The Palimpsest

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

THE PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH
Superintendent

THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

In early times palimpsests were parchments or other materials from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY JOHN ELY BRIGGS

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Lowell

In the southeastern part of Henry County in Baltimore Township, where the Skunk or Chicauqua River winds its way among the wooded hills, lies the quiet and peaceful village of Lowell, nestling in the valley beside the flowing river.

In the pioneer days, Lowell was one of the important industrial centers in rural Iowa. Scarcely had the Black Hawk Purchase been concluded before numerous settlers came pouring into Iowa to make their future homes. The first settlers in the vicinity of Lowell arrived in 1834, and to this location were attracted many men of energy and enterprise in the years that followed.

The river was the making of the town. At this point, where the river channel is narrow and the current swift, the enterprising pioneers quickly saw the opportunity to develop extensive water power, a factor much needed in the growth of a new country.

Flour and meal were prime necessities among the pioneers. While game, vegetables, and wild fruit were abundant, bread stuffs were scarce and at first could only be obtained by a long trip over ungraded roads to mills in Illinois. Hence, the grinding of grain and the making of flour were the first industries to claim the attention of the settlers. The river offered a splendid opportunity at this point.

In 1838, William Smith and Thomas Angel built a dam across the river and began the erection of a flour mill to serve the needs of the people. The demand for labor caused by this enterprise attracted many settlers, and soon a prosperous village was formed. Among the prominent families that settled in the locality were the Boxes, the Archibalds, the Smiths, the Jackmans, the Stevensons, the McFarlands, and the Browns, all enterprising people whose influence and energy brought prosperity to the community. The flour mill proved a success from the start, and when completed was patronized by the people for many miles around.

As interest centered in this locality, other industries were developed. Since lumber was in great demand to supplement the log-cabin homes of the settlers, sawmills were established to supply the necessary material. Justice Clark, observing that corn was plentiful and of little market value, built a distillery in 1840 which consumed much of the surplus corn. It ran for four years, and free whisky was kept on tap for all who cared to partake.

The original town was platted by a man named McCarver and was first called McCarversville. About 1840, however, the town site came into the possession of Edward Archibald, an enterprising man from the East. Because the water power seemed to give promise of great manufacturing possibilities, Archibald changed the name of the town to Lowell, hoping that some day it would rival the industrial city of Massachusetts for which it was named.

In 1839 the United States government began the construction of a military road from Burlington to the Indian Agency on the Des Moines River. This road went through the new village. When it was completed an immense emigration followed this route and as a consequence hotels or taverns were opened at Lowell and many points along the road.

In 1852, Joseph Brown built a grist- and sawmill on the south side of the river to serve the rapidly settling country. This mill soon acquired a fine reputation and was patronized by farmers from a distance of fifty miles. At all hours the mill yards were filled with wagons and teams waiting for their grist. In order to meet the demand of their customers, both mills in Lowell were operated night and day. In connection with one of the grist-mills, carding machines were operated where the farmers could have wool carded into rolls.

The heavy traffic on the Agency road and the coming of so many people to patronize the mills,

required the establishment of mercantile houses and blacksmith shops. R. J. McFarland operated a tannery for many years, and manufactured a goodly quantity of leather which was in great demand by the pioneers.

On the wooded hills around Lowell was a fine forest growth of white oak trees suitable for cooperage purposes. This business was early established, and shops were started not only in the town but on many of the homesteads in the vicinity. Lowell became the headquarters for all kinds of barrels and kegs and general cooperage, and held this distinction for many years after the Civil War.

Another industry that was started and prospered for a time was the manufacture of spinning wheels, warping bars, and all kinds of weaver's supplies. This industry soon perished, however, because of the growth of great textile mills that rapidly superseded hand weaving.

An extensive pottery business, though not established in the town itself, was yet so closely related to it that it gave life and strength to the community. Dennis and Edward Melcher, two men of German birth, discovered a fine stratum of potters' clay about three miles east of Lowell. These men, being familiar with the art of making pottery, proceeded to develop the industry. Large kilns were built for burning and glazing the ware, which proved to be of fine quality. The Melcher wares soon gained a wide reputation and all southeastern Iowa was

supplied with crockery from the Melcher kilns. This industry continued for many years, but finally faded as the problems of trade and commerce changed.

The citizens of Lowell, though gathered from all parts of the nation, were on the whole a peaceful and honorable people. The claim has often been made that no citizen of Lowell or Baltimore Township was ever convicted of a felony. Whether this immunity from conviction arose from the character of the citizenship of the community or from the failure to detect and punish the derelict might be a mooted question. Certain it is that crimes were committed, and it is equally certain that the criminals were never brought to justice.

In 1864 the people of Lowell were thrown into a fever of excitement by the report that outlaws had entered the home of Edward Folsom, living one mile east of the village, and deliberately shot him as he lay peacefully in bed, then seized two of his horses and hastily fled. Folsom's wife and child, who were unmolested, ran to Lowell and gave the alarm. A posse was quickly gathered and went to the Folsom home, but no sound could be heard from within except the groans of the dangerously wounded man. His horses were found abandoned near Burlington, but no trace of the outlaws was discovered. It has been alleged by some that Folsom knew the man who shot him, but feared to reveal his identity until he learned of his death at the hands of a vigilance committee in Missouri.

Perhaps no political campaign in the history of Iowa was prosecuted with such vigor and energy as the struggle between the followers of Lincoln and Douglas in 1860. In every town and hamlet the partisans of Lincoln were organized into marching clubs and commanded and drilled by some officer or veteran of the Mexican War who was acquainted with the manual of arms. These marching companies were equipped with oilcloth caps and capes and double-wicked oil lamps attached by swivel to the end of a staff so that the lamp would always hang in an upright position no matter what the angle of the staff. These marching companies were called Wide Awakes and when marching at night made a very spectacular appearance. The followers of the "Little Giant" were also organized into marching companies and were officered and drilled in a similar manner. They were equipped with a heavy hickory staff, one end of which was crowned with a bunch of red, white, and blue ribbons. These clubs bore the cognomen of Hickories in honor of "Old Hickory" Jackson.

The rivalry between the two organizations was very intense. Many of the early pioneers of Lowell were emigrants or descendants of emigrants from the southern States, who were strongly proslavery in sentiment and hated the "abolitionists", as Lincoln's supporters were called. In this regard the people of Lowell and Salem were strongly arrayed against each other. During the progress of the cam-

paign, numerous rallies were held by the respective parties where the drilled companies marched and countermarched amidst the plaudits of their admirers. It so happened that the Wide Awakes of Salem and the Hickories of Lowell were scheduled to march at Lowell on the same evening. So bitter was the feeling between the two communities, it was greatly feared that a militant encounter might occur between the two organizations. In such a contingency the heavy clubs with which the Hickories were equipped would make very formidable weapons, while the Wide Awakes with their oil lamps and light supporting staffs would be no match for their assailants. To be prepared for any emergency that might arise, the Wide Awakes of Salem provided themselves with hatchets and butcher knives and other implements of defense, suspended or concealed beneath their oilcloth capes. Wise counsel prevailed, however, and the two rallies occurred without friction, much to the relief of the friends of the respective companies.

Among the pioneers of Lowell were a number of noted characters. Edward Archibald came from New England to Lowell at an early date, and entered at once into the business enterprises of the town. Being possessed of considerable means he was a conspicuous figure in the community. Before leaving his eastern home, he had studied medicine, but it is not known that he was a graduate of any particular school. He opened an office in Lowell

and continued the practice of medicine to the end of his career. Dr. Archibald gained such a wide reputation in the treatment of diphtheria that he was called long distances to treat that malady. It is doubtful, however, if the pioneer physician distinguished between diphtheria and tonsilitis, since both diseases in those days were called putrid sore throat and given the same treatment.

John S. Stevenson was another man that left his mark upon the Lowell community. Stevenson came to Lowell in 1836, and settled in the woods near the river. Four years later he moved to the prairie in Jackson Township where he built a palatial home. In 1845 and 1846 he represented Henry County in the Territorial assembly at Iowa City. Afterward he opened a general store at Boyl's mill which he conducted for several years, but the enterprise was not successful and in 1856 he returned to Lowell to spend the remainder of his life in that village.

One of the most versatile and unique characters among Iowa pioneers was the first settler of Lowell. James Box was born in South Carolina and emigrated with his parents to Tennessee and Kentucky. In 1834 he settled in Henry County, Iowa, one mile southwest of the site of Lowell. He was in the fullest sense of the word a child of the forest. Unlearned in the books of the day, innocent of school attendance, yet he was splendidly equipped with worldly knowledge which enabled him to maintain an independent existence on the fringe of civiliza-

tion. A master in the woodcraft of his generation and familiar with the ways of the frontier, he was well able to cope with the hardships and privations incident to pioneer life. James Box was not one of those adventurous spirits that sought fame and fortune in the new Territory, but came instead to establish a home where he could live a quiet, independent life among his fellows regardless of what race or nationality they might be. The most peculiar characteristic of this queer person was his ability to fabricate strange and extravagant stories. So renowned did he become in this regard that he early acquired the name of being the biggest liar in the Territory of Iowa, a distinction which seemed to please him.

My father, Joel C. Garretson, settled in Henry County in 1837 about six miles from the home of Mr. Box. The two men soon met and father learned something of his neighbor's characteristics. Not long afterward, Mr. Box appeared at my father's cabin but not finding him at home he placed his hands on the door casing and, addressing my mother in his slow deliberate fashion, said, "Well, Mrs. Garretson, I don't suppose you know who I am, but I am the biggest liar in the Territory of Iowa."

"Good morning, Mr. Box", replied my mother without a moment's hesitation, much to the delight of the caller.

The following incident will illustrate the remark-

able temperament of this unusual man. One morning, Mr. Box was walking along the road carrying a small stick in his hand, when he met a neighbor and his wife driving toward the village. After having passed the usual greetings, his friend said, "Tell us a lie this morning, Uncle Jimmie."

"Oh, I haven't time this morning," Mr. Box replied. "Our neighbor's child died last night." And, holding up his little stick, he added, "I am going up to take the measure for the coffin."

Shocked and grieved at the sad news, the man and his wife turned around and drove back to the stricken home to offer sympathy and assistance. But when they arrived they learned, much to their relief, that Uncle Jimmie had told them the lie they had requested.

After the Indians were removed from the Black Hawk Purchase, small bands often returned to the vicinity of Lowell on hunting expeditions. On the occasion of one of these visits a member of the hunting party, known as Indian Jim, decided to remain permanently. For some time his activities were watched with great solicitude by the early residents of the community but they gradually became accustomed to his presence. He erected his hut in an isolated spot and made his living by hunting, trapping, and selling lead ore to his pale-faced neighbors.

Herein lies the principal interest of the pioneers in Indian Jim. He claimed to know the location of

a lead mine from which he obtained his lead ore, but he kept the location of his mine a profound secret. The quality of the ore was fine, and the Indian seemed to be able to furnish any quantity of it to his neighbors. The people, not being versed in the geological formations of the territory, firmly believed that he had a real lead mine. This aroused their cupidity and curiosity to such a degree that the country was thoroughly searched for any trace of the coveted mine. Parties were organized to watch the movements of the Indian, hoping thus to solve the mystery, but Indian Jim was too wary for them all and kept his secret unrevealed. Just before going on a visit to his tribe at the Agency, he promised Lewis Collins, with whom he was intimate, that when he returned he would show him the source of his lead supply. But Indian Jim never returned. The great wealth for which Lowell had so fondly hoped was never discovered, and the secret lead mine of Indian Jim remains a secret still.

A very peculiar character among the people of Lowell was Lewis Collins, a free negro. He was a miller by trade and was employed in the flour mills. Although a majority of the people of the community were proslavery in sentiment, Collins held the respect of his neighbors. It is alleged that several plots to sell him into slavery were frustrated by the people of Lowell.

Before he was employed in the Lowell mills, Collins operated a small grist-mill on Prairie Creek a

few miles west of the town. In those days, millers received their pay for grinding by taking toll of the grist. In this way large quantities of corn were accumulated for which there was small cash market, so it was customary for millers to keep a herd of hogs to consume the accumulated toll. One summer Collins had a fine herd of young hogs that fed daily at the mill, but ran at liberty in the open woods. About the middle of September, these hogs were missing and failed to return. Collins searched the woods in vain. About two miles from the mill in the Skunk River bottom, there lived a man whose reputation was a little shady. While searching in this vicinity for his missing pigs, Collins came upon a pen in the middle of his neighbor's cornfield, and there, carefully concealed, was his herd of hogs.

Here was a problem. Should he report the case to the officers and have his neighbor arrested for the theft of his property? The negro did nothing of the kind. He was a diplomat of no mean ability. Seeing that his hogs were being well cared for, he went quietly home and said nothing, but kept watch over his property. Late in the fall, several farmers in the neighborhood prepared to drive their hogs to market at Burlington. Collins announced that he had a herd ready to go and proposed joining in the drive. On the day designated for the trip, he calmly went to his neighbor's cornfield and drove his hogs away to market. The potential thief did not dare to protest.

The founders of Lowell never realized their expectations. The town was doomed because of its location and changes in the currents of trade. The advent of new inventions, the integration of industry, the introduction of improved means of transportation, and the modifications of the domestic requirements of the people sapped the foundations of the community. Like many another bustling pioneer village, Lowell now lies dreaming of the past and what it might have been. The river, whose power once turned the busy wheels of mills and factories, is as free as it was the day the first explorer gazed upon its rippling waters. The descendants of the pioneers now live in quiet solitude beside the flowing stream, thinking of the energy and enterprise of their ancestors, realizing how futile was their hope that Lowell would rival its eastern namesake, yet conscious that this pioneer village fulfilled its destiny well in the days when the foundations of the Commonwealth were being laid.

O. A. Garretson

Literary Place Names

The names of places in Iowa reflect the life of the times when they were named. Prominent men of the day were thus commemorated by the pioneers — some who are still regarded as national heroes but others like Senator R. E. Fenton, Governor J. M. Rusk of Wisconsin, or William T. Senter, a politician of Tennessee, for each of whom an Iowa town was named, have long since been forgotten. The Crimean War contributed the Russian name Sevastapol to an old town, now a part of Des Moines, while many of Iowa's Spanish-sounding place names were introduced after the Mexican War. The name of the State itself and some of the rivers, counties, and towns are, quite naturally, of Indian origin. Another group of names in Iowa is apparently derived from literature, and perhaps from them something can be learned of the character of the reading matter of the pioneer Iowan.

One author in particular seems to have been doubly popular, for we have both Irving, in Benton County, and Irvington, in Kossuth County. At the time the town of Irving was named (1854), Washington Irving was seventy-one years old. He had begun writing before the age of twenty, and already his *Rip Van Winkle* and *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* were American classics, though his *Tour of the*

Prairies may have been particularly interesting to the people in the West. That his works were read in Iowa is indicated by the fact that the library of the Horticultural and Literary Association at Cedar Falls, one of the early libraries in the State, had a set of his books in 1861. The town of Irvington, founded two years after Irving, was laid out by a speculative town-lot company that hoped to attract the county seat away from Algona. There is considerable, if not preponderant, evidence to indicate that this village was not named for the famous author at all, but for Irving Clarke instead, the first white child born in Kossuth County.

Two other major lights represented are Bryant and Poe. A civil engineer on the railroad, Isaac Howe, was responsible for the name of Bryant in Clinton County. The town was named toward the end of William Cullen Bryant's long career as editor of the New York *Evening Post,* while he was one of the leaders of the antislavery crusade. But there may have been another reason that had a slight influence upon the name of the town: the Midland Railroad had an alphabetical plan for its towns — Almont, Bryant, Charlotte, Delmar, and Elwood, all in a line west from Clinton — and Bryant dropped neatly into its place. Edgar Allen Poe is represented by a township in Ringgold County. Riley Township in the same county would seem promising, but the name comes from L. D. Riley, a member of the board of supervisors.

The waywardness of fame is shown strikingly by the decline in the reputation of Mrs. Lydia Sigourney. During her lifetime she was one of the most widely known and highly esteemed writers of her day. Her work was published in all kinds of magazines, from the *North American Review* to the obscurest Sunday school weekly, and at the time of her death she had half a hundred volumes to her credit, ranging from moral poetry to advice for mothers. The selection of the name Sigourney for the county seat of Keokuk County is credited to Dr. George H. Stone who was one of the commissioners to locate and name the seat of government in the new county. He was an exemplary man except that he went on a yearly spree and was fond of Mrs. Sigourney's pieces, because, it is said, of their "moral and salutary effects in his young family." Mrs. Sigourney herself evidently appreciated having an Iowa town named in her honor for she made provision for the planting of trees in a park at Sigourney. One of her poems relates to an incident which occurred in southeastern Iowa. "The Indian Girl's Burial" celebrates in sentimental rhyme the pathetic death of Kalawequois, a Sac maiden who died of consumption in 1837 and was buried on a hill near the road between Montrose and Fort Madison.

Another Iowa town commemorates the work of an author who died as recently as 1915. F. Hopkinson Smith gained wide popularity through his book *Colonel Carter of Cartersville,* which appeared in

1891. The town in Cerro Gordo County called Cartersville has the book as its namesake.

That the pioneers read history is shown by the fact that they honored the name of George Bancroft. Judge A. C. Call is generally given credit for selecting his name for the town in Kossuth County. Perhaps the name of the town was suggested by the extinct county of Bancroft whose territory now constitutes the northern part of Kossuth County. Along with Bancroft should be noted Clio (Wayne County), the name of the muse of history.

The selection of the names Audubon and Humboldt implies an interest in scientific writing. J. J. Audubon, the noted ornithologist, for whom the county was named, had made a trip through this part of the country in 1843. One section of the *Laws of Iowa,* 1850, reads, Resolved, "that the following shall be the boundaries of a new county which shall be called Audibon", but that peculiar spelling was not retained. Baron Alexander von Humboldt, the noted German scientist and traveller, for whom Humboldt County and its principal town are named, was known chiefly for his twenty-volume description of his extensive explorations in Spanish America at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Turning now to British authors, the name Avoca appears to be a tribute to Tom Moore's "Sweet Vale of Avoca". The town had first been called Pacific and later Botna, but the change is attributed to a railway excursion party. The group walked out

to a hill overlooking the town, and one of the gentlemen, inspired by the quiet valley before him, repeated several lines of the "Sweet Vale of Avoca". One of the ladies then clapped her hands and exclaimed, "That should be the name of the town!" Her suggestion was later accepted.

Two other poems that are favorites even now were evidently read then. H. D. Rice in 1868 named his new town in Lyon County, Doon. He is said to have received the suggestion from a friend, Mr. L. F. Knight, who settled with him on the Rock River. In the fall Mr. Rice returned to Clay County for his family. Thus left in the loneliness of his solitude on the banks of the Rock River, Mr. Knight recalled Burns's poem:

> Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
> How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
> How can ye chant, ye little birds,
> And I sae weary, fu' o' care!

Mr. Knight had the name Doon ready, then, when Rice returned. Auburn, in Sac County, attests to the popularity of Goldsmith's "Deserted Village", although the name was borrowed from the city in New York.

Lord Bulwer-Lytton, whose novel *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1843) is still recommended on most school lists, is remembered in the town of Lytton in Sac County. Stanhope in Hamilton County was named, according to some authorities, for Lady Hester Stanhope, who travelled in the Near East

for many years, and then, having adopted Eastern costume and manners, settled on Mount Lebanon as a seeress whom the natives held in great awe. Ossian in Winneshiek County, it is true, gets its name from the middle name of its founder, John Ossian Porter. But in it perhaps is reflected also the great popularity of James MacPherson's famous poems of Ossian, so highly praised by Byron, Goethe, and others of the romantic school.

It has frequently been remarked that nowhere in the United States does the word Shakespeare occur as a geographic name, and yet there are a great many Avons and Stratfords, and even a Romeo and a Juliet. In Iowa, Avon appears as a country village in Polk County southeast of Des Moines. An Avon was also once a rival of Mt. Ayr for the county seat of Ringgold County, but it never rose above the status of a "paper town". Stratford, a name borrowed from the English town, is found in Hamilton County. Although there is no positive proof, the town name Waverly is generally thought to commemorate the notable series of Sir Walter Scott's Waverley novels. The name is used extensively in the United States, but in every instance except the town in Kansas the *e* is omitted from the last syllable.

Adolph Benson, a professor at Yale University, has written of Frederika Bremer: "It is no exaggeration to say that Frederika Bremer was one of the most celebrated and influential Swedish women that

ever lived.'' Her most notable works were her letters of travel, among which were several concerning Iowa which she wrote while on a boat trip down the Mississippi in 1850. Four names in Iowa record the impression that her visit made. Bremer County, for one, bears her name, at the suggestion of General A. K. Eaton, then a member of the legislature from Delaware County. A postoffice in Bremer County with the name Bremer was established in 1858, and the town and township of Frederika in Bremer County are memorials of her first name. The former name of Lovilia in Monroe County was also Bremer.

Even some of the ephemeral literature has been signalized. A railroad official happened to be reading a book containing the name Carnforth, which appealed to him so much that he applied it to the town of that name in Poweshiek County. The now defunct town of Simoda, a mile and a half east of Harlan in Shelby County, is reputed to have got its name from a character in a novel which one of the first settlers happened to be reading at the time. The town in Jones County once called Blue Cut adopted the name Amber at the suggestion of one of the founders, J. C. Ramsey, for a prominent character in a novel then running serially in the New York *Tribune*. A celebrated old novel, *The Heir of Radcliffe,* is remembered in the town Radcliffe in Hardin County.

But not all towns that bear authors' names were

named for the authors. Thomas Hardy, for instance, had almost no fame in 1881 when the town of Hardy was laid out. Mark Twain was very popular with the pioneers, for they reprinted his work frequently in their newspapers, and yet the town of Clemens was named for a local hotel-keeper. The name Dickens comes from a member of a railroad construction company. Although no information is available relating to Milton in Van Buren County, the Milton of Mills County (now Malvern) was named for Lieutenant Milton Summers, and the Milton of Pocahontas County (now Rolfe) had its name borrowed from Milton, New York. The origin of the name of Emerson in Mills County is not known, but Ralph Waldo Emerson had lectured in Iowa only a few years before the town was founded.

No doubt there are other places in Iowa whose names may be traced to a literary origin, but this selection will suffice to demonstrate one of the influences of pioneer reading and at the same time afford a clue to what was most admired in literature by various influential citizens at different periods. Although our town names may not represent a wide selection in literature, it is usually said that the pioneers knew a few books well. Irving, Scott, Burns, Shakespeare, and the others — these surely represent a worthy literary taste and cultural standing.

ALLEN WALKER READ

Comment by the Editor

THE CHARACTER OF NAMES

The name of a place, like any other noun, is a linguistic convenience. The word which denotes a country, a stream, or a town is in itself merely a symbol by which people may think in common terms. To mention Iowa is to describe the Commonwealth according to the conceptions and experiences of those who see or hear the word. One might think prairies and another tall corn, but to all it would signify the same place. Without such general usage the word which designates a particular object is meaningless. Three months ago "whoopee" was an uncommon exclamation, meaning hurrah if anything, but now it has become a noun which everybody uses accurately but no one can define precisely. It may never get into the dictionary, though for a while at least it will serve as a convenient means of expression.

Place names have much the same origin and development as other nouns. In a study of Iowa place names, Allen Walker Read has discovered that relatively few are indigenous. Creeks seem to be the most common subject of such nomenclature (Willow Creek, Catfish Creek, Big Whisky Creek), but several towns may be placed in the same category

(Eagle Grove, Wall Lake, Strawberry Point). Many of the descriptive names used by the pioneers, like Hoosier Point, Buttermilk Hollow, and Frenchtown, have been supplanted by the more artificial Urbana, Miles, and Gilbertville.

Indeed, most places in Iowa have been more or less formally christened by early settlers, leading citizens, legislators, or railroad officials. The process has been conscious and arbitrary, with the result that the names applied have usually been devoid of local significance.

Names of persons appear to have been the principle source of Iowa place names, though some towns, like Lowell, were named for older cities as an expression of hope. Occasionally a pioneer clung to the same name for the successive settlements he founded in different States during the westward course of his migration. Aaron Street, who emigrated from Salem, New Jersey, founded a town in Ohio, another in Indiana, and his son one in Iowa, each of which was named Salem. No doubt the literature familiar to the pioneers had some influence on Iowa nomenclature; while deep-seated piety may have suggested the virtues of amity, independence, gravity, tranquility, and enterprise as proper names — most of which have now disappeared in a more materialistic age. Perhaps the most peculiar Iowa place names, yet characteristic of the nonchalance of the naming methods that prevailed, are those of Delmar, Le Mars, and Primghar which were manu-

factured from the initials of members of railroad excursion parties.

EVOLUTION OF IOWA PLACE NAMES

To the student of word origins, forms, and meanings, the names of places offer a rich field for investigation. Here is language being made under known conditions: any country or community is a veritable laboratory of etymology. From the place names of Iowa a philologist may deduce various rules of word formation and discover tendencies of usage which may pervade the whole language. In the matter of suffixes, -ton seems to be the favorite in Iowa at present, with -ville second, City third, -burg fourth, -land fifth, and -grove sixth, whereas seventy years ago the order of popularity was -ville, -grove, -ton, City, Creek, and -burg. Similarly, generic names like Point, Run, Prairie, and Corners have gone out of fashion.

Probably the most conspicuous philological tendency in Iowa has been toward simplification of place names. Long, pretentious names, such as Rocksylvania (Iowa Falls), have never been popular. Efforts to change the name of the Upper Iowa River to Oneota, which is shorter and more appropriate though somewhat lofty, have been unsuccessful. In many instances, however, suffixes like City, Junction, and Center have been dropped, unnecessary letters have been omitted, particularly in substituting burg for burgh and boro for borough, apostrophes have

disappeared, and names originally in two parts have been unified as in the case of Vanhorn for Van Horne.

Of course such changes are not accomplished suddenly. Witness the evolution of Sergeant's Bluff (1854), Woodbury (1862), Sergeant Bluffs (1870), Sergeant (June, 1883), and finally Sergeant Bluff (July, 1883). For years Morningside has been the generally accepted form, yet the Sioux City *Journal* persists in the use of Morning Side. Although common usage may vary widely, the spelling of a place name adopted by the National Geographic Board or indicated in the United States Postal Guide may be regarded as official.

PHILOLOGY AND HISTORY

Philology involves history. The specific use and development of words is the story of the language, and the reliability of philological conclusions would seem to depend upon the accuracy of historical observations. Yet between the philologist and the historian a difference appears. The attention of one is directed primarily toward the variations of word forms, while the other looks first for the facts pertaining to origin and usage. The philologist is inclined to accept the sources of information at face value, but the historian insists upon appraisal and rejects the less trustworthy. The historian must know the causes, but the philologist is satisfied with effects.

One of the most fascinating but elusive phases of history is the origin of place names. The facts are usually to be found only in uncertain recollections and the truth is almost invariably obscured by a mass of conjecture. To determine the true origin of Iowa place names would require the critical technique of the historian, involve extensive correspondence, and necessitate the coöperation of many connoisseurs of local history. But until that is done the philology of Iowa place names must remain tentative.

J. E. B.

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[NOTE — The names of contributors of articles in THE PALIMPSEST are printed in SMALL CAPITALS. The titles of articles and of all other publications are printed in *italics.*]

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Illustrations

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