survey of the town in July and August. Two thousand stakes were used in making the surveys for the village and fifty posts nine feet long were used for the corners of the capitol square and for various lots reserved from sale. White oaks, bur oaks, hazel brush, and heavy vegetation made the work of surveying more difficult than the laying out of sections and townships on the open prairies, and Swan complained that the luxuriant vegetation and heavy dews made work early in the forenoon impossible without exposure to "illness and death".

The first sale of town lots was conducted for three days — August 18-20, 1839 — at the "Lean Back Hall", a rudely constructed building provided with liquors in front and sleeping quarters in the back. Here the perspiring auctioneer sold 103 lots for a total of $17,292. Governor Robert Lucas, who, with his two daughters, had come to the village on horseback from Burlington, was a spectator at the sales. The Governor did not patronize either end of the "Lean Back Hall", but lodged at the home of Matthew Teneick. He advised Swan to increase the work at the quarries to insure a larger amount and better grade of stone. In the next month the big scraper was removing ground from the capitol site eastward toward Iowa Avenue. The site was being transferred from surveyors to architects and builders.

On November 12, 1839, John F. Rague and Company of Springfield, Illinois, secured the contract for the building of the capitol, and for the next four months Iowa City awaited the coming of the architects. Two years before Rague had won a prize of $200 for the best plans for a statehouse at Springfield and during the construction he had been retained as the supervising architect at a salary of $1000 per year. He brought with him in the spring a force of laborers, masons, stonecutters, and carpenters. By April the little capital was vibrating with activity. The grounds were cleared and digging for the foundation was resumed. The original contract, later greatly modified, required the completion of the building in two years at a cost of $46,000.

To John B. Newhall, a careful observer, the village in May presented "all the appearance, bustle, and activity of years, rather than a prodigy of months." Its population he estimated at 700; it contained a "spacious city hotel", three or four brick buildings, ten dry goods, grocery, and provision stores, one drug store, a saddlery, two blacksmiths, a gunsmith, four "coffeehouses", a church, a primary school, four lawyers, and three physicians. He saw the "rising" of one hundred buildings and heard the workmen engaged on about fifty more. A Pennsylvanian had a frame house containing his goods. "Five days ago", said the owner, "my house was in the woods, growing."

A visit of Joseph Jefferson, the actor, to Chicago in 1838 yielded a picture of scenes in most part repeated in the frontier capital of Iowa a few years later. Jefferson walked through Chicago, a town of about 2000 people, "busy even then, people hurrying to and fro, frame buildings going up, board sidewalks going down, new hotels, new churches, new theatres, everything new. Saw and hammer, — saw! saw! bang! bang! look out for the drays! — bright and

muddy streets, — gaudy-colored calicos, blue and red flannels and striped ticking hanging outside the drygoods stores, bar-rooms, real-estate offices, attorneys at law, — oceans of them!'' In 1840 the population of Chicago was 4470 — only about eight or ten times that of Iowa City.

Then came 1840 — a year of raucous politics and hero worship! Harrison and Clay were the booming notes in Whig campaign songs. Van Buren was President illumined by the legend of Old Hickory. Contemporaries of Washington were still active, and the Revolutionary War was closer in years to its veterans than the Civil War is to its few survivors in 1930. Abraham Lincoln, hardly known to any of the pioneers on the Iowa River, was an obscure member of the legislature of Illinois. The new republic of Texas was a land of promise but Oregon was an unknown country. It was the springtime of national growth and expansion. Iowa City was attracting the best blood from the east and south. Youth, optimism, hard work, and opportunity were the elements of conquest on the Iowa frontier of the forties.

In July, forty or fifty settlers departed from Johnson County to the Dubuque land office with wagons, provisions, camp equipage, and plats of two townships of land. For over a year they had been in possession of their farms; surveys had been made; timber had been cleared; the ground plowed; crops sown and reaped; and buildings constructed. The Johnson County Claim Association, of which many were members, regulated their surveys and protected their rights, but it could not issue a title or resist the sovereign claims of the government.

Both private and government surveys measured in chains, rods, and yards, appeared in the recorded claims of the Association. In hazardous English and spelling appeared boundary lines of furrows, the Iowa River, ra-

vines, the Indian boundary, and the meanders of streams. One line ran to a "hickry Elm at the mouth of a slough" and another to a "hickery Stake in the Prairie". Marks and initials hewn on bur oaks, white oaks, "burch" trees, maples, sycamores, willows, and cottonwoods were made and respected. And in the Iowa River Valley with its free acres the pioneers preferred — or at least understood — locations in terms of cherry stakes, mill sites, trading houses, marshes, and "slues" to those of the mathematics of latitude and longitude.

"We traveled by easy stages," wrote a member of the group, "and reached Dubuque on Saturday, August 1st. On Monday morning early we had made all arrangements for the sale. The bidder and assistant bidder had furnished themselves with large plats of the two townships to be sold, with each claimant's name plainly written on the subdivision which he wished to purchase. When the time came for the sale to begin, the crier stepped out on the platform, inviting the bidder and assistant to take places on the platform beside him, took hold of one side of the plat, and began at section No. 1, and called out each eighty acre subdivision as rapidly as he could speak. When he came to a tract with a name written on it, he would strike his hammer down, and give the name to the clerk. He thus proceeded taking the sections in numerical order. The two townships were offered in less than thirty minutes."

A semi-circle of silent buyers watched this process as the crier called out the sections of township seventy-nine north, range six, and township seventy-nine north, range five. By twos and threes purchasers advanced to the platform where piles of United States silver coin and Bank of Missouri bank notes were counted. The first certificate, No. 1208 for 240 acres, was issued to Peter H. Pattison and James P. Carleton. The 57 purchases by the Johnson

County men on the first day ranged from 8.46 acres to 327.36 acres and the total sales of 8,273.65 acres netted the land office $10,342.06. Samuel H. McCrory, the bidder, purchased 240 acres.

Farmers, doctors, county officials, merchants, and hotel keepers made purchases. "On the 5th of August", noted Cyrus Sanders, county surveyor and the assistant bidder, "we started for home, many of us enjoying the comfortable feeling of being owners of real estate for the first time in our lives." This process of acquiring lands — the prime motive in the westward drift of population — was repeated a thousand times on the American frontiers.

By this time the spirit of work and building was emanating from the capitol square. Piles of lumber, sand, lime, "stone in the rough", buckets, shovels, spades, carpenters' and masons' tools, and ropes — teamsters, blacksmiths, stonecutters, and common laborers — such were the daily scenes in the summer and fall of the early forties. Great blocks of limestone were hauled by teams of horses and oxen from the nearby "city" quarry and from the Cedar River quarry about twenty miles away. Commissioner Swan and the foremen at the quarries kept the daily payrolls. The specie hauled from Burlington required a safe which had been purchased in St. Louis and brought overland from Bloomington. Heavy reports from blasting charges of powder and brimstone at the quarries echoed down the valley. Almost every kind of labor — skilled and unskilled — was in demand.

On July 4, 1840, work gave way to a holiday celebration. The southeast corner of the capitol had been built two or three feet above the ground. Men, women, and children of the county and many visitors watched Governor Lucas settle the corner stone in place. A copper box fitted into the stone contained the laws of the United States and of

the Territory, the Organic Act, the Constitution of the United States, the Declaration of Independence, territorial newspapers, and specimens of silver and copper coins. The reading of the Declaration of Independence, a dinner, toasts, and a "grand ball" in the evening ended the ceremonies. When would the capitol be finished? When would the Governor and the legislators come? When would Iowa City become the capital in fact as well as in law?

Work, anticipation, and preparation marked the summer and fall months of 1841. Walter Butler, the tavern keeper, aided by several public spirited men soon furnished a building for the temporary quarters of the legislators to convene in December, 1841, at Iowa City. More buildings rose; a millinery store was opened; at the new "English and Classical School" of C. F. Hardie tuition was payable in cash, produce, or mechanical labor; Virginia tobaccos, hats, shoes, dry goods, queensware, burned brick, and hides were some of the offerings for sale; press and type for *The Iowa Standard* had been brought in by ox-team and the issue of April 29, 1841, carried the mournful tidings of the death of the Whig President. A barber invited all "to have the protuberance of his chin developed from the face, so smoothly, that you may go to sleep under the operation." The wife of Dr. Henry Murray who had come as a bride to the capital heard and saw with wonder the noise and newness of this frontier community. Sixty-seven years later she recalled the wild strawberry patch and the rattlesnake den located only a few blocks from the rising capitol.

The village was becoming a "city"; the taverns "hotels". Generous estimates of population appeared and notices of brick buildings found their way to printed accounts. *Godey's Lady's Book* was widely advertised and a school for "young ladies" was opened. A tailor, a "Ladies' Riding Habit and Pelessee Maker", was another new-

comer. A course of twenty-four lessons in vocal music was offered according to the "Pestalozrian system of instruction." In midsummer a "cotillion" was held at the National Hotel where a large number "engaged in the serpentine windings of the dance".

In thus becoming more urbane the "city" did not escape the sarcasm of James G. Edwards, a Burlington editor, who was pleased neither over the loss of the seat of government by his city nor with his meals in Iowa City. "It is not", he described, "the land of milk and honey, that is certain for we saw neither on the table at any of the five or six meals we partook. Chickens must also be scarce, for though there was one plate appeared on one occasion, we could not get even a 'drumstick' before it was all gone. It appeared to us as though they did not expect anybody to eat any thing before the Legislature convened there, or they were saving their provender to make a good impression on the 'members'."

The words "port of Iowa City" and "steamboat landing" echoed the longing hopes of a community located in the interior, and dependent upon the Mississippi River towns for its imports. The arrival of the steamer, *Ripple,* at Iowa City on June 20, 1841, was deemed an extraordinary event. A committee of citizens invited Captain D. Jones to a public dinner at the City Hotel where a series of toasts, animated and hopeful, predicted the growth of river navigation. Steps were taken to solicit money for the removal of obstructions in the river. Two days later the *Ripple* departed with a cargo consisting of five cases of Iowa City "marble". The freight on the shipment consigned to Burlington and weighing 200,000 pounds was $200.

The Iowa pioneers gladly paid tribute to the majesty and usefulness of the Mississippi, but Charles Dickens, a

traveller on its boats in April, 1842, wrote of it: "It is well for society", he observed, "that this Mississippi, the renowned father of waters, has no children who take after him. It is the beastliest river in the world."

The *Ripple* did not make a return voyage and not until April 21, 1842, did the next steamer, the *Rock River*, make its appearance. Workmen on the top of the capitol raised the cry of "steamboat!" early in the forenoon. "Emerging from time to time", wrote an observer, "from the thickets of timber variegating the banks, puffing, blowing, and converting the deep black waters of the Iowa into foam of milky whiteness, contrasted with the luxuriant foliage of the trees, the deep green of superabundant vegetation, and the azure-golden serenity of the Heavens, afforded a field worthy the contemplation of the enthusiast and could not fail to generate the inspiration of poetry in the heart of the admirer of nature and the ingenuity of man."

But what were the thoughts of a group of Indians on a distant bluff as they watched this invasion of the scenes of their ancient homes?

Captain Thayer bowed to the cheers which greeted his vessel. In the afternoon about a hundred persons boarded the steamer — "elderly citizens with their daughters, young, blushing and gay as the summer's morning, dashing belles and beaux in profusion". Later generations of canoeists have not detracted from the sentiment and romance breathed in these lines. The vessel returned from its fifteen mile cruise upstream without mishap. On the next visit of the *Rock River* on April 20th, Captain Thayer brought in a cargo of freight from Burlington and Bloomington.

Nearly two years passed before the coming of the next steamer, the *Agatha*, in March, 1844. The vessel, 119 feet long, 19 feet wide, and 3 feet in depth, had been built in

1842 at Pittsburgh and was owned by Captain James Lafferty and George Collier of St. Louis. She imported a quantity of freight for Jones and Powell and departed with a shipment of wheat and pork. The captain's hope to return in a few weeks seems never to have been realized.

The *Maid of Iowa,* built at Augusta in the Iowa Territory, in 1842, docked at Iowa City on Sunday, June 2, 1844. The steamer was captained by Daniel M. Repshell, and had a length of 115 feet and a width of 18.4 feet. Joseph Smith of Nauvoo, Illinois, held the craft in trust for the Mormons. On departing she towed a keelboat which broke in two a few miles below the landing and spilled 1000 bushels of corn into the stream.

Late in the same month the *Emma,* constructed two years before at Pittsburgh, and having a length of 127 feet, came to Iowa City with salt and groceries. The second visit of the *Maid of Iowa* in the following September perhaps marked the end of steamboating at Iowa City during the territorial period. Her down stream cargo was wheat, probably destined for St. Louis.

A heavy snowfall on November 16, 1842, ushered in a long, cold winter, and the thick ice groaned on the Iowa River. But Swan's Hotel advertised warm rooms, well furnished, attentive and accommodating servants, and the table furnished the "best the country affords". A large, commodious, warm stable well equipped with horses, carriages, sleighs, and a stage office invited travellers. Dr. Joseph K. Rickey, the dentist, proffered "Butler's Old Stand" enlarged and equipped with stable, horses, and sleighs. The Globe Hotel offering cheap prices sought the patronage of the legislators.

Hotels, observed the village paper in November, were nearly ready for the legislators, visitors, office seekers, and the genteel loafers. The new Governor, John Chambers,

arrived. "For days", remarked an editor the next month, "our hotels, avenues and squares have been filled with a horde of office seekers more numerous than the frogs of Egypt." One Frank Reyno advertised that his place "shaves smoother, washes cleaner and cooks better than any amateur in the west." During the legislative sessions he promised suppers of pheasant, squirrel, and quail on short notice and "served up a little slicker than anything out west."

The lawmakers who assembled in the new capitol in December, 1842, soon became aware of the severe simplicity of its furnishings and furniture. The secretary of the Territory was allowed $46.00 for providing fuel and candles for the Governor's office; $150.00 were expended for 75 cords of wood; the Reverend Samuel C. Mazzuchelli was paid $60.00 for furnishing storage room for twelve months for the furniture of the legislature; Morgan Reno was paid the sum of $76.20 for providing fuel and candles and for removing furniture from Burlington to Iowa City; in another bill he was allowed $2.00 per day for the thirteen days spent in carrying a part of the funds for legislative expenses from Dixon, Illinois, to Iowa City. The stoves were sometimes troublesome pieces of furniture in the cold winters. One day a legislator introduced a motion "that gentlemen be not allowed to smoke in the halls." Immediately another member moved to insert after the word "gentlemen" the words "and the stove".

Occasionally a Puritanical spirit rises out of the sober records of these pioneer lawmakers. A law of 1843 bore the title, "A law to prevent immoral practices". Among other things this law provided a fine of $5.00 for any one over fourteen years of age who performed "common labor" on Sunday. Likewise the selling by grocery stores of liquor except for medical purposes made the seller liable. An-

other provision declared that any one who profanely cursed, damned, or profanely swore within hearing of any religious assemblage was liable to a fine of $1.00 to $.25 for each offense.

In 1843 streams of immigrants continued to pass through, if not to, the little capital. The frontier was extending westward and settlements were leaping over the plains to Oregon. In March, 1843, a meeting of pioneers near the village perfected plans for organizing a company of immigrants to Oregon. Captains were chosen, hunting parties were named, and all males between eighteen and forty-five were required to bear arms. Letters appear from Oregon immigrants giving advice and information for the journey. In May six or eight ox-teams with men, women, children, dogs, and cows passed through Iowa City on their way to the Oregon country.

The spirit of migration was in the Mississippi Valley, animating new land offices, new towns, new lands, fresh opportunities, and new routes. "Our people", noted James K. Paulding, "have more of the locomotive principle than any other, not excepting the Israelites and the Arabs. . . . But the people of the 'Great West' beat all the rest together. I hardly met a man, or indeed woman, who had not travelled from Dan to Beersheba, and back again, and 'settled' as they were pleased to term it, in half a dozen places, some hundreds, perhaps thousands of miles distant from each other."

A generous and grateful posterity in its reminiscent moods sometimes paints pioneer conditions in colors darker than the pioneers themselves saw them. Amusements and fun leavened the hardships on the Iowa frontier of ninety years ago. Lecture courses of home talent were offered and musical programs given. In the legislative chambers the Iowa City Lyceum debated such questions as "Ought

capital punishment exist by law?" Here, as elsewhere, the fiddle not only yielded its tunes but also played its part in the social life of the frontier. In 1844 a ball was held at the "City Inn" by a party of young people who had come up from Bloomington in a dozen sleighs "richly freighted with the beauty and fashion of our neighbor".

A grand wolf hunt furnished a diversion. Captains and marshals were elected, rules were adopted, a circle of mounted men with clubs and guns gradually contracted, and — one or two wolves were captured. A notice, "Marksmen Attend", invited men to a shooting match on a nearby farm. The prize was a several hundred pound hog at one dollar per chance or shot. Here, it was urged, pork can be secured cheap since the marksmen "stand the chance of going the 'whole hog' for one dollar."

On July 4, 1843, Iowa City was heavily charged with joyful enthusiasm and patriotism. From miles around the pioneer folk had come to do homage to the great event of sixty-seven years before. "By 11 o'clock", wrote an observer, "our town contained more of the real bone and sinew of the land, more hoary headed patriots, and decidedly more youth and beauty than we have ever witnessed on a similar occasion in Iowa." A procession was formed in front of the capitol square and in the July sun the banners and badges furnished a gay scene. Two hundred school children furnished perhaps more noise than dignity in the procession, which marched over the principal streets. The perspiring throngs then went to the Methodist Church where they applauded, if they did not listen to, the address by H. D. Downey.

But at the public barbecue in the park the hungry folk gathered quickly. From a huge "Independence Cake" great slabs were cut and distributed among the people. For a "lighter" diversion two balloons were sent up. One of

these sailed far to the north furnishing a spectacle which at present might cause the capsizing of student canoes on the Iowa River.

Then came a broadside of thirteen regular toasts — to the President, Governor, judges, the assembly, and to the Territory. To Iowa City : "May it soon become a mighty Babylon, renowned for its great and good works, as was the former Babylon for its evil works." Then in quick succession came eleven volunteer toasts, the last of which was to the "Ladies of Iowa" : "More beautiful than the flowers that bloom on the prairies. May they be celebrated for their transcendent virtues." Chivalry was not unknown among pioneers on the Iowa frontier eighty and ninety years ago.

With a population of about 900, Iowa City included a little less than one-third of the people of the county in 1846. Arriving in November a pioneer woman found corn selling at $.05 per bushel, and hominy the principal diet. The winter was so cold that the water-mills on the Iowa River froze up and bread became a luxury. The prairies were strewn with the bones of animals that had been the victims of prairie fires. Wild game and fowl were abundant and hungry flocks of wild turkeys were trapped in barnyards where they had ventured in quest of food.

The healthfulness of the prairies and the fountain of youth on the frontier were topics not omitted in the gazetteers and immigration tracts sent to the East, but in reading the professional cards of seven doctors in this village one is impressed more by their claims to skill than by the health of the people. The western frontiers sometimes shook with ague but in Iowa City "Clemen's Indian Tonic", for chills, ague, and fever, was ready for sale. Sufferers could also find relief in "Dr. John Sappington's" fever and ague pills which gave "life and vigor to the whole

vital functions''. Who among the 869 inhabitants in 1846 — excepting the physicians — could resist the testimonials for ''Wistar's Balsam of Wild Cherry'', a compound of the moss of Iceland, the wild cherry bark, and tar from pines of northern latitudes? The medicine cured consumption of the lungs, for the term ''tuberculosis'' was unknown to the pioneers who antedated Pasteur and the germ theory of disease.

But the virtues of ''Jew David's or Hebrew Plaster'' were pitched in a key several octaves higher. It cured eighteen separate pains and ills — from asthma to gout. Its discoverer was an eminent Jewish doctor whose modesty withheld his name. The remedy was on sale by ''respectable dealers in every town and city in the West'' and the relief it wrought — not to say incommensurable — was never calculated.

Of the thirty-seven mail routes in the Territory four entered and four left Iowa City. Every Monday at noon the mail departed for Keokuk where it arrived at six in the evening of the next day. The trip to Marion — a weekly service — required twelve hours. Tri-weekly mails from Bloomington arrived at Iowa City at six o'clock the same day. On the three other days the villagers sent their letters to Bloomington.

Transportation, markets, and prices constituted the economic triangle. Inland settlements and river towns were always seeking cheaper importations and greater returns from pioneer produce. Roads, the seasons, and sometimes the coming of the legislators affected prices. In September, 1846, oats sold at $.10-$.12 a bushel and potatoes for $.12-$.16; fresh butter was $.06-$.08 per pound, eggs $.04-$.06 a dozen, chickens $.75-$1.00 a dozen, and lard $.04-$.05 per pound. The housewife paid $1.50-$2.00 a dozen for brooms.

But let the merchant at "No. 1 Commercial Row" cry some of his wares:

Java, Rio & St. Domingo Coffee, brown and loaf Sugar, Young Hyson and Imperial Teas, molasses, mackerel, pepper, allspice, ginger, cinnamon, tobacco, sperm & tallow candles, bar and Castile soap, powder, shot, lead, percussion caps, indigo, madder, copperas, peppersauce and mustard, shells and chocolates, &. &. Furs, Green and Dry Hides, Beeswax, Tallow, Lard, Butter, Eggs, etc. taken at the highest market rate, in exchange for Goods.

As in any place or time there was much of humdrum and prosaic living. An old *Day Book* of 1846 and 1847 now and then relumes a community in its shopping at a frontier store. One account charged the "State of Iowa" with desk locks and another for six yards of crepe to be worn in honor of a member of the legislature who had died. Hogs and wheat were taken in trade and the freighting wagons carried produce to, and a varied lot of goods from, Keokuk and Bloomington. Butter at $.10, coffee at $.12½, whiskey at $.40 per gallon, and eggs at $.05 per dozen are random examples of prices. Of the 4500 or more credit accounts in the *Day Book* less than five per cent are against women. The account of Mrs. James Harlan (later among the wives of senators and cabinet officers) seems not only modern but feminine:

2 yds Lace 15	30
1 pr Scissors	37½
2 prs. Mitts 31 2 pr to be returned	
1 pr. Slippers — Returned	
	67½

"Emigration is pouring in upon us", remarked an observer in 1846, "and settling up the fine country along the Iowa and the Cedar rivers, which .... cannot be surpassed

in beautiful scenery, fertility of soil, health of climate or advantage of locality.'' But with the establishment of the land office in Iowa City this year its records become one of the Domesday books of settlement in Iowa. In ten months five hundred and seventy-five tracts were sold to residents of almost every county of the State and of various States from Maine to Missouri. Forty acres was the most common size for the areas sold but the numerous purchases on September 10, 1847, of Hendrick Peter Scholte, the president of the Utrecht emigrants association and the founder of the Holland settlement at Pella, Iowa, amounted to 5229 acres.

At Iowa City sales were made for lands in Benton, Poweshiek, Tama, Mahaska, Marion, and Jasper counties. To its receiver and register flowed a stream of field notes and surveys. In its office were lists of townships surveyed, of townships platted and recorded, of other townships surveyed but unplatted. Some were in process of being surveyed and another set had only the exterior lines run. Scores of townships marked by an ''H'' were under contract for surveys.

Nearly 4,000,000 acres had been surveyed in the ''Iowa City District'' by the end of 1848 and over half a million acres had been sold. The surveyors, like scouts, had pointed out the outposts and the land officials directed the army of occupation. The goal of every member of the army was land — a farm at $1.25 an acre. It is a humble figure. But what millions have contemplated it in their visions and heartened their hopes for a home!

Interested as later generations are in the work, joys, hardships, and social life of this miniature frontier of the forties, one doubts that the pioneers were conscious of the wonders of the year 1846 — the Mexican War, the acquisition of Oregon, the occupation of California, the Mormon

exodus, the use of the electric telegraph, the Wilmot Proviso, and the admission of Iowa to statehood.

A lapse of eighty or ninety years furnishes a perspective of pioneer beginnings but much of hope, aspirations, joy, and sorrow has faded from record and memory. A veil is soon drawn over the intimate history of a community. Migrations continued, railroads came, and pioneer aspects of the frontier moved westward with the tide. But in a changing world there remained some immutable foundations. Thousands and thousands of titles to property — the basis of community life — are traceable to early pioneer purchases, sales, and transfers of land. An enduring monument with its rows of columns facing Iowa Avenue has also survived the pioneer epoch. Those who in passing read the simple date, "July 4, 1840", and feel the breath of the stone upon them, are paying silent tribute to the pioneer spirit which abides in the foundations of the Commonwealth of Iowa.

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