

# The **P**ALIMPSEST

FEBRUARY 1933

## CONTENTS

### *The Settlers Came 1833*

The National Scene 41

HARRISON JOHN THORNTON

To the Land of Black Hawk 53

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

The Half-breed Tract 69

J. A. SWISHER

Squatter Settlements 77

LOTIS PELZER

Pioneers in Person 85

RUTH A. GALLAHER

Comment 98

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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

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## The National Scene

Exactly one hundred years ago, in 1833, the American people completed the first half century of acknowledged and secure independence. By that time they had increased in number from between three and four million to over thirteen million. They were of English, German, and Scotch-Irish stock chiefly, with slight contributions of Dutch and French. This biologic enlargement of fifty years was almost entirely from natural causes, for foreign immigration of the post-revolutionary period was yet in slow and early tide, less than 150,000 having come from abroad between 1821 and 1830. The physical stage on which the American drama was unfolding was, because of the Louisiana and Florida purchases, more than twice as large in 1833 as it had been in 1783. The national domain covered an area of almost 1,800,000 square miles. Eleven new States had been admitted to the company of the



original thirteen, thus bringing the number to twenty-four, exactly half of the present aggregation.

Three phases of economic activity absorbed the energy of the people: agriculture, manufacture, and commerce, but the greatest of these was agriculture. The close of the colonial period had found over ninety per cent of the population either actually at work upon the land or living in small agricultural communities. This was still the case in 1833, and the situation did not change much in the next thirty years. Confined to the Atlantic plain during the colonial years, the agrarian empire had advanced deep into the Mississippi Valley by the opening of the third decade of the nineteenth century, and had even flung its outposts across the great river.

During the eighteen thirties manufacture was in process of transition from the home to the factory. There had been practically no distinction between agricultural and manufacturing economics in colonial times. For the most part the farmer was then not only a tiller of the soil but a jack-of-all-trades. Hard days in the field were followed by long nights in the farm kitchen making implements, furniture, shoes, and all articles and devices necessary to preserve life and to maintain a minimum of decency and comfort in a



near primitive environment. Relief had come to the communities as the specialized craftsman appeared, and to the countryside when he became itinerant, but the revival of individual skills did not disturb the domestic system. Craftsmanship was essentially a part of it. That system was to fall not before the craftsman but the machine.

In the middle thirties household manufacture was still of first importance in the industrial economy of the country, and continued active as long as frontier conditions prevailed. Yet the transition from handicraft to machine production was under way. The most vigorous response to the new techniques had been made by the textiles. The value of products made from cotton alone was estimated at \$26,000,000 in 1830, though the industrial records of the period are faulty and unreliable. Shoemaking had achieved a measure of mass production. Commercial grain milling, meat packing, lumber cutting, coal mining, distilling, leather work, and the exploitation of the metals — iron chiefly — were in process of expansion, though from their nature it is clear that some of these industries never had been literally domestic. The fact is that in 1833 much manufacture had to do with the extractives; "pure manufacture" had hardly more than crossed the threshold of the factory.



To provide for the flow of domestic commerce a transportation system was in process of evolution. Road construction was retarded by political antagonisms, but the Mississippi, Ohio, and Hudson rivers, together with many tributaries, were nature's provision for smooth interchange. Slowly and laboriously the natural waterways had been supplemented by a canal system that constituted a network of 1300 miles in 1830 and which was over 3300 miles in 1840. But the coming of the railroads set sharp limits to this form of capital investment. It was a dramatic decade for the new invention. From virtually nothing at all at the beginning, the trackage had expanded to almost 3000 miles when it closed. Sea-borne commerce was still in the hands of an able class of men that had inherited a notable maritime tradition from the colonial era. Encouraged by Congress, both foreign and coastwise trade was diligently pushed. Exports valued at \$72,000,000 and imports valued at \$63,000,000 witnessed to the favorable trade balance in 1830.

A labor movement existed in the United States by 1833. It had passed beyond the fraternal stage of colonial days as the widening divide between employer and worker became apparent. The twenties had seen the first effort to organize a modern trades union. In 1833 was founded the



General Trades Union of New York City. But these were local groupings. There was no national labor movement, and no appreciable bitterness between capital and labor. The machine was yet in its infancy and the West was a vast and inviting asylum for the discontented.

In 1833 the political tempest that had raged for a decade came to dramatic climax. The issues upon which the turbulent waters broke were personal, social, and sectional. There were too many giants in the land in those days: at least too many men of great ability who made the Presidency the dearest object of their desire and who, failing to achieve it, were wounded in pride and disheartened in purpose. These painful facts were reflected in the conflicting policies and embittered relations of John Q. Adams, Daniel Webster, Andrew Jackson, John C. Calhoun, and Henry Clay, to mention only the chief actors upon the stage. Andrew Jackson overcame his rivals and enjoyed an uproarious progress to the Executive Mansion in 1828, there to remain in secure tenure for eight years. His going thence was the visible evidence of successful social revolt. City workers and farmers had become vocal. Common men of East and West again, as in 1800, had assailed and carried the seats of the mighty. It was a sectional and social victory for the frontier.



But the line of political and sectional conflict was more acutely drawn between North and South. Two issues revealed it sharply by 1830: the tariff and slavery. Since 1816 the protective barriers had been rising. Though undisturbed in the day of high prices for cotton, southern planters increased their opposition inversely to the decline of cotton values. In 1832 furious South Carolinians repudiated the compact of federal union, refusing, as they saw it, to exalt the economic fortune of northern manufacturers at the expense of their own. South Carolina's extremism was thirty years too soon however. Nullification could win no such support in 1832 as could secession in 1860, and when Henry Clay put on the white robe of compromise in 1833 the passionate issue was composed by bargain and balance.

But as the tariff controversy subsided, slavery passion advanced. By 1833 cotton had achieved its *coup d'état* and at the South a new positivism was dissolving the ethical and material doubts about the slave system that the exhausted tobacco lands had induced. In the North, on the other hand, long indifference was giving way to increasing irritation as the two regional systems came more visibly into conflict. Certain northern groups were in open revolt. Garrison had been thundering in the *Emancipator* for two years.



Sharp issues of politics and economics were not the sole concern of Americans in 1833. The social structure was many-sided. Curious foreigners found it irritating or interesting according to personal disposition. Most found it provocative. Alexis de Tocqueville, stirred by the nature and achievements of the American democratic experiment, had just gone back to France to write his great work. After four years in America, Frances Trollope returned home to publish, in 1832, her scathing criticism of American ways, and to tell the world of the "total and universal want of manners, both in males and females . . . I very seldom, during my whole stay in the country, heard a sentence elegantly turned, and correctly pronounced from the lips of an American. There is always something either in the expression or the accent that jars the feelings and shocks the taste." Mrs. Trollope, however, did confess to some regard for the American intellect, but not so the Reverend Isaac Fidler whose judgment was that "There is hardly any village in England which does not possess residents of greater learning than in almost any large town in the United States." Happily, before the thirties ran out more generous appraisals were to be made by foreign visitors.

Without rationalization, a good case could be made for the dignity of the mind and manners of



America at this time. Social grace and clever conversation were in ample evidence in the polite circles of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond, and Charleston, and for many years a steady stream of intellectual stimulus had been flowing from numerous academic centers between Harvard and William and Mary, and from the younger colleges of the hinterland. The proof of personal and group culture might be found in every package of mail, and in newspapers and journals. The behavior of the boisterous throng that had accompanied "Old Hickory" to the capital was really not an index to the manners of all America.

Literature can not be said to have been in flower in the America of the thirties. These were years, however, of nurture and preparation for some who were to bring great credit and some glory to American letters during the next two decades. Emerson was thirty years old in 1833 and the year before had resigned his pastorate in Boston and gone abroad to meet great men as well as to seek relief from "the mouse gnawing in his chest". Nathaniel Hawthorne was twenty-nine, Longfellow and Whittier, twenty-six, Edgar Allen Poe and Oliver Wendell Holmes, twenty-four, Thoreau, sixteen, and James Russell Lowell, fourteen. Some of these already had tried their literary



wings. William Cullen Bryant had completed his poetic cycle and turned to journalism. James Fenimore Cooper's productivity was at full tide, so was that of Washington Irving, and William Gilmore Simms, though only twenty-seven, was giving promise of his literary fertility. John Pendleton Kennedy, and some others, were writing books that ought to be better known, and William Dunlap enriched the decade and obliged posterity with his *History of the American Theatre* and the *History of the Arts of Design in America*.

A tide of romanticism was running strong in American life in the eighteen thirties. It was manifest in political ideas and aspirations, in literature and religion, in the individualism of the frontier, in the recent Utopian venture at New Harmony, and that at Brook Farm at the end of the decade; in the sweeping force of humanitarian and reforming zeal that labored for the establishment of asylums, universal peace, prison reform, woman's rights, temperance, and the abolition of slavery.

The romantic spirit was powerfully marked in educational ideals and purposes. It was the second quarter of the nineteenth century that witnessed the fierce battle for a system of lower education involving public control of schools, support by taxation, compulsory attendance, and non-



sectarianism. Society divided upon this question as passionately as lately it has divided over Prohibition. In secondary education this was the period of the academy with its effort to broaden the base and nature of the curriculum. In higher education there was no relaxation of religious influence and control. Almost every one of the thirty-six colleges and universities established between 1830 and 1840 was the creation and concern of some church group.

Perhaps it was in religion that the romanticism of the period reached flood tide, expressing itself in metaphysical speculations, emotional ecstasies and multiplied interpretations. The romantic satisfactions of these were very great but the trend was highly centrifugal and worked havoc with the ideal of Christian unity. The body of the church was infinitely scattered. There were Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists, many times divided and subdivided within themselves. There were Catholics, Quakers, Dunkers, Rappists, Mormons, Mennonites, Campbellites, Millerites, Dutch Reformed, Unitarians, Universalists, and so on, almost endlessly. There was something for everyone: medieval mysticism, modern rationalism, ebullient emotionalism. The latter was particularly attractive and perhaps inevitable in an environment of sweeping distance,



slight settlement, and crushing loneliness. From such conditions the camp meeting evolved spontaneously, providing means for human fellowship and emotional release. That these often took rapturous and grotesque form in this period is not difficult to understand.

National consciousness, though not national unity, was present and growing in the American mind at this stage of the middle period. It found expression, certainly, in political events and, measurably, in educational experiment and literary performance. It was strong in frontier society. In 1832 Samuel F. Smith had made it vocal in "America". There was less looking back to old-world origins. Americans everywhere loved the rocks, the hills, and the prairies of their native land.

But not all things felt this impulse. The arts, for example, expressed it tardily. Of the painters John Singleton Copely and Benjamin West had gone to their graves nationally inert. Gilbert Stuart had exemplified a genius that owed more to America than to Europe, but Thomas Sully, through a long life that touched the Revolution at one end and Grant's second administration at the other, remained faithful to the English vogue. John Vanderlyn, though breaking with the English tradition, turned not to the American scene



but to France for inspiration. America was still without distinctive architecture unless the log cabin be considered such.

The American republic was in close touch with its origins in 1833. Washington had been in his grave only thirty-four years, John Adams and Jefferson only seven years. John Marshall was still among the living. But the young nation also was approaching its deepest trial and anguish. Ulysses Grant was attending school in Georgetown, Ohio. Both Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis were engaged in the military service of their country, and Abraham Lincoln was postmaster at New Salem, a strong youth of twenty-four. The fathers had not been long at rest, and future leaders and events were close at hand. From this year of curious placement one could see the receding light of the republic's natal star, and could hear the rumble of the gathering storm within whose fury the power of the nation to endure was to be fearfully tested.

HARRISON JOHN THORNTON



## To the Land of Black Hawk

Fourteen cents an acre for six million acres of worthless land! Such, in the opinion of Black Hawk, was the substance of the treaty of September 21, 1832, whereby the first cession of land in what is now Iowa was secured from the Indians. Black Hawk had waged a bloody war largely because he thought the "difficulty of breaking the new prairie with hoes — and the small quantity of corn raised" would result in starvation. Had not the women of Keokuk's band given "bad accounts" about "raising corn at the new village"? Death at the hand of a foe was preferable to starvation. And yet the United States was willing to pay \$655,000 in cash alone for a "worthless" tract fifty miles wide extending along the Mississippi from the southern boundary of the Neutral Ground to the Missouri line.

Fortunately other men disagreed with Black Hawk. When Indian Agent Joseph M. Street examined the territory about the Wapsipinicon and Turkey rivers in the fall of 1833 he was delighted with the "beautiful and fertile" region. The country was so "full of game" that the hunter who accompanied him expressed astonishment at the



abundance of wild life of all kinds except buffalo. The men who surveyed the southern boundary of the Neutral Ground, however, killed many buffalo thirty or forty miles west of the Red Cedar River. During the summer of 1833 Keokuk and his men discovered a herd of three hundred of the shaggy beasts near the headwaters of the Iowa River and killed eighty of them. Elk and deer were abundant on the prairies and bear roamed in the woodlands. The signs of muskrat and otter could be seen on all the streams and ponds. Street actually saw a "beaver dam in progress" of construction on the "Wa-pee-sa-pee-nee-can".

The entire eastern border of Iowa abounded with fine mill streams. The soil was rich, springs were plentiful, and good stone and timber were close at hand. But the rugged nature of the northern half of the purchase was not likely to invite immediate conquest of the soil and probably served to deter those wishing to engage in agriculture. Lead was abundant in the vicinity of Dubuque's abandoned mines, however, and miners on the eastern bank were prepared to rush over and stake out permanent claims. While the mineral region served as a magnet, the country as far south as the Half-breed Tract offered fewer inducements than those afforded in the unsettled portions of Illinois and Missouri where settlement



was at least legal. The Lincoln country about Springfield in southern Illinois received approximately ten times as many settlers in 1833 as did the Black Hawk Purchase.

The last red man had departed before the first spray of immigration was allowed to enter the Black Hawk Purchase. The Indian villages of Keokuk, Wapello, and Poweshiek dotted the banks of the Iowa River on the Keokuk Reserve. No vestige of white occupation could be seen along the eastern border of the Black Hawk Purchase save the ruins of old Fort Madison, the charred cabins of the trespassers driven off by the troops at Dubuque, Flint Hills, and Fort Madison, and perhaps the dilapidated remains of a "house and barn" on the Giard tract.

The land adjoining the Black Hawk Purchase on the east and south was almost as sparsely settled. The population of Illinois in 1830 was 157,445, most of which clung to the rivers that formed its southern borders. With the exception of a small island of settlement in the mineral region, the northern half of Illinois was an unsettled area with less than two people per square mile. Galena was the county seat of Jo Daviess County, which sprawled eastward from the Mississippi to Lake Michigan and as far south as Rock Island.

The exaggerated descriptions of the rapid tide



of emigration was the fruit of an "over-heated brain" in the opinion of the editor of the *Chicago Democrat*. "Chicago, nay the very spot of ground where we are now writing", we are told naively in the first issue of that paper, "a few months since was the abode of the savage; and where are now seen a long line of habitations for white men, a short time ago was unoccupied save by the wigwam of the Indian. The change has been wrought by magic. More than eight hundred souls may now be found within the limits that within a few short months since included less than one-tenth of that number."

It was not until 1835 that the first land sales were recorded in the newly created land offices at Chicago and Galena. The frontier of 1830 barely impinged upon the Black Hawk Purchase opposite present-day Fort Madison.

North of Illinois lay Michigan Territory which included what is now the States of Michigan and Wisconsin. A total of 31,639 inhabitants occupied this vast region in 1830. Most of these were concentrated about Detroit, although a considerable number had settled about Niles and Saint Joseph. Small patches of settlement cropped out at Green Bay and Prairie du Chien, while the lead miners in southwestern Wisconsin occupied a still larger area. Milwaukee had but one permanent



settler in 1833 while Racine and Kenosha were as yet unborn.

Much of northwestern Ohio as far east as Toledo was equally barren. The Cumberland Road was not fully completed to Columbus, Ohio, until 1833. With the exception of a cluster of settlers around South Bend, northern Indiana contained less than two people per square mile.

Northern Missouri was likewise destitute of settlers. The 140,455 people who had entered that State up to 1830 were settled along the Missouri River as far west as Kansas City. A thin film of settlement enveloped both banks of the Mississippi from Saint Louis to the Des Moines River, but no portion of it extended as far west as the Half-breed Tract. A significant factor in the settlement of the Black Hawk Purchase in 1833 was the unsettled nature of the adjacent country.

Probably less than two thousand immigrants came to Iowa in 1833. Of these, the overwhelming majority located in the mineral region about Dubuque. A sprinkling of squatters, soldiers, and fur traders formed the first spray in what is now Scott County. The settlements at Flint Hills and Fort Madison doubtless received most of their pioneers from Hancock County and the contiguous territory. Most of the pioneers of 1833 were apparently from the immediate vicinity.



Prior to the advent of the railroad no other single factor was as important in developing the Upper Mississippi Valley as the steamboat. The mightiest highway in the world formed the eastern border of the Black Hawk Purchase. It served as a link for the fastest, cheapest, and most convenient method of travel in the western wilderness. James Hall, the editor of the *Illinois Monthly Magazine*, urged emigrants to travel by steamboat, particularly if they contemplated coming west in the spring. "The streams are then swollen. The largest rivers rise from thirty to fifty feet above the low water mark; rocks, snags, sawyers, and sandbars, those formidable obstacles to navigation, are now all buried far below the surface; the steam-boat glides without interruption from port to port, ascends even the smallest rivers, and finds her way to places far distant from the ordinary channels of navigation. Business is now active; the number of boats are increased, to meet the demand for transportation; and the *traveller by water* meets with no delay; while the hapless wight, who bestrides an unlucky nag, is wading through ponds and quagmires, enjoying the delights of log bridges and wooden causeways, and vainly invoking the name of M'Adam, as he plunges deeper and deeper into mire and misfortune."



In 1833 steamboats ran from distant Pittsburgh and New Orleans to Saint Louis, the center of traffic on western waters. From Saint Louis other craft ascended the Mississippi, the Missouri, and the Illinois. Of the two hundred and thirty-four steamboats afloat on western waters in 1833, ninety-nine docked at Saint Louis. Eighteen of these ninety-nine craft plied as far north as the lead mines, carrying their tribute of passengers and freight and returning with heavy cargoes of lead. During a single week in May the *Chieftain*, the *Don Juan*, the *Dove*, the *William Wallace*, the *Paragon*, the *Warrior*, and the *Winnebago* arrived at Saint Louis with a rich freight of lead. These boats, it must be remembered, were operating before miners were digging in the Black Hawk Purchase. Eleven other steamboats, the *O'Connel*, the *Express*, the *Utility*, the *Union*, the *Courier*, the *Reindeer*, the *Volant*, the *Albion*, the *Olive Branch*, the *Orion*, and the *Miner*, stemmed the swift current of the Mississippi to the mineral region that year. Only six steamboats are known to have visited the lead mines during the Black Hawk War in the previous summer.

Fares were governed largely by the number of passengers on hand, the number of boats in the trade, the stage of the water, and the season of the year. It cost \$55 to travel by stage and steamboat



from Philadelphia to Saint Louis. Deck passengers could reduce the fare from Pittsburgh to Galena to \$26. Cabin fare from New Orleans to Saint Louis was \$25 while freight cost about sixty-two and a half cents per hundred. Those who could not afford cabin passage in a steamboat were accommodated with deck passage. The deck, for the use of such passengers, was protected from the weather, but had no other conveniences. Passengers on deck furnished their own beds and provisions.

Late in the fall of 1833, Samuel W. Pond, a Sioux missionary, arrived at Galena from Pittsburgh by way of the Ohio and Upper Mississippi. Pond found the cabin fare from Pittsburgh to Saint Louis was \$24 and deck passage but \$8. Fare from Saint Louis to Galena amounted to \$15 in the cabin and only \$5 on the deck. On the way down the Ohio he had been seized with the cholera and accordingly warned his brother of his experiences. Since cabin passage cost three times as much as deck passage, Pond had borrowed a blanket from a fellow passenger. Mackinaw blankets cost as high as \$12 a pair. The table expense was cut by clubbing with other passengers of the same class, for food could be readily purchased at the towns along the way. Pond suggested bread as the chief diet to avoid cholera and



other sickness. Deck passengers were required to assist in taking on wood at the landings, and the youthful missionary found wood chopping was good exercise. Through tickets were not advisable, for a boat might lay over or run aground and the passenger be needlessly delayed.

The northward shift of population into Illinois was affected in no small degree by the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825. Emigrants from New England and New York, according to Robert M. Baird, approached Buffalo by stage or wagon on the road from Albany or by the Erie Canal. Six transportation lines were in operation on the canal besides a number of short-run lines and boats belonging to individuals. Emigrants could leave Albany for Buffalo almost hourly. The price of passage in a packet boat was about four cents per mile, and the common or "line" boats charged from two to two and one-half cents per mile. Emigrant families generally paid very much less.

At Buffalo the emigrant would set out by steamer for Detroit. Cabin passage cost eight dollars while a deck passenger paid but four dollars. A family of five or six with a wagon load of furniture and emigrant supplies could go on the deck in a comfortable manner during the summer for twenty dollars. In one week of June, 1833, seven steamboats arrived at Detroit from Buffalo



with 2610 passengers. Two hundred families in New York were reported to be on their way to Indiana and Illinois.

When Charles J. Latrobe arrived at Detroit in the fall of 1833 he learned that no steamers were likely to ascend the Great Lakes at that season of the year. Indeed, no steamer had arrived at Chicago until the year before. Latrobe therefore set out by land. Travel in "open and uneasy" conveyances around the southern tip of Lake Michigan involved many miles of "dreary road" without the "possibility of shelter." Once Latrobe walked fifteen miles through a pelting storm to the nearest cabin, where bread, whisky, and a few potatoes served to refresh him.

When he reached the "mush-room" village of Chicago he found five thousand Pottawattamie Indians assembled to sign a treaty giving up their land along Lake Michigan. Work of dredging a harbor had begun but vessels still anchored in the open lake. It was not until 1834 that the weekly arrival of steamers from Buffalo was advertised.

Another traveller over this route, Charles F. Hoffman, ferried the St. Joseph River at Niles in a "low sided scow" and drove in a four-horse wagon through the land of a "long-haired race" called "Hooshiers" whom he found "much more civilized" than he had been led to expect.



Stumps and fallen trees, bottomless mudholes and deep sand, impeded his progress. The course of the impressionable Hoffman was guided by stars that "stood out like points of light" while the "resplendent fires of the aurora borealis" which shot along the heavens to the north were "mocked by the livid glare of the Kankakee marshes, burning behind the sand hills" in the south.

There were no highways leading to the Black Hawk Purchase from Lake Michigan. An appropriation for the survey and location of a military road from Green Bay to Prairie du Chien was made in 1830 but it was not until 1835 that troops actually commenced building the road.

A rough trail connected Galena and Chicago. Surveyors had set out over it on May 1, 1833, driving stakes or posts in the open prairie at the end of each mile, and blazing the trees in the timbered land. They were expected to determine the probable amount of money and labor necessary to open such a road and "afford a safe and convenient passage" to travellers.

Two dim trails from Peoria to Galena crossed the Rock River at the Prophet's village and Dixon's Ferry but a regular State road was not established until January 18, 1833. In the fall of that year Latrobe described Peoria as a "wretched and ruinous collection" of huts. His route to



Galena led over "vast prairies" that were "rarely broken by cultivation". The accommodations throughout the journey were of the most "homely description" since some "beds in the corner, a table, a few stools or a bench, a chest or two containing the family clothing, and a shelf with a few papers and books" comprised the squatters' furniture. Bottles of "powerful medicine" hung from one nail and a skin pouch, powder horn, and "charger made of an alligator's tooth" dangled from another. Travellers were allowed to "stow themselves away enveloped in their clothes and blanket-coats on the low plank erections" that passed for bedsteads.

The roads leading to Galena were little more than faint ribbons on the prairie sod. The "survey and marking" did nothing to improve their usefulness as highways of immigration. Even a special act of the Illinois legislature dubbing them "State roads" brought little consolation to the emigrant deeply mired in one of the many holes en route.

A sprinkling of emigrants may have followed the old Sauk Indian trail that connected Saukenuk with Detroit. Two roads paralleled the Mississippi from Saint Louis to the Half-breed Tract. The eastern road left Missouri and entered Illinois in southern Calhoun County from whence it



followed the general course of the Mississippi northward through Atlas and Quincy to Fort Edwards. The road along the west bank passed through Saint Charles, Troy, New London, Palmyra, and Wyaconda, striking the Des Moines River a few miles west of Keokuk. A dim trail also hugged the bank of the Mississippi between Galena and Fort Armstrong. During 1833, provision was made for the survey and locating of a road from Beard's Ferry to the head of the Des Moines Rapids and another from Pekin into Mercer County, probably to New Boston. These enabled the sturdy pioneers to span a wilderness in order to gain the coveted Black Hawk Purchase.

Ferries were established in anticipation of those who crawled westward over the unmarked trails. Since the laws of Illinois required ferrymen to advertise their intention to petition their local county commissioners for the privilege of operating a ferry at certain specified points, the Galena newspaper contained many such notices. No less than six ferries were to be established between the Turkey and Fever rivers. Another, Jordan's Ferry, was in actual operation opposite the settlement of Dubuque.

Captain Benjamin W. Clark's ferry ran from Andalusia to Buffalo. Jonah H. Case declared



that he wanted to establish a ferry across the Mississippi at General Gaines's encampment "below Rock River", while Archibald Allen signified his intention to operate a similar craft "near the head of the Rock Island Rapids". By an act of the Illinois legislature dated December 3, 1832, James White of Hancock County secured permission to operate a ferry near the head of the Des Moines Rapids in Lee County. White was to receive such rates of ferriage as the Hancock County commissioners might allow and be governed by the same laws as though established by them. Morton McCarver and Simpson S. White operated a ferry at Flint Hills in 1833. Wilcox's Ferry at Warsaw, Illinois, probably transported the handful of emigrants destined for the Half-breed Tract.

The concentration of settlement in southern Illinois together with the increasing immigration to that region made it natural that most of the roads, ferries, and bridges should be established there. "Emigrants are coming by thousands into Illinois, and from all quarters of the Union", declared the Springfield *Sangamo Journal*. "On Friday last fifteen large wagons, from St. Lawrence County, N. York, loaded with emigrants, arrived in our village, and drove up in front of the market house, in grand style. These emigrants



had been about ten weeks on the journey, and enjoyed good health during the time. They design to settle in Sangamo County to which we bid them welcome. A few days previous a company of emigrants from Vermont for Green County, passed thro' this place. Our northern counties are daily receiving inhabitants from New York, Ohio, and the Eastern States. Kentucky is pouring out her population upon us — which generally passes over to the military tract [between the Illinois and Mississippi rivers]. Tennessee also contributes largely to the current emigration; and even some of the wandering sons of Illinois, who were driven off to the Paradise of Arkansaw by a certain cold winter, are bending their weary steps back to the sucker land. We calculate that Illinois will increase her number of inhabitants the present season by emigration between 20 and 30,000."

A Kentucky paper declared that the "number of persons that daily pass thro' this place [Hopkinsville], on their way to the State of Illinois, is immense. Many of these people seem to be much more wealthy and respectable, than those we have observed moving to that State in former years. A company passed, in which were five large well built and heavily laden wagons, and six neat two horse carriages, filled with females. The fertile lands of Illinois must invite men of enterprize and



capital; and e'er long we expect that this young State will take a conspicuous rank among her sisters of the Union." While these waves of emigrants were destined for Illinois and no mention is made of the Black Hawk Purchase their importance can not be overestimated. Their presence increased the need for roads, bridges, and ferries, to the land west of the Mississippi. The extension of the frontier northward led many of the settlers to cross over to the Iowa country west of the Mississippi.

According to the first census of Iowa, 10,531 people lived west of the Mississippi in 1836. Ten counties now form the eastern border of Iowa. An average of one immigrant per day for each county for three years reveals the slow progress of settlement in the Black Hawk Purchase. The census of 1840 shows Iowa with but 43,112 inhabitants. Illinois, on the other hand, gained 318,738 new settlers during the thirties, Indiana 342,835, Missouri 243,247, and Michigan 180,628. The Territory of Wisconsin showed a total population of 30,945 in 1840. When measured by the accretions of other States, it becomes clear that a mere trickle of squatters filtered into the Black Hawk Purchase in 1833.

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN



## The Half-breed Tract

In the early decades of the nineteenth century Indians roamed in Iowaland. There were Indians on the plains, along the streams, by the lakes, and in the woodlands. There were great Indian chiefs, strong Indian braves, and many charming Indian maidens. Among these tribes had come white men, trappers and traders, who were as gallant as they were venturesome. Some of them married Indian women and remained in the Iowa country, living either at the frontier posts or at the Indian villages. Their children were half-breeds, whose way of life was usually more Indian than white.

In the summer of 1824 ten chiefs of the Sauk and Fox tribes, accompanied by Indian agents and interpreters, left their village homes in the valley of the Upper Mississippi River and journeyed to Washington to visit their "Great Father", the President of the United States. For the sake of perpetuating peace and friendship with the government, this deputation of head men, on August 4, 1824, relinquished their claim to all the land they possessed in the State of Missouri, except a triangular area lying between the Des Moines



and Mississippi rivers south of the northern boundary of Missouri. This tract, comprising approximately 119,000 acres located in what is now Lee County in the extreme southeastern part of Iowa, was reserved "for the use of the half-breeds belonging to the Sock and Fox nations" by the same title and in the same manner as other Indian lands were held. In other words persons of mixed Indian and white blood, and presumably their parents or grandparents if of different races, were to have possession of this Half-breed Tract, though the land remained a part of the public domain of the United States subject to control by the national government but not to be sold in fee simple until the Indians were removed.

When possession of this area was first given to the half-breeds, the land was considered as of little value and slight consideration was given to actual ownership or title. The few half-breed residents were more concerned for the time being with Indian trade and river traffic. The difficulty and confusion did not develop until settlers began to arrive in large numbers.

The first pioneers in the Iowa country were interesting people. Dr. Isaac Galland in writing of them some years after their arrival said: "It is true that they did not render themselves notorious, either by their turmoils with each other or by their



inhuman brutality toward the natives, as many other settlers upon the frontiers have done. But as long as benevolence and humanity, industry and enterprise, virtue and talents, deserve to be remembered the names of Russell Farnham, Dr. Samuel Muir, Joshua Palen, John Connolly, Moses Stillwell, Maurice Blondeau, Andrew Santamont, John Gaines, Thomas Briely and James White should not be forgotten."

As early as 1820 Samuel C. Muir, a surgeon in the United States army, who was stationed at Fort Edwards, now Warsaw, Illinois, crossed the Mississippi River and built a log cabin at Puckeshetuck, "Point or Foot of the Rapids", on the present site of Keokuk. Dr. Muir, like many another early settler, was not immune from the beguiling influences of Indian maidens, and had taken one of them for his wife. After building his cabin in Iowa he leased it for a term of years to residents of Saint Louis, and went to the Galena lead mines, where he practiced his profession for ten years, returning to Keokuk in 1830.

Meanwhile a second settlement had begun to develop in the Half-breed Tract, a few miles north of Keokuk, near the present site of Montrose. This settlement was first called Ahwipetuck. Later it was named Nashville, and still later it came to be known as Galland, in honor of Dr.



Isaac Galland. It was at this location, and largely under the influence of Dr. Galland, that in 1830 the first school was established in the Iowa country. The opening of this school, although now looked upon as a significant event in Iowa history, was then considered as of no great moment. No teacher's examination, no certificate, and no minimum wages were taken into consideration. Dr. Galland, having decided that a school was necessary for the development of culture, had crossed the river to Commerce, Illinois, and hired Berryman Jennings as the first schoolmaster in Iowa. The building in which this school was held was a small log cabin. The pupils were few in number, but the "district" was very large — extending from the boundary of Missouri northward to Canada, and from the Mississippi River westward to the Rocky Mountains.

By the latter part of 1830 the little community at Keokuk had grown sufficiently to maintain a school. In December of that year and the opening months of the succeeding year, I. K. Robinson taught the youth of that pioneer settlement. In those early days, Iowa had no churches and no courts, but the sturdy pioneers, looking forward to the time when their children would govern a great Commonwealth, would not do without schools.



These two pioneer settlements at Keokuk and Galland were advantageously situated because steamboats on their voyages up and down the river had to unload their cargoes at these points in order to be lightened over the rapids. By March, 1833, the Half-breed Tract had been surveyed and plats and field-notes were forwarded to Washington. As late as September of that year, however, no division of the reservation had been effected, but requests were made that each half-breed claimant be given his share of the Tract.

It is significant that, although trespassers upon government lands in the north were rigorously excluded and driven out by United States troops prior to the legal opening of the Iowa country, squatters upon the Half-breed Tract were never molested. Only a few white men had drifted in before the thirties. Moses Stillwell came to Puckeshetuck with his family in 1828, Dr. Galland settled at Nashville in 1829, and Isaac R. Campbell arrived in the following year. These, it may be said, were advance agents of civilization, for no portion of Iowa was opened to white settlers until June 1, 1833.

As the population in the Half-breed Tract increased, the land became more valuable and there was continual agitation to give the individual half-



breeds titles to their share of the land so that they might dispose of their interests to incoming purchasers. To meet this demand Congress passed an act in 1834 which relinquished all rights, titles, and interests in this tract and vested them in the half-breed residents.

Difficulties at once appeared. Speculators came in and claimed title by purchase from half-breed owners. Nor were shrewd dealings and connivings confined entirely to the ranks of the white men. Sometimes a full-blooded Indian sold a tract of land "in which he had no earthly interest". Sometimes a half-breed of some other tribe "palmed himself off" as a half-breed Sauk or Fox, and in other cases genuine half-breeds sold and conveyed their interests to several different parties. Moreover, actual settlers urged the validity of their claims based upon the fact that they entered the land under the impression that there was no title vested in any one — that the land still belonged to the government and that they were entitled to preëmption rights as first settlers. Thus it became extremely difficult to distinguish between honest and bogus titles. This confusion was the basis for many long and bitter law suits.

As immigrants continued to arrive the land titles became more and more complex. The expediency of determining just claims gave rise in



January, 1838, to a Territorial legislative measure which provided for a partition of the lands among those having valid claims. Three commissioners were appointed to receive testimony concerning claims, and a fee of six dollars each per day was allowed for their services. The expenses thus entailed resulted in a judgment and an execution sale of the entire tract to H. T. Reid for the sum of \$2885.60. Thus for a mere pittance Mr. Reid became the ostensible owner of one of the largest estates ever privately held in Iowa.

Shortly before this sale was consummated, Francis Scott Key, author of the "Star Spangled Banner", who was then an attorney for a New York company having extensive land interests in the Half-breed Tract, drew up a decree by which this area was divided among one hundred and one half-breed claimants. Thus for every acre of this area there were two paper titles — one resulting from the decree and another issuing from the execution sale. In addition to these, many claims were made by squatters who had settled there with the hope of later acquiring title to a homestead.

For a decade and a half, land titles in the Half-breed Tract were frequently before the courts of Lee County. Sometimes claimants from each of these three sources of titles were involved. In at



least eleven instances matters involving half-breed titles were taken to the Supreme Court of the Territory or the State, and in one instance the matter was appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States. In accordance with the decision of the latter tribunal in 1850, land titles in the Half-breed Tract are traceable to the partition drawn up by Francis Scott Key.

J. A. SWISHER



## Squatter Settlements

Settlements trickling into the Iowa country in 1833 pictured a process and a movement rather than dramatic events and episodes. Great land companies did not lead the settlers to this region as in the early peopling of Ohio. In headlong rush the immigration did not compare with that of the Forty-niners sixteen years later. Lead and lands rather than gold discoveries impelled the Iowa advance. And, as on so many frontiers, the farmers and miners outran the treaty makers and the government surveyors.

When John Whitaker in May returned to his cabin, which he had already built in the present Lee County on the Skunk River, there were only two or three cabins near old Fort Madison. Peter Williams the next month returned to occupy his cabin built some time before. Later John H. Knapp and Nathaniel Knapp and a few others "moved" into Lee County from the Illinois side. Farther south James Bartlett and his family were landed at Keokuk by the steamboat *Warrior*. The building of cabins, clearing timber, staking claims, and planting crops make a sparse record of these scattered settlements.



Flint Hills — and more likely “Shokokon”, its Indian name — was more current on the Mississippi than was the name “Burlington”. Straggling settlers who penetrated the Flint Hills area perhaps did not even know the older Burlington in Vermont. The spot was one profitable in Indian trade, and the graves, root-house, canoes, and the trinkets suspended from trees attracted the attention of the early white invaders. An even longer and more respectful look could be given to the grave of the half-breed Maurice Blondeau surrounded by paling and marked by the sacred emblem of a cross.

Amasa Doolittle, Simpson S. White, and Morton McCarver, a triumvirate of brothers-in-law, had invaded the Iowa side and then retreated. Others likewise had before June 1, 1833, the date of Indian evacuation, made furtive explorations of the hills and prairies and had even staked out their claims. Bolder intruders brought their stock across, built some cabins, and sowed some seed.

News of a coming military raid sent many of these farmers back across the river. Fifteen soldiers commanded by Lieutenant John R. B. Gardenier came to the scene to tear down and to burn the cabins. The epithets applied to these troops by the dispossessed settlers may be left to imagination. Solomon Perkins's cabin, built on a



"stepped off" claim five miles away, escaped destruction. White returned immediately and resumed the building of his rail cabin.

Day after day vanquished settlers waited for June 1st when the real settlement could start. Canoes and flatboats pushed across the Mississippi with men and families. At least twenty-five heads of families constituted the spray of the waves of immigration of later years. Dr. William R. Ross selected a claim and returned to Quincy. There he employed two men to accompany his father and to build a cabin on this claim. His assortment of dry goods, groceries, drugs, medicines, and household goods was landed by a steamboat at Flint Hills in August. Later arrived another cargo of goods brought in by Jeremiah Smith.

Newcomers brought tidings from the east as well as names of persons planning to "settle" west of the Mississippi. Claims, cabins, immigration, roads, ferries, the state of the weather, surveying — rather than Indian dangers — made up the every-day talk of these settler folk. Wolf hunts were common and one of Isaac Crenshaw's dogs single-mouthed captured and killed three. The country, said one settler, was "without Law or Gospel". With attractive ladies at Flint Hills and attracted young men, "how could the nuptials be



performed?" Doctor Ross and Matilda Morgan answered the question when a flatboat carried them and a wedding party to the other side. Illinois furnished the license and the ceremony. At a celebration fifty years later the couple recalled the sheltering sycamore tree and the flatboat bridal party of that December 3rd.

The axe, the plow, the compass and chain — rather than guns — were the conquering implements on this frontier. The ferry moved back and forth and saws and axes transformed oak trees into cabins. The stakes and chains of surveyors marked valleys and prairies. Dr. Ross built a cabin and a schoolhouse on his claim. In the fall, aided by Doolittle and Benjamin Tucker, he platted the region and laid out a townsite. A petition was sent by Dr. Ross for a post office at Flint Hills.

A hard winter ushered out the year and closed the navigation on the Mississippi. But in the various finished cabins the log fires radiated comfort. Visits with friendly Indians, if they had then been recorded, would have furnished later generations with entertainment, if not history, about the old "war skirmishes". In the fall the aged father of Dr. Ross, a Virginian and a veteran of the Revolutionary War, died a victim of chills and fever.

Work and hardships rather than the native



charms of the region are accorded notice. The pioneers, wrote one of them, were "frequently without bread or meat, only such food as the God of Nature supplied the country bountifully with, wild honey, venison, fish and vegetables". One wonders whether the boarders at Doolittle's boarding-house would have preferred the bass, shell-fish, and clams of the Pilgrims at Plymouth nearly two centuries earlier.

Farther upstream another advance was made. From Rock Island, Major George Davenport sent in the summer a man named Farnham with two helpers to erect a log trading house at "Sandstone Bluffs" or "Grindstone Bluffs" — later renamed Bloomington, and then Muscatine. There a stock of goods was installed and for a time Indian trade was more important than surveying, building, or sowing seed.

But other cabins rose in the present county of Scott. In the spring "Captain" Benjamin W. Clark, a Virginian, came to the right bank of the Mississippi to settle on the site of Buffalo, where he operated a ferry. As a soldier he had served with Major Henry Dodge's United States Rangers on the western frontier. He is said to have planted the first orchard in Scott County. At Buffalo he built a sawmill and a hotel. In another part of the county Roswell H. Spencer built in the



fall another cabin on the river bank to become a lonely but permanent settler.

Continued thrusts of pioneer miners had given a population of about two thousand for the Dubuque area in this year. Sprawling shanties and cabins sheltered the miners. Furnaces and smelters continued the processes of the shovels and picks. Rude stores, gambling houses, and saloons — the ever present marks of a miners' frontier — ministered to the wants, if not the needs, of the miners.

In January a raid of troops from Prairie du Chien under Lieutenant E. F. Covington swooped upon the settlements for a second time. In this rout many miners fled across the river and the troops took shelter in some of the cabins. Some houses were pulled down and miners' wagons torn to pieces. From Galena the dispossessed miners looked in sullen wrath at this conquest of the army of the United States.

But more deadly was the attack from the Asiatic cholera whose first victim was a man named Fox. Then James Firth, a blacksmith, was struck down. A pall overhung the settlements, blighting the business of the stores and mines. Men fled from such scenes and others on the way to the mines turned back in terror. Doctors Allen Hill and John Stoddard stoutly remained on duty to minis-



ter to the sick and dying. About fifty deaths were recorded before the disease had run its course.

By June John P. Sheldon arrived with orders from Washington. He was ready to grant permits and licenses to miners and smelters. Plats two hundred yards square could be granted at a fixed amount of lead to be given the government. This indicated that the dangers from military raids were over. It meant a new era of more settlers, trade, furnaces, stores, and the expansion of mining camps.

Many rough aspects of these mining districts have faded from record and memory. A tragic figure was Captain Allenwrath, a British army officer. After his arrival at the mines he became in turn a recluse, a hermit, an outcast, a victim of drink, and finally of a pauper's death. A much briefer scene was the whipping given by "Miss S." to a man until he consented to give back her watch. A brawl on a Christmas eve and the fatal stabbing of Dickinson, a saloon keeper, are remembered out of many forgotten tragedies at Dubuque a hundred years ago.

Already pioneers were exhorting men to better conduct. In August Aratus Kent preached in an unfurnished log cabin of Ezekial Lockwood. From a box pulpit a sermon was delivered before, and perhaps at, rough miners seated on rough



boards. In other cabins miners acquainted with treasures on earth listened to the Reverend Barton Randle and Father McMahon, whose sermons dealt with the treasures of another world.

Weekly mails between Galena and Davenport carried by George O. Karrick were deposited in a soap box in the store of Milo H. Prentice. To some, the letters in this rude box might convey hope, to others sorrow, or, there might be tidings of success or failure. A raft of lumber was piloted to Dubuque in the fall and the whole cargo was sold in one day. Steamboats nosed their way into Galena and Dubuque to bring cargoes of goods from Saint Louis and news from the outside world. In turn Dubuque was paying its tribute of thousands of pounds of lead to the southern Mississippi River ports.

These little deposits of settlement came in 1833. But soon other and higher tides of settlement were to come, to rush over and beyond, and to leave a deeper layer of population drift.

LOUIS PELZER



## Pioneers in Person

White settlers came into Iowa as the snow falls on the prairies. At first only a few flakes appear, drifting aimlessly with the wind; they eddy about, most of them melting before they become noticeable on the ground. But more flakes fall, faster and faster, until the ground is covered with snow.

It was not until June 1, 1833, that the Iowa country was opened to white settlers and even then by sufferance rather than by official action, but there were white men in the Iowa country long before that — explorers who came to spy out the land and, having seen, drifted back whence they came; casual traders who brought their goods to barter with the Indians, then took their furs or lead and went elsewhere; missionaries in search of converts; a few settlers, who had been granted baronial estates; government officials intent upon affairs of state. Into the land which had held the Indians, first came the French and the Spanish, and finally, after the Louisiana Purchase, the Anglo-Saxons, more aggressive than the French, less tolerant, more land hungry — soldiers, traders, travellers, missionaries, and, above all, settlers.



Best known of the French pioneers in Iowa in 1833 was Antoine Le Claire. Born in what is now Michigan in 1797, Le Claire spent his youth among the French and Indians in the Old Northwest, learning to speak French, English, and a dozen Indian dialects. His intelligence and loyalty as well as his linguistic ability won for him the confidence of both whites and Indians alike and it was Antoine Le Claire who served as interpreter at the Black Hawk Purchase Treaty in 1832. By this treaty Le Claire was given two sections of land in the new purchase.

Le Claire saw possibilities in the new cession, not yet known as Iowa, and in the spring of 1833 he built a small house on the west bank of the Mississippi on the site of the present city of Davenport and became one of the first citizens of Iowa, both in point of time and in influence. He did not cease to be an interpreter but he became also a business man. Soon after he came to Iowa, Le Claire received an appointment as postmaster and justice of the peace.

For almost thirty years, until his death in 1861, Antoine Le Claire was a well-known figure in Davenport and the surrounding country. His swarthy complexion and black eyes were inherited, it may be, from his father, a French-Canadian, friendly to the Americans during the War



of 1812, but more likely from his mother, a grand daughter of a Pottawattamie chief. As the years passed, he became more and more portly, weighing it is said over three hundred pounds, but he never lost his ability to dance, nor his interest in public affairs.

A conscientious Catholic, Le Claire was generous to the churches of his own faith and to those of other denominations as well. More successful financially than most pioneers, he became banker and business man, public official and philanthropist. As his fortune increased he exchanged his plain pioneer home — still standing in Davenport — for a mansion on the bluff, and at his death left his family a considerable fortune. A town in Scott County occupies the grant made to Le Claire by the Indians in 1832 and bears his name.

New lands attract adventurous spirits. To such men distance means little and strange races do not repel. Such a man was George Davenport, one of the influential men on the Iowa frontier in 1833, although his home was on Rock Island and he never became officially a resident of Iowa.

Born in Lincolnshire, England, in 1783, Davenport became a seaman at the age of seventeen: an accident landed him in the Mississippi Valley. While his vessel was in New York harbor in the



summer of 1804, young Davenport fractured a leg when he jumped into a boat to rescue a sailor who had fallen overboard and had to be left behind when the ship sailed. He made friends with a young American officer and enlisted in the American army. At the close of the War of 1812, his term of enlistment having expired, he was employed by a firm supplying the army with provisions. During the construction of Fort Armstrong, he became known to the Indians as "Sag-anosh" — an Englishman — and taking advantage of their preference, he entered the Indian trade. In this he was unusually successful and at least ten years before the Black Hawk War had trading stations on Iowa rivers, and in 1825 was appointed "Post Master, at Rock Island, Missouri".

During the Black Hawk War, Davenport received the appointment of quarter master general, with the rank of colonel, and soon after the Black Hawk Purchase became effective, he joined some men in founding the city of Davenport. The end of Colonel Davenport's career was indicative of the crime wave on the frontier during the forties, for on July 4, 1845, he was murdered in his home on Rock Island by a band of desperadoes.

The rich lead mines at Dubuque attracted still another class of settlers. True pioneers were these men, bringing pick and shovel. These miners



were a cosmopolitan collection. Lucius H. Langworthy, himself one of those who came to Dubuque as early as 1832, wrote of them in a lecture delivered in 1855: "every considerable nation of Europe and all the States of our Union, were duly represented. The German liberalism, the New England puritanism and the Celtic nationalism mixed and mingled in all the elements of society."

Mining towns have usually been "wide-open" and the settlers at Dubuque's mines in the early thirties were no exception. According to Lucius H. Langworthy "there were but very few men in the whole country who did not indulge in drinking and gambling. 'Poker' and 'brag' were games of common pastime, while the betting often run up to hundreds of dollars at a single sitting . . . Balls and parties were also common and it was not an unfrequent occurrence for one to treat his partner in the dance at the bar, if he did not, he generally performed that delicate and flattering attention to himself. The Sabbath was regarded as a holiday and vice and immorality were prevalent in every form."

On the other hand, Edward Langworthy wrote in his reminiscences of Dubuque: "My experience proves that nowhere has ever such a state of society existed for honesty, integrity, and high toned generosity as was found among the miners in the



early days of mining in this country. No need here for locks to keep out burglars. We had none."

Perhaps the most interesting characteristic of the mining community was the variety of types represented. The "tough" was present, but so was the gentleman. Many examples of this latter class are available, but one will illustrate the type. Lucius H. Langworthy was one of four brothers who came to the mining region in the early thirties. His father, a physician, lived originally in Vermont, but moved his family by successive stages to New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. Lucius, his second son, was born in 1807. After attending an academy at Jacksonville, Illinois, young Lucius taught school for two years and in 1827 went to Galena to make his fortune in the lead mines. Lucius served in a scout company during the Black Hawk War. With two brothers, he crossed to the Dubuque mines in 1832, was forced to leave during the winter, and returned in the summer of 1833 to make his home at Dubuque until his death in 1865.

Successful in his mining, Lucius H. Langworthy soon became a prominent citizen, serving as sheriff of Dubuque County, director of the Miners' Bank, director of the Dubuque and Sioux City Railroad, and director and later president of the Dubuque



Western Railroad. His contribution to the community included the publication of several articles on railroads and two published lectures on Dubuque history.

The settlers who came into the Iowa country at such places as Davenport and Burlington were, on the whole, more representative of the typical pioneers, less cosmopolitan, showing fewer diverse types. These settlers were more likely to be American born, second generation frontiersmen, coming from States such as Kentucky, Indiana, or Illinois, Commonwealths still in the pioneer stage. As a class, these early pioneers were "rolling stones", of many and diverse occupations, common men taken from the rank and file of American life, temporarily dislodged from homes and occupations, seeking better opportunities, but not always finding them.

At Burlington there was Dr. William R. Ross, who brought a supply of dry goods, groceries, drugs, and medicines to Flint Hills in the summer of 1833. At this time Dr. Ross was not quite twenty-nine. With him came his father, William Ross, a man eighty years of age, who had come to America first as an officer in the British army during the Revolution and had returned to become an American citizen and one of the prominent business men of Lexington, Kentucky. The elder Ross



died in October, 1833, and is said to have been the first white person buried in this part of the Black Hawk Purchase.

Ross, apparently, was never unemployed. He practiced medicine, though rather casually. At one time he is said to have performed an operation with only a pen knife and a razor to lift a fragment of bone which was pressing on the brain. He ran a store and developed one or two farms. In 1834 he became postmaster at Burlington and was authorized to notify the settlers to hold an election. He served as the first clerk of the court and as the first treasurer and recorder of the county. He helped survey the site of Burlington and built a cabin to be used as a schoolhouse. He was admitted to the bar, although he did not practice. He served as clerk in the Wisconsin Territorial legislature at Burlington in 1837-1838 and in 1839 was elected to the House of the Iowa legislature, serving one term. He also served one term in the State legislature in 1850 from Mahaska County.

Nor were Dr. Ross's pioneer activities limited to business and politics. In Kentucky he had joined the Methodist Episcopal Church and almost as soon as he came to Iowa, he wrote to Peter Cartwright asking for a preacher for the new country. In the spring of 1834, Cartwright



sent Barton G. Cartwright, who broke prairie during the week and preached on Sundays. Peter Cartwright himself came to Burlington that spring to hold a two-day meeting in the pasture on Ross's farm, organized a Methodist class of six members, and appointed Dr. Ross class leader. It was Dr. Ross who donated the lots for "Old Zion Church", at a cost of a hundred dollars. He also dug the foundation of the church and served as trustee. Well may Dr. Ross be called a pioneer.

There were women, too, among the settlers, chiefly wives and daughters, who braved the hardships of the frontier. Many of them had been born on the frontier. There were, however, women who came from the Atlantic coast or from Europe. An obituary of a Mrs. John G. Bosch gives the information that she was born in Wurttemberg in 1810, came to Florida in 1825, and to Flint Hills in 1832, where she was married to her first husband, Francis T. Bercht.

The story of Louisa Massey and her attempt to avenge one brother's murder and protect another is well known. The rash but heroic act of this young woman gave her name to one of the counties of Iowa. Mrs. Noble F. Dean, said to be the first white woman at the Dubuque settlement, crossed the Mississippi in the fall of 1832. Mrs. Dean, it appears, was leaven of better things for



in 1834 we find her one of the founders of a Sunday School at Dubuque.

The frontier was not without its share of "cranks", men who had failed to adjust their lives to society, and, perhaps, hoped that in a new country they could overcome this lack. Almost always they were unsuccessful, for pioneer conditions were not a favorable environment for those who were mentally unstable or misfits in the social order.

One of these peculiar characters was Thomas Kelly who came to Dubuque among the pre-treaty miners of 1832. Locating a claim on what came to be called Kelly's Bluff, he devoted himself to digging, indifferent alike to the need of friends and the attractions of the saloons. After some fifteen years of hermit life, he loaded a barge with lead and shipped it down the river, after having insured the cargo for \$10,000. It is generally believed that the lead was lost at sea. At all events, Kelly disappeared for several years. Some say he went east to collect his insurance and while there was confined in an insane asylum. In 1854, however, he returned to Dubuque and went to work in his mine, as much a hermit as before. He was reputed to be very wealthy, but when he died in 1869 only \$10,000 in money was found and his real estate was worth about \$8500. Legend says



that most of the hoarded treasure of the old recluse has not yet been discovered.

Nor was the collection of 1833 pioneers lacking in still another element — the anti-social individuals who relied upon the lack of laws and courts to pursue their criminal careers or at least to commit crimes. Best known of these, perhaps, is Patrick O'Connor, native of Ireland by birth and miner at Dubuque by occupation, as early as 1832, who shot and killed his partner because he insisted on being admitted to the cabin shared by the two men. O'Connor admitted the killing but pointed out that there were no laws west of the river and defiantly asked what the miners were going to do about it. Their answer was an extra legal trial, and a month later an extra legal hanging.

Another early settler who seems to have been extremely unpopular was Alexander Hood. The antecedents of this pioneer who came into the Half-breed Tract about 1831 are unknown. He married Louisa Muir, a daughter of Dr. Samuel C. Muir and his Indian wife, possibly because he coveted her share in the Half-breed Tract, and seems to have been as unsatisfactory as a husband as he was as a citizen. At one time he came to the home of Isaac R. Campbell late at night in an intoxicated condition and demanded that Mr. Campbell get up. When he failed to do so



quickly, Hood went up to the bed and attempted to stab Campbell, very narrowly missing a small child. Campbell struck Hood with his rifle and nearly killed him. A message was sent to Captain Browne of the Dragoons asking that he send a surgeon, but the officer is said to have replied profanely that he would not, adding that Campbell should have killed him if he did not. Hood was later whipped at Warsaw, Illinois, for wounding a man, but his later life and his death are unrecorded or at least undiscovered.

The "crank" and the "bad man", however, were not representative of the men who came to Iowa in 1833. A composite picture of the pioneers at that time would reveal a man between twenty and forty years of age, American born, of a reputable and ambitious family, coming to Iowa from a nearby State, frequently a farmer by occupation. Although many of these men were married, they were mobile, moving easily from place to place, liking new enterprises. To some, change had become a habit. Like a child choosing toys in a large toy shop, many of them saw opportunities on every side, but were too bewildered to choose wisely.

These men were, almost without exception, versatile. The same man might be farmer and business man, manufacturer and miner, city plan-



ner and operator of some means of transportation, politician and justice of the peace. Torn from their religious and educational moorings, they yet brought with them an ideal which soon created these agencies anew. And so it was that the pioneers of 1833 laid the foundations and outlined the pattern of the industrial, social, and religious life of Iowa as it is in 1933.

RUTH A. GALLAHER



## Comment by the Editor

### *THE CENTENNIAL OF SETTLEMENT*

One hundred years ago the Sauk and Fox Indians packed up their belongings, put on their feathers, whistled for the dogs, and straggled out of the Black Hawk cession. Most of them probably built new wickiups on the banks of the Iowa River in Keokuk's Reserve and a few small bands may have remained along the streams in the western part of the tract, but they must have realized that these abodes were only temporary. From the Great River, a brave had to ride all day with the sun to reach a land not claimed by the white man. No longer did he have any legal right to hunt on the prairies or in the woods where his great grandfathers had stalked the deer and the bison and fought the Sioux and the Ioways. On May 31, 1833, the sun set forever on the favorite hunting grounds of the Sauks and Foxes, but the next day it rose on a paradise of opportunity for the white men.

Before settlement on the public domain was legal, two conditions were requisite. Not only must the Indian title be extinguished, but no one had a right to live on the land or buy it from the



government until it was surveyed. Although the Indians were removed from the Black Hawk Purchase in 1833, the land had not been surveyed and none was offered for sale until 1838. As long as the Indians occupied the country, the government kept the settlers out for their own protection and in defense of the rights of the Indians.

Even after the Indians were gone, the government endeavored to prevent settlement in the Iowa country. In February, 1833, the Secretary of War reported that a company was being organized at Rock Island "to take possession of the lead mines west of the Mississippi". An act of Congress in 1807 excluded settlers from the public lands in States and Territories, but there was no law to prevent the contemplated settlement at the lead mines after June 1st, because the Iowa country was politically unorganized. The provisions of the act of 1807 were, therefore, made applicable to the Black Hawk Purchase, and the Indian agents at Rock Island and Prairie du Chien were entrusted with the enforcement of the law.

Being in sympathy with the venturesome settlers at Flint Hills and Dubuque's mines who had been "persuaded" to get out of the new country when their cabins were destroyed during the winter, the agents quibbled about their authority under the revised law and did nothing. The squat-



ters were allowed to remain west of the river after June 1st. Thus, the permanent settlement of Iowa, though illegal, actually began in 1833.

There can be little doubt that the squatters knew they were trespassing upon the property of the United States. If they outran the statutes of Congress and ignored the newspaper notices, they were informed by the soldiers, traders, and Indian agents. Nevertheless, the practice of the government had never been as severe as its policy. According to Representative Duncan of Illinois, the exclusion law had never been enforced. Public opinion was opposed to it. Intruders who staked out claims upon the common land of the country had usually been tolerated and eventually obtained a legal title to their homesteads. Ultimately this preëmption practice was adopted as the policy of the government in disposing of the public land. To recognize the claim rights of honest settlers seemed preferable to the futile system of trying to exclude everybody, which resulted in admitting only those who were disposed to "disregard all law."

It is significant that a government was provided for the squatters of Iowa four years before they were allowed to own the land they lived on. But that is the subject of another centennial.

J. E. B.



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