

The **P**ALIMPSEST

OCTOBER 1945

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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

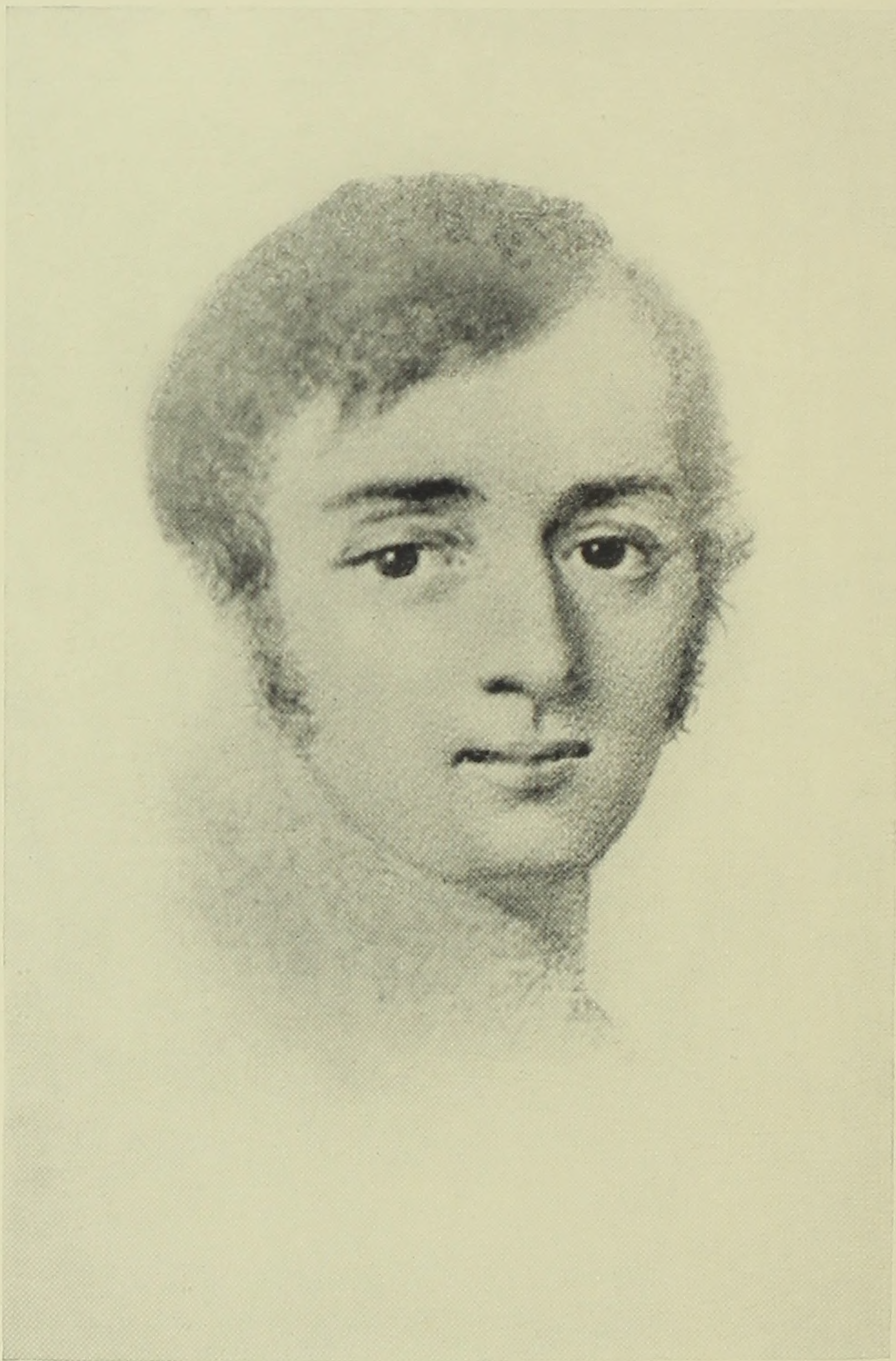
THE MEANING OF PALIMPSEST

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material 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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FROM A PAINTING ON IVORY

COURTESY OF MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

J. N. NICOLLET

THE PALIMPSEST

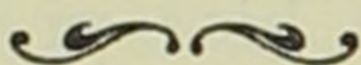
EDITED BY RUTH A. GALLAHER

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J. N. Nicollet Map Maker

When the people of Iowa were considering statehood in 1844 there was much discussion both here and at Washington as to the boundaries of the proposed new State. The constitutional convention adopted what came to be called the Lucas boundaries — the Mississippi River on the east, the northern boundary of Missouri on the south, the Missouri River on the west, and on the north a line running from the mouth of the Big Sioux River to the “middle of the main channel of the St. Peters river, where the Watonwan river (according to Nicollet’s map) enters the same” and then down the St. Peters River to the Mississippi.

Sectionalism dominated the thinking of many Senators and Representatives at that time. More free States meant more Senators opposed to slavery; more slave States meant more Senators to support the South’s “peculiar institution”; more western States meant greater influence for the West as against the original States.

Free-State Congressmen wanted as many States as possible carved out of the area north of the Missouri Compromise line. For the first State in this area they found boundaries to suit their plans in a report which had recently been submitted to J. J. Abert, Chief of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, by the French mathematician, scientist, and explorer, Joseph Nicolas Nicollet. Who was Nicollet? How did he happen to be listed as an authority on the boundaries of Iowa? His story illustrates the threads which have connected Europe with America.

There are conflicting statements as to the early life of the man who suggested the Nicollet boundaries for Iowa and many details needed by a biographer are missing. Most of the data come from the reminiscences of those who knew him and memory is unreliable for dates and names. Authorities record that Joseph Nicolas Nicollet was born in the Duchy of Savoy on July 24, 1786, although the date 1790 is also given. His parents were poor and the little boy herded cows on the mountainside. We are also told that he could play the flute and the violin and that he learned the trade of watchmaker.

But these activities were not to be the horizon of the future. A village priest discovered that this peasant lad had an unusual mind, taught him to

read at the age of twelve, and then secured a scholarship for him at the college at Cluses. There Nicollet became an expert mathematician and at the age of nineteen began teaching at Chambery. In 1817 he went to Paris, became a naturalized French citizen, and for over a decade carried on numerous scientific activities in the French capital. He served as secretary and librarian at the Paris Observatory. He prepared a statement concerning life expectations which was published in Paris in 1818. He had a part in the discovery of two comets. He served as astronomical assistant at the Bureau des Longitudes and later as professor of mathematics at the College of Louis-le-Grand. He wrote, or helped to write, a textbook on mathematics for men in the naval and marine service. That his work in science was recognized is indicated by the fact that in 1825 he received the Cross of the Legion of Honor. Somewhere along his busy life he learned English.

Misfortune seems to have sent Nicollet to America, as it has sent thousands of other men and women to these shores. Along with his reputation as a scientist, Nicollet accumulated some wealth. No doubt his position in society required money and he attempted to increase his savings by speculation on the Bourse, but the outbreak of the Revolution of 1830 brought the loss of all his own

investments and involved a number of his friends in the failure. There seem to have been no criminal charges against him, but the situation was unpleasant, conditions in France were tense, and Nicollet decided to spend some years in America studying the work of early French explorers.

No explanation has been found as to the source of funds for this work, but in 1832 Nicollet arrived at New Orleans. The handsome and cultured French scientist became a popular guest in the homes of French and American families, finding friends along the Mississippi as he moved northward. At St. Louis he became acquainted with the old French and Spanish families, among them the Chouteaus, and he found work in astronomical and geographical observations and surveys along the Red, Arkansas, and Missouri rivers.

But always the mighty Mississippi beckoned him to explore its source, and in the summer of 1836, perhaps financed by his friends, the Chouteaus, he arrived at Fort Snelling where he was made welcome by the officers stationed there, by Major Lawrence Taliaferro of the Indian agency, and by Henry H. Sibley, Indian trader at Mendota. He interviewed soldiers, traders, missionaries, Indians, and half-breeds concerning the country to the north and he sought information as to the Indians, their customs, languages, and way

of life. Could he visit the Selkirk settlement? Could he make a trip to the source of the Mississippi? The answer was always, "Yes". "Well", he replied, "you American beat the dev. Suppose I say can I go to h-ell, you say yes." But Nicollet compromised on an expedition to Lake Itasca.

On this expedition he was accompanied by a half-breed guide, a Chippewa Indian, and a French servant. In making the portage to Lake Itasca, Nicollet said, "I carried my sextant on my back, in a leather case, thrown over me as a knapsack; then my barometer slung over the left shoulder; my cloak, thrown over the same shoulder, confined the barometer closely against the sextant; a portfolio under the arm; a basket in hand, which contained my thermometer, chronometer, pocket-compass, artificial horizon, tape-line, &c., &c. On the right side, a spy-glass, powder-flask, and shot bag; and in my hand, a gun or an umbrella, according to circumstances." The umbrella must have been as strange to his associates as the sextant. Upon his return he produced with pen and ink a beautiful map of the area.

The winter of 1836-1837 was spent at Fort Snelling. Nicollet was a frequent visitor in the home of Major and Mrs. Taliaferro and in the trading house of H. H. Sibley. Intelligent, courteous, and widely traveled, he was a welcome

quest. During winter evenings he often played the violin, while Mrs. Taliaferro accompanied him on her piano, a rare luxury on the far frontier.

News of Nicollet's abilities and interest in frontier surveys had reached the War Department at Washington and he was invited to visit the American capital. Joel R. Poinsett, then Secretary of War, decided that Nicollet was just the man to make an official survey of the unexplored area along the course of the Mississippi north to the Canadian boundary and west to the headwaters of the Missouri and to prepare a much needed map of the region. Nicollet accepted, and from that time until his death on September 11, 1843, he spent his time in expeditions to secure data or in Washington at work on his map and report.

An expedition in 1838 took him up the Mississippi along somewhat familiar paths. A second, in the summer of 1839, was up the Missouri River on the steamboat *Antelope*. From Fort Pierre the party struck north and east to Devil's Lake in what is now North Dakota, and then across to the Mississippi. On both expeditions he was accompanied by Lieutenant John C. Fremont, assigned to this duty by the Secretary of War, by Charles Geyer, a German botanist whom Nicollet had employed at his own expense, by a few friends, and by the usual half-breed guides. How much these

expeditions cost seems to be lost in the archives of the War Department, but an item of \$15,126.90 for "military and geographical surveys west of the Mississippi and north of the State of Missouri" from September 30, 1839, to September 30, 1840, may suggest the expense.

In Washington Nicollet and his assistants worked steadily on the map and compiled data for the report. During part of this time Nicollet and Fremont shared the home of Ferdinand R. Hassler, Chief of the United States Coast Survey. It was an interesting trio. Hassler, a native of Switzerland, had been separated from his wife for some years. Fremont, much younger than the other two, had not yet met his "Immortal Wife". There seems to be no record that Nicollet was ever married, although on one occasion, when an Indian chief offered his young daughter to the distinguished Frenchman as a wife, he explained that he already had one wife and that the Great Father did not permit him to have two. He added, however, that his young companion, Fremont, had no such alibi, and enjoyed the embarrassment of the young officer as he declined the proffered bride and gave her the proper presents. At any rate Nicollet had no family in America and the three men kept bachelors' hall with the aid of an expensive French chef.

That Nicollet had some of the French interest in cooking is indicated by a story related by Fremont. On one occasion during an expedition some Indian guests had been invited to dinner. The main dish was a stew made of fat buffalo meat and wild rice. The *pot-au-feu* was served and all began to eat. At the first bite the Indians laid down their spoons and expressed fears that the concoction was poisoned. The interpreter had to explain that the strange taste was due to some cheese which Nicollet had added to the other ingredients.

As the years passed Nicollet's health failed steadily. His physique had not been able to withstand the hardships his scientific mind had imposed on it. Many a night he had spent in astronomical observations after a day of travel or work. He occasionally relaxed at St. Mary's College, Baltimore, where his host was John M. J. Chauche, then president of the college, and at the home of a friend, Dr. J. T. Ducatel.

Always hoping for recovery, Nicollet continued his work on the huge map and on a report to accompany it which was published under the title *Report Intended to Illustrate A Map of the Hydrographical Basin of the Upper Mississippi River*. It was dated February 16, 1841, but was not published until after his death in 1843.

It was this map and this report which were used

by those attempting to fix the boundaries of Iowa. Nicollet had made specific suggestions concerning the division of the upper Mississippi basin into States. He suggested that two States be formed west of Arkansas and Missouri. Although he does not mention the slavery question, these would have been slave States under the Missouri Compromise. The State of Iowa, according to Nicollet's report, should not extend to the Missouri. His boundaries were the parallel of latitude passing through the mouth of the Mankato or Blue Earth River on the north, the Mississippi River on the east, the northern boundary of Missouri on the south, and on the west "a certain meridian line running between the 17th and the 18th degrees of longitude". This longitude was based on Washington, not Greenwich. Nicollet also suggested that a State could be laid out west of Iowa along both sides of the Missouri River, and north of Iowa there was still enough land for a State.

The western boundary proposed by Nicollet for Iowa lay approximately along the watershed between the tributaries of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. Nicollet explained it as follows: "As the population would be composed of emigrants from all parts of the civilized world, by not extending the boundary so as to estrange one portion of the people from the other, on account of a

difference of origin, or a different course of trade, they would be brought to live contentedly under the same laws and usages; whilst the uniform direction of the waters, together with the similarity of climate, soil, resources, and avenues to market, are well calculated to give to the inhabitants of this State a homogeneity of character and interest highly conducive to their well-being, both morally and politically."

Why Nicollet feared that the settlers on the Mississippi slope would differ from those along the Missouri River is not clear. He may have been influenced by the situation in St. Louis, where he had been impressed by the difference between the old settlers of French and Spanish extraction and the Americans who had come in after the transfer of Louisiana to the United States. The "Missourians", as he called the inhabitants left behind by the Spanish regime, were easy-going, honest, without education, and slow to act. The Americans were energetic and shrewd.

In this connection Nicollet told the story of a "Missourian" who wanted to purchase a slave. He consulted a Kentucky slave dealer and agreed to purchase one of the negroes. The dealer explained that the price of this slave was five hundred dollars but that the buyer had one year's credit on the purchase. The "Missourian", think-

ing of the danger of being in debt, replied, "I'd rather pay you six hundred dollars at once, and be done with it." The merchant, no doubt astonished, replied, "Very well, anything to accommodate you."

But the minds of the lawmakers in Washington were not concerned with the racial backgrounds and characteristics of possible Iowa settlers. Slavery and anti-slavery men watched jealously the shaping of States to come. When the Iowa constitution of 1844 was submitted to Congress in 1845 Representative Alexander Duncan of Ohio introduced an amendment to the act admitting Iowa and Florida, making the western boundary a line running due south from the mouth of the Blue Earth River. He presented as support of this line a copy of Nicollet's map and declared that Iowa would still have about 39,400 square miles and, he claimed, be larger than Ohio.

As finally fixed by the act of Congress adopted on March 3, 1845, the western boundary was to be a meridian line seventeen degrees and thirty minutes west of the meridian of Washington. This was slightly west of the Duncan line but it could be said to follow Nicollet's suggestion that the line run "between the 17th and the 18th degrees of longitude".

The amended boundaries found little favor in

Iowa; settlers had no fear of friction between those on the Mississippi and those along the Missouri. Nor were Iowans willing to accept a smaller area in order that more free States or more western States could be formed. They wanted a river-to-river State and they twice rejected the constitution of 1844 because they were determined not to accept the boundaries specified by Congress, even though they were told that they might have to remain out of the Union. This was no idle threat. Slave State Congressmen were not anxious for the admission of Iowa, another free State; anti-slavery men insisted on more States in the north; some Congressmen wished to strengthen the voting power of the West. But Congress had learned that the settlers knew what they wanted and would have it and in the end Iowa won the Missouri River as her western boundary.

In the meantime the man who had laid out the rejected boundaries was dead at the age of fifty-seven. Although he lived in the United States only eleven years Nicollet left his name in the history of the Upper Mississippi. There has, however, been confusion as to his given name. In many of the reminiscences concerning him, even those by his friends such as Lawrence Taliaferro and Henry H. Sibley, he is called Jean Nicolas Nicollet. Possibly he was confused with the

earlier French explorer, Jean Nicolet. He seems to have signed his name J. N. Nicollet, but even this was not proof against error, for the title page of his famous report bears the name I. N. Nicollet, no doubt the result of a typographical error.

Although Nicollet apparently did not become a citizen of the United States, he was punctilious in his loyalty to the country he served. On one of his expeditions he was invited to a council with some Chippewa Indians. Early that morning he was informed by one of his guides that the Indians had raised the flag of England beside that of the United States. Nicollet suspected that the Indians wished to praise the British and disparage the Americans. He immediately sent word that he was "not provided with a *forked tongue*" and that two flags could not protect the same country. He could attend the meeting under the American flag alone. The Indian chief removed the British flag and apologized.

One of Nicollet's cherished ambitions was to be elected a member of the French Academy of Science. His scientific work in France and in America made him eligible for this honor and his name was presented for election. But the debacle of 1830 was still fresh in the minds of some of his former associates and a black ball ended his hopes of recognition in this field.

But Joseph Nicolas Nicollet seems to have been a universal favorite among the Americans he met. Urbane, polished, brilliant, witty, musical, and affable, astronomer, mathematician, geologist, and cartographer, he was sought as a friend by many Americans of high rank. He was a Catholic and was welcomed by leaders of the church. Few men seem to have been less adapted to the rigors of frontier life. A portrait reveals that he had handsome almost femininely beautiful features. It is not surprising that he cared nothing for hunting and that he was not interested in horses or dogs. He accepted the hardships of life beyond the frontier because of his interest in science. A collection of his papers, lost for years after his death, was turned over to the Library of Congress in 1921; his map and report are buried in government documents of a hundred years ago. But the centennial of the State of Iowa recalls the story of the French scientist who mapped the Upper Mississippi and, except for the persistence of Iowa pioneers, might have prescribed the boundaries of Iowa.

RUTH A. GALLAHER

Hopeville

Hopeville is a name to conjure with. Every village hopes to be a town; every town desires to become a city; and every city aspires to become a metropolitan center. Every municipality hopes for a post office, a railroad, paved streets, sidewalks, a water system, churches, schools, and a multitude of other improvements. In a sense every town is Hopeville. But alas, hopes often vanish. The long-looked-for railroad never comes. The post office is abandoned. Business houses close, until perhaps only a single store remains. Like Goldsmith's Sweet Auburn, "loveliest village of the plain", the once thriving town becomes a deserted village.

Every State in the Union has had its Hopeville, though it may have been known by another name. But in Doyle Township, Clarke County, Iowa, there is a village which is actually named Hopeville. Its name is, perhaps, more fitting than its founders suspected.

The first white settlers in Clarke County were Mormon emigrants who started from Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1846, with the hope of reaching Salt Lake City. When they came to the region that is

now Clarke County, they became separated from the larger group of emigrants, and tarried for a while. They erected cabins at a place which they called "Lost Camp", planted corn, and remained for a year or two before moving on westward.

In 1850 the first permanent settlement was made in the vicinity of Hopeville. Bernard Arnold, James J. Arnold, I. Ellis, Robert Jamison, A. Collier, and John Shearer were among the first settlers. They were followed by a group of emigrants from Van Buren County, which came to be known as the "Hopewell Colony". This lasted only a short time. According to one explanation "every man wanted to boss his own work and do as he pleased. It was but a waste of time to try to work together, so they soon scattered onto farms of their own."

In 1851, it is said, a post office was requested for "Hopewell". It happened, however, that there was already a Hopewell post office in Mahaska County, so the name Hopeville was adopted instead and a post office was established there on December 19, 1851 — the same day on which the post office was established at Osceola. David Newton was the first postmaster at Hopeville and he continued to hold that office the greater part of the time for twenty years.

Good land could be bought in the vicinity of

Hopeville in those days for \$1.25 per acre, but the people who toiled to make their homes there sometimes "shook with chills" or "burned with fever." The winters were hard to endure, for the houses were small and poor — "the first ones all log cabins."

The town was laid out around a public square consisting of an entire block, which formed the center of the village. The first schoolhouse in Hopeville was a log cabin. In this building all public gatherings were held. Here, too, the Methodist Episcopal Church of the village was organized and held its first meeting. By 1850 more people had arrived and those of the Baptist faith erected a little log cabin for themselves. Meanwhile, people of the Christian Church organized and held meetings at the home of Dr. Jesse Emery. With the passing of time, small frame houses came to take the place of log cabins. About 1860 two frame churches — Methodist and Christian — were erected.

These two churches were south of the village square, facing north. Each had two front doors — one for the men and the other for the women and children. A family would come together to the platform along the front, then separate, the men going in at one door, the women and children at the other. If there were a large family of chil-

dren the father as well as the mother might accompany them and sit on the women's side to assist in maintaining quiet and reverence during the long services. On Sunday evenings young men might accompany their sweethearts and sit with them on the distaff side. When the church was crowded, the women might sit on the men's side while the men stood at the rear or outside, looking in at an open window.

When the Civil War broke out, Hopeville responded with its full quota of "Boys in Blue". Under the leadership of Sergeant Edwin F. Alden, twenty-one Hopeville boys joined Company B, Sixth Iowa Infantry. One of these, Orin S. Rarick, was cited for bravery and promoted to captain. Two of Hopeville's young men were killed in action.

When the war was over, the Grand Army post at Hopeville became one of the strongest in southwestern Iowa, and the Hopeville Grand Army Fife and Drum Corps served its own and neighboring communities for many years. Indeed, a remnant of that patriotic group was taken to Murray to help celebrate Armistice Day in 1918 at the close of World War I.

There was a time in the decade of the sixties when Concordia Lodge No. 215 at Hopeville was one of the strongest Masonic lodges in that sec-

tion of Iowa. Members came for miles around and frequently remained to an early hour to partake of refreshments. In 1869 when a new lodge was being established at Murray the ladies brushed past the tiler to serve refreshments to all present. It was a complete surprise to the lodge members and so the Murray Lodge was named Surprise Lodge No. 396. Thereafter membership in the Hopeville Lodge soon dwindled and Concordia Lodge No. 215 was moved to Thayer.

When Hopeville was in its heyday there was an array of hitching posts surrounding the four sides of the village square where farmers might "hitch" their teams while they did the shopping, and many were the occasions when all the hitching posts were in use. In 1869 Hopeville was the second largest town in Clarke County — being surpassed only by Osceola. At that time the town boasted "three general variety stores, two grocery stores, one drug store, one school, one tin shop, one harness shop, one shoe shop, one wagon shop, two blacksmith shops, two lawyers, and three physicians".

How many people lived in Hopeville? There have been both hopeful estimates and census figures on the population. The Iowa census for 1875 reported 332. That was the high point. By 1890 the population was not quite half as large as it had

been in 1875. It had become evident by that time that no railroad would reach Hopeville in the near future. During the next fifty years the population varied but it never justified the name of the town. In 1900 there were 145 residents in Hopeville; in 1940 there were 92.

In 1870 the citizens of Hopeville celebrated the Fourth of July "under their own vine and fig tree". Ample arrangements were made to accommodate the audience, "a large and commodious bower having been previously erected adjoining the Christian Church. A procession was formed in the morning, headed by the Hopeville Martial Band, which marched to the grounds. The meeting was called to order by Chief Marshal Harlan, and James Bates, Esq., was elected President. The Declaration of Independence was read by O. G. Brown, who did credit to himself as a reader." The oration was delivered by M. B. Reese. At the afternoon session a speech was made by P. O. Goss. Joseph Howard, a resident of Hopeville and a veteran of the war of 1812, volunteered a toast to the "Sons of Iowa", which was responded to by M. B. Reese. "Upon the adjournment of the meeting the Calathumpeans, in fantastic garbs made their appearance and entertained the audience; their performance was quite laughable". The Glee Club, "which discoursed

such fine music," the *Osceola Republican* declared, deserved much praise. "It is but just to say that the best musical talent in Clarke County is to be found at Hopeville, and the best that Hopeville had was furnished on that occasion."

In 1871 "Lively Times" were reported at Hopeville. A prominent citizen, locally known as "Ur" Fitch, wanted to become postmaster, but did not receive the appointment. By way of protest he moved to Murray and began the operation of a "Star Line" carrying freight, express, and other packages that might be sent between Murray and Hopeville. Later Mr. Fitch moved back to Hopeville to continue his operations. The *Osceola Republican* in reporting this news item said: "Ur. Fitch wanted the Post Office at Hopeville a year ago. The incumbent Mr. Newton demurred and 'Ur' didn't get it. Not to be foiled, Ur went up to Murray and bought one. He has moved back to Hopeville and proposes to take the property with him. The old postmaster is said to be mad about it, he says that two Post Offices at Hopeville won't pay. We advise consolidation."

In December, 1871, the *Republican* reported that "Dr. Newton, the old and reliable postmaster of Hopeville retires and Ur. C. Fitch succeeds him. Ur. will have to watch his 'P's and Q's' if he comes up to Mr. Newton's standard."

In 1883 Hopeville was dependent upon the town of Osceola for banking facilities, and the nearest railroad shipping point was the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy at Murray. There was stagecoach service to Murray and also southward to Decatur in Decatur County. Hopeville received mail daily and it was hoping still for the day when a railroad would come and bring to it a greater and lasting prosperity. The railroad had not come by 1890, but stagecoach facilities remained. The population had changed but little, and the post office was maintained in connection with Sam Lockwood's hardware store.

In 1906 hopes of obtaining adequate transportation facilities were revived. In January of that year the *Osceola Sentinel* said:

"Hopeville is wonderfully excited over the prospect of getting two railroads, one from Sioux City via Winterset, Thayer and Hopeville on to St. Louis. This is to be a standard gauge double track State R. R. The route has been viewed and pronounced practicable, the papers of incorporation will soon be filed and as soon as the company gets their franchise the route will be surveyed and the work on the grade will begin as soon as spring opens up. The other road is to be a motor from Creston to Arispe on to Osceola via of Hopeville and Lacelle. Those who want to buy Hopeville

property had better do so at once as property has already advanced 25 per cent and the boom has just begun. For thirty years we have been living between hope and fear, hoping for a railroad and fearing it would not come. And how gratifying even in our old age and declining years to think that our fond hopes are about to be realized. Already we fancy we see a fine depot standing on some nearby spot where we may be able to catch the morning train to Osceola without having to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning, drive 10 miles over rough roads or thru mud and rain, but in a palace car we shall reach the city, transact business, shake hands with our old friends, return home in the evening and wonder how we got along so many years without a railroad."

In May of that year a Hopeville news item reported that "The two strangers who are stopping at the Dewey house are here in the interest of the new railroad. They are pricing the lots and looking the city over." At least in the thought of the news reporter, Hopeville had become a city, and there was hope that it might flourish, with the coming of the railroad.

But alas, hopes vanish! By August, 1906, it was apparent that the railroad would not come. Moreover, it appeared that Hopeville might even lose its post office. There remained only the hope

that an interurban might come. A news commentator referring to this situation said:

"The town of Hopeville, historic spot of Clarke county and at one time one of the most prosperous towns in this part of the state, is apt to lose its post office. The new arrangement of the rural routes will probably provide for the distribution of the mails in this place by carriers on one of the Murray routes. The people of the town are very much disappointed at the news and efforts will be made to maintain the office. While it will be only an added convenience to the people to have their mail distributed at the same time it seems hard to allow the name of a town with the historic career of Hopeville, founded in the earliest days of this section of the country, to be taken from the directory of the postal department. But the Hopevillians can wait until we get that interurban out that way and then it will be a city of no small importance."

Such incurable optimism convinces one that Alexander Pope was right when he said:

Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
Man never is, but always to be, blest.

In September, 1906, the postmaster at Hopeville, still firm in his belief that the report relative to discontinuing the post office was mere rumor, inserted in the weekly newspaper this item:

"Notice — It has been reported that the post office at Hopeville is to be discontinued and I am asked that question very nearly every day so I thought best to answer thru the *Sentinel* that it is a mistake. The Star Route [the stage and express service] will stop on the 15 of Oct., 1906."

Meanwhile the town of Hopeville maintained its local interests. Now and again a store would close, and the population decreased somewhat. But the churches, the school, the lodges, the remaining stores, and the village park continued to be the centers of interest. Indeed, the village park for many years played an important rôle in community life. It was the scene of many Fourth of July celebrations, G. A. R. reunions, church and lodge picnics, strawberry festivals, ice cream socials, band concerts, and ball games.

It is reported that on one occasion during the days of the Civil War a copperhead came to town and was "giving free voice to his opinions" when the commanding officer of the militia ordered him placed under arrest. He was sullen and impudent and refused to salute the flag. Whereupon he was compelled to carry the flag around the village square while a few members of the militia prodded him with their bayonets. "He was then ordered to kiss the flag three times and give three cheers for Lincoln".

Upon at least one occasion in later years the village square was used for a funeral. On October 4, 1906, a newspaper reported the following item:

"Our town was all excitement last week over the sudden death of Uncle Abe Coon. He was out in the orchard helping his wife gather peaches when he fell stricken with apoplexy and lived but a few hours. The funeral was held in the park Thursday because no church in town was large enough to accommodate the people in attendance."

Today the Hopeville village square presents a forlorn aspect. Its once gaily decorated band stand is weathered and worn. The hitching posts for the most part have been removed. Only a few scattered trees remain, and weeds have crept in to the once well-kept park lawn. To the north of the square is an almost deserted lodge hall, to the east a little store where farm products may still be exchanged for necessary groceries, and to the south a little school where children still may work and play, as did their great grandsires in pre-Civil War days. But everywhere there is evidence that for the most part the glories of Hopeville lie in its historic past.

Had a gifted poet visited Hopeville a half century ago he might have written:

Sweet Hopeville! "loveliest village of the plain,

Where health and plenty cheer'd the laboring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delay'd."

As one visits Hopeville today, he is moved to write:

"Sweet, smiling village, loveliest of the lawn"

Thy hopes are fled, and many charms withdrawn.

Hopeville is, indeed, almost a deserted village. Yet not wholly so. It still has a church, a school, a few dwellings, and a store, although the post office was discontinued on September 15, 1919. But most of all it has a history — a memory of the past, a record that may well be preserved. Moreover, Hopeville is not an isolated example of an Iowa town that has come, and served, and receded. There have been hundreds of Iowa towns that are now abandoned. Hopeville is perhaps on its way to become a typical deserted village. Meanwhile it presents a fascinating story in justification of the name Hopeville.

JACOB A. SWISHER

An Editor Speaks

Just one hundred years ago the question as to adoption of the Iowa constitution of 1844 was being debated by Iowa newspapers. This constitution, unfortunately, had a Siamese twin — the Federal act creating the States of Iowa and Florida and giving Iowa a western boundary far short of the requested Missouri River. There was an acrimonious debate in Iowa as to whether the twins could be separated. Would it be possible to change the boundaries laid down in the act if Iowa adopted the constitution? Would Iowa be left out of the Union if the voters insisted on the Lucas boundaries? There were many opinions.

On October 22, 1845, the Iowa City *Capital Reporter*, a Democratic paper opposed to the adoption of the 1844 constitution, debated the question of a large versus a small State with the Dubuque *Miners' Express*, another Democratic paper which was giving the constitution grudging support. The *Express* had expressed approval of the argument that more small States would be an advantage to the West. "And how", the Dubuque editor wrote, "is this increased representation to be more effectually accomplished, than by adopt-

ing the policy of having none but small western states admitted into the Union?"

This attempt to sugar coat the bitter pill of the Nicollet boundaries aroused the ire of one of the editors of the *Capital Reporter* who declared: "the public may rest assured that we speak the sentiments of ninety-nine out of every hundred of our citizens, when we say that they will *never* consent to be dwarfed down to about one fourth the dimensions of our neighbors, Missouri and Illinois.

"No curtailment of our dimensions below the amount comprised in the boundaries prescribed by the hand of nature, is in any view, necessary to preserve the equipose of the Union. There is an abundance of territory on our north, west and southwest, to secure this object, without making a sacrifice of poor Iowa. . . . Then what does all this senseless jargon amount to, respecting the necessity of carving Iowa up into potatoe patches, as it were, to secure an equilibrium of representation in the U. S. Senate? . . .

"What, may we ask, is the heinous offence whereby the people of Iowa can have merited such shameful treatment? Is it, that, leaving their homes in the states, sacrificing the comforts of life, exposing themselves to the dangers, the toils, and privations incidental to a frontier life, they have reclaimed and subdued these western wilds, mak-

ing the desert to blossom as a rose — caused the stars and stripes to wave over a land, which but recently, burned with council fires and rang with the savage war-hoop — substituted the busy and cheerful hum of civilization, for the wild orgies of predatory aboriginal tribes and reared a new pillar of support to the glorious fabric of our American confederacy? Methinks that the intuitive self-sacrificing propensity and indomitable spirit of enterprize by which these results have been accomplished, should meet with a very different return. . . .

“There are surely too many liberal, high minded friends of equal rights in the new Congress, to stand by and see us drawn and quartered and cut up into small slices, to appease the morbid appetite of this comorant western power. We do not couple the North with the West, because, from our identity of interest in many respects with the South, the former would be greatly the loser by the policy under consideration, rather than the gainer. — That this monster requires *such* food to subsist on, is quite a recent discovery. — Those whose interests are identified are generally said to be mutual friends; but if the western states, while persisting in such a course, are to be regarded as our friends, may God save us from our enemies.”

Comment by the Editor

TRIANGLES

The modern world knows triangles as geometrical or marital problems, but history presents many other kinds, beginning, perhaps, with Adam and Eve and the serpent. Iowa history has also had its triangles. In 1845 the Iowa area lay at the apex of a geographical right angle. From the mouth of the Des Moines River one side ran north to the Canadian border; the other side lay along the Missouri Compromise line. Iowa was knocking at the door of the Union of States, the first to be admitted in the area included in this right angle. Political leaders looked beyond the apex and coveted the Senators who might represent the States to be.

Here appeared a political triangle. On one side was the North, industrial, favoring a protective tariff, believing in free labor. On another side was the South, agricultural, advocating free trade and slave labor. The third side was the West, agricultural but industrially ambitious, divided by the Ohio River and the Missouri Compromise line into free and slave territory, undecided on the tariff issue. Each group had its aims and ambi-

tions, and new States often held the balance of power.

Although the lines were not always clearly drawn, the debates over the boundaries of Iowa show that many northern lawmakers wanted as many small States as possible in the angle spearheaded by Iowa, for small States meant more free-soil Senators. The South, on the other hand, wanted fewer States in this area, hoping thereby to keep control of the Senate.

The North and the South, representing the original thirteen States, looked with some suspicion on the upstart West, the third side of the triangle. It was the age of Know-nothingism and the West was the alien group in the community of States. There were men from the East who wanted as few States — slave or free — in the West as possible, purely on the basis of East against West.

And so the debate over the size of Iowa waxed hot in Congress and within the Territory of Iowa. But the pioneers had their own ideas on the subject of boundaries and they stuck to them through endless debates and two elections. In the end, Iowa was admitted with the Missouri River as its western boundary as the people had determined it should be.

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