The Palimpsest

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

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

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH
Superintendent

THE MEANING OF PALIMPSESTS

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

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

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THE PALIMPSEST

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A Port for Pioneers

Land, not gold, forests and trading posts rather than religious differences drew Amasa Doolittle, Simpson S. White, and Morton M. McCarver to the place that the fur traders called Flint Hills — the site of the future Burlington. This doughty triumvirate of brothers-in-law had ventured across the Mississippi in the fall of 1832 to prospect the Black Hawk Purchase for choice homesteads. Others likewise, before the date of Indian evacuation, had made furtive explorations of the hills and prairies and had even staked out their claims. Bolder intruders brought their stock across and began to build cabins.

News of a coming military raid sent many of these squatters back across the river. Partially erected buildings were torn down and burned in February by a detachment of infantry. But Solomon Perkins, later the first sheriff of Demoine County, had built his cabin on a "stepped off"

claim five miles away, and it escaped the vigilance of the soldiers. Simpson White returned immediately and resumed the construction of his log cabin. Others waited for the first of June, 1833. At least twenty-five heads of families crossed the river to Flint Hills on that first day of legal settlement. Thereafter came a growing stream of pioneers — men, women, children — traders, surveyors, ferrymen, and merchants.

For these plain folk the axe, the plow, the compass and chain, rather than guns, were the conquering implements on the frontier. Doolittle and Benjamin Tupper laid out a town site, and cargoes of dry goods, groceries, drugs, and household goods were brought in by steamboat. More claims were staked out. Then a schoolhouse was built. Log fires in the rude cabins radiated comfort. The budding colony of about fifty families was digging in to stay.

For over a year the little settlement was a political orphan "without Law or Gospel". A young doctor was compelled to cross the river with his bride where both the license and the ceremony could be furnished by the State of Illinois. Fifty years later William Ross, the doctor, and Matilda Morgan, the bride, recalled the friendly sycamore tree and that flatboat bridal party of December 3, 1833.

John Gray the next month came from Vermont, importing a cargo of groceries and a fresh name — Burlington — for the Flint Hills settlement. Peter Cartwright, a mighty sky pilot, came in the spring to preach near Burlington. Soon after Barton H. Cartwright arrived to preach the gospel and also to break thirty acres of sod. On Sundays this "Ox Driver Preacher" turned from plow handles to pulpit, and week-day remarks to oxen gave way to Sunday sermons in cabins.

Congress then attached the Iowa country to the Territory of Michigan for judicial purposes. Two immense counties — Dubuque and Demoine —were created. Burlington was chosen for the county seat of the latter and the judicial records begin with Dr. William R. Ross's clerkship of the court. Wills were probated, marriage licenses issued and recorded. In 1835 the grand jurors were summoned from such settlements as "Flint Hills", "Half Breed", "Tama Town", and "Fort Madison". Three divorces were granted at this term of court and an assault and battery case was tried. When two men in a rough brawl in the court room upset some dry goods boxes used for the court's desk, they were immediately found guilty of contempt of court!

Another record of this court reveals the humble possessions of Peter Williams, a pioneer farmer.

His land claim with its improvements was valued at $400. Calves, horses, sows, and shoats were listed. A "Prairie Plough" was worth $6.25. What were the volumes in a "lot of books" appraised at $3.00? A "Waggon", a grindstone, a box of carpenter's tools, crockery, four large beds, one "whiskey barrel and focit", and half a dozen chairs — all to be sold for the children of the deceased as adjudged by the court of Demoine County in the Territory of Michigan in June of 1835.

A lawyer not yet twenty-one arrived from New Hampshire at Burlington in April, 1836. "There are in this town", wrote James W. Grimes, "six doctors, five lawyers, with myself, sixteen stores, five or six groceries, or, in New England, grog-shops. No minister in town. We had one but he died a few days ago." A passenger on the steamboat *Dubuque* in July, 1836, observed this bustling village and recorded that lots were selling for $500 each. "A good blacksmith", reported Grimes five months later, "can make fifty dollars a month; carpenters, masons, joiners, etc., three dollars per day; a man for common work the year round twenty-five or thirty dollars per month."

Fever struck the little settlement in September, 1837, and whole families were sick. There was one "close by me," noted Grimes, "in which the

father, mother, and four children are down with the fever." A cold, early fall did not cheer the Burlington people and floating ice stopped navigation early. But then came thaws to permit river traffic until late in December.

After the legislature had adjourned in January, 1838, and Governor Dodge had gone to his home at Dodgeville, life in Burlington again became routine. New settlers kept arriving over land and water routes. Boats and ferries plied across the river. Town talk about the legislature shifted to roads, lands, the state of the river, the stores, and the steamboats with their cargoes of merchandise from Saint Louis. Old letters and newspapers brought news from relatives and friends in the East and of events of the world.

It was the locust year following the panic of 1837. "We have hard times here, such as were never conceived of in the East," wrote a young lawyer in March. "There is no money in this country. I saw a man today, who had been keeping a shop. He was obliged to sell out on credit, and he had, besides, small notes due to the extent of twenty-five hundred dollars, yet he could not raise enough money to buy a bushel of corn-meal for his family. Collecting is impossible for the Legislature passed a stay law of twelve months."

Torrents of rain fell in the spring of 1838 and

by May the Mississippi River was the highest in eleven years. The ferry charged fifty cents for one horse and carriage or wagon with persons and belongings; for each person and horse half that amount; a footman would be hauled across for eighteen and three-fourths cents; a two-horse wagon or a wagon with oxen was ferried for seventy-five cents; the rate was three cents per head for hogs, sheep, and goats; neat cattle were taken across for six and a fourth cents each. Double these duties could be charged in such a state of high water.

Patriotism also rose to high levels on Independence Day. Thirteen general toasts followed by twenty-six individual toasts were endured and perhaps listened to by the pioneer throngs. At least half the audience could applaud the toast of James W. Grimes: "The Ladies — they are as fair as the flowers of Iowa's prairies — may they by early cultivation, be as rich and productive as her soil."

Steady immigration flowed into and beyond the region of Burlington. The stream of humanity swelled as soon as the ice went out of the river in the spring and subsided with the advent of cold weather. Frequently three or four boats docked on the same day. A crowd of pleasure seekers on a Pennsylvania steamboat bound for the Falls of

Saint Anthony stopped in May, 1839, to parade through the streets. "Were it not that they had partners," wrote Editor Edwards, "we are not certain but the young men of our town might have thought this was the load of Yankee girls, promised them a long while ago. Their eyes sparkled, any how, when the ladies came on shore."

Invasions of settlers from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, and Illinois continued. But the characteristics of such people changed quickly because the population was so fluxible. "Human nature in every variety and shape can be seen 'without money and without price'. We see exhibitions of every grade of humanity from the highest to the lowest." On the opposite shore of the river the settlers looked like an army with its prancing steeds and army wagons. New arrivals were always on hand to replace those transported across by the steam ferry. To the west beyond the river lay opportunity and land at $1.25 an acre.

Every part of the world was sending immigrants to this port: staid, phlegmatic Germans, enterprising New Englanders, hospitable Virginians, Ohioans, Hoosiers, aged men with children and grandchildren. Horses, cattle, and mules crowded the ferry. Young men from Cape Cod and New Hampshire, merchants with dry goods and car-

goes of Yankee notions that could be stored in a trunk came seeking their fortunes. "Here is the son of Erin's isle, spade upon his shoulder and mattock in hand, ready to dig our canals, level our hills, or excavate mountains."

Northbound steamboats arriving almost daily brought news and gossip of the river towns. Officers of such boats as the *Ione,* the *Brazil,* the *Quincy,* the *Omega,* the *Indian Queen,* the *Malta,* the *Rapids,* and the *Ariel* delivered newspapers from Saint Louis and other ports. Nine-tenths of the passengers on these upward trips, estimated an observer, were bound for the Territory of Iowa. One boat carried thirty German families from Pennsylvania who brought along sawed lumber, fitted, and ready to put up as houses. A hundred covered flatboats carried down the Iowa products of vegetables, beef, pork, and tallow. A number of these craft were built and laden, as well as shipped, from the port of Burlington.

By 1839 Burlington had become the commercial port for four counties containing about 15,000 people. The population estimates — not unmixed with pride and optimism — had risen from 1200 in 1838 to 1600. Two newspapers — the *Territorial Gazette & Burlington Advertiser* and the *Hawkeye and Patriot* — registered births and deaths and by weekly debates kept alive the

Whig and the Democratic parties. The oldest settlers remarked in midsummer that the river had never been so low. But the steamer *Ione* in August moved downstream with three keel-boats in tow.

Late in October, as the fall of 1839 was bowing itself out, Webb and Mauro's new steam ferry-boat, the *Shokoquon,* built at Louisville at a cost of $7000, began its regular trips to the Illinois shore. Running ice crunched downstream a few days later to render navigation more and more hazardous until December 5th, when the Mississippi became icebound. A great jam of ice then formed which broke with a tremendous crash on February 20th. The whole village witnessed the spectacle which promised the renewal of navigation. On March 11th the *Ariel,* the first boat of the season to dock at Burlington, arrived from Saint Louis.

By the year 1840 the settlement of Burlington was becoming the object of descriptions and recollections. The oldest natives were then youngsters of six or seven years. It had witnessed the pageantry of river traffic, immigration, retreating Indians, and the birth of local government. Taverns and boarding-houses had become "hotels". In the summer of this year sixty or seventy buildings, many of them of three-story brick, were built.

Some houses exhibited architectural taste and beauty that would "put the blush of indolence" on some older towns of the eastern States. Modesty and pride, not equally mingled, prompted an editor and a one-time Bostonian to remark, "This city is really becoming one of the most interesting places within our knowledge."

J. P. Stewart's Academy of Science and Literature was opened in 1839 to both sexes but limited to thirty pupils. Philosophy, drawing, Latin, and about a dozen other subjects were offered. In Samuel M. Clendinin's school the next year fees ranged from $4.50 to $8.00 with a small additional charge for fuel. Mr. Burnham's Burlington Academy required fees of $4.50, $9.00, and $16. Latin, Greek, and French were listed and he hoped to acquire some "electrical apparatus". Pupils were to study Webster's *Elementary Spelling Book* and the *Eclectic Readers*. Kirkman's *Grammar* was a text of many editions and long usage. Hale's *History of the United States* furnished students with dull catalogues of wars and administrations. These young people, unaware of their share in a pioneer process, were closer in point of time to the Revolutionary War than is the present generation to the Civil War.

Two steam ferries brought immigrants from the Illinois side in 1840. A visitor then counted twen-

ty retail and wholesale merchants and one jewelry store. Horses were given shelter in three livery stables. Three blacksmiths were on hand to shoe the animals. Two places were devoted to cabinet and chair making and one to carriage making. Steamboats brought patrons for the six tailors, the hatter, and the two shoemakers. Two tinners, one crockery and glassware store, three bakers, two butchers, and two drug stores were available to the pioneer farmers and to the 1300 villagers.

Troy post coaches carried the tri-weekly mails into and from Burlington. One letter was on the way from New York to Burlington for a year and twelve days. From Washington the most direct route to Burlington was by way of Columbus, Ohio, to Terre Haute, Indiana, and Peoria, Illinois. "But letters that come by the way of St. Louis", observed Governor Lucas in 1838, "are frequently received sooner than they are by any other route."

The Mansion House, formerly the Wisconsin House, promised reasonable rates. The larder, the stables, as well as the bar and cellars, had been given the special attention of the proprietors. L. J. Lockwood's Western Hotel had "Stone Stables" and also served the choicest viands of the season. Parlors and sleeping quarters were "chaste and convenient". The host promised to

conduct his place at reasonable rates and in a "*temperate*" manner. Why was one place called the "Oregon Hotel" — six years before the territory in the far west was acquired?

Many travellers knew the National House, or Fletcher's. There ninety-six chairs accommodated guests. It contained ten toilet tables, five bedsteads, fourteen wash stands, one counter, one small and one large Franklin stove, eleven "corn" seat chairs and two Hollingsworth tables. At the Mount Pleasant Hotel the food fitted the "appetites of epicures". With equal honesty but less taste the manager promised "that at all times the beds shall be free from other occupants than the lodgers."

The professional cards of sixteen lawyers were more modest. David Rorer, able and learned, had come in 1836. Two years later twenty men had been admitted to practice by the Supreme Court. "I am so well established here", wrote James W. Grimes in 1840, "that I have some credit, else I should starve to death assuredly." W. H. Starr and W. Henry Starr, J. C. Tracy, and J. C. Hall were prominent in the early bar of Burlington. Lawyers from other towns also aspired to a share of the legal business of the Territorial capital.

Six or seven doctors treated accidents and sickness before anaesthesia and the germ theory of

disease were known. Dr. Enos Lowe was an early postmaster. Doctors A. A. Stahl, J. J. Ransom, and William R. Ross left few records but rather the grateful memories of a pioneer settlement. Even the dentist, alleviator and sometimes maker of pains, had arrived at Burlington in 1840. J. W. Weed, Dentist, not only treated and extracted teeth but furnished them from a "full assortment of S. W. Stockton's latest improved and incorruptible teeth, which he will insert in any number, from one to whole setts, and in a manner so perfectly to rival nature, as to deceive the most observing, and in most cases without the slightest pain."

Liquor has always been quick to move to new frontiers. A religious society at Burlington in 1833 decided that any persons allowing any Indians to have whisky "should forfeit all the whiskey he or they shall have on hand." Governor Lucas added his influence to the cause against drink. Gambling and intemperance he regarded as the "contaminating evils" of the time. When the Territorial temperance society was formed in 1839 he became its first president. On Christmas day the meeting heard addresses, resolutions, reports, and a poem — all of native origin.

Shrink not when the foe appears;
Spurn the coward's guilty fears;

Hear the shrieks, behold the tears
Of ruined families.
"Touch not — Taste not — Handle not"
Who would be a drunken sot,
The worst of miseries!

Indians — never a serious danger at Burlington — were gradually retreating and becoming the object of recollections. In January, 1840, about fifty of them met Governor Lucas in conference to voice gloomy complaints over their lands and annuities as administered by Agent J. M. Street. Against their charges of fraud, the Governor explained the good efforts of the government and the deep concern of the Great Father at Washington. On the second day the Indians relaxed from their sullen mood to engage in war and religious dances. A great crowd looked on as the Governor and the interpreter acted as "managers of this unique ball".

The next summer some three hundred dissatisfied Sauks and Foxes met their agent John Beach in the north part of town. The agent listened to their complaints but insisted that he could transact business only in the council house. Disreputable whites had furnished liquor to some Indians who were then seen drunk on the streets and in the stores. These scenes, complained the local editor, were disgusting and indelicate to lady shoppers.

The tone — as well as the undertone — of pioneer Burlington was agricultural and rural. No railroads existed west of the Mississippi River, and, except for the steamboat, the means of transportation were those in vogue for centuries. The farm was the food emporium except for staples like flour, sugar, coffee, and a few other articles imported from Saint Louis. Salted and cured meats were not yet for several decades to be supplemented by the help of refrigeration. Preserved and dried fruits were foods in days when the processes of canning were hardly in their infancy. Land was so cheap and abundant that the pioneer farmers had hardly learned the meaning of conservation and the rotation of crops. Oil wicks and candles had not yet surrendered to gas jets, and the electric light was still far in the future.

The port of Burlington in 1840 was still young. Settled by the youth of the East and the South, it was converting a frontier into a State. Through this Mississippi River port continued to flow streams of immigrants or "movers". Some of these "settled"; some later joined streams to California, Kansas, Nebraska, and Oregon to reenact the pioneer process. From the East and South these pioneers bore memories and traditions; their hopes and visions lay in the West.

LOUIS PELZER

The Hub of Politics

On April 20, 1836, the first Territory of Wisconsin — an empire in extent, including the Iowa country — was organized. During the following summer a count of inhabitants revealed that nearly half the population of Wisconsin lived west of the Mississippi, and of these approximately two-thirds were in Demoine County of which Burlington was the metropolis. Southern Iowa was represented by ten members in the first Territorial legislature which met at Belmont in October, 1836. The next year, however, all Burlington exulted when it learned that it was to become the second legislative capital of the Territory. This, the village believed, was a greater honor than being merely one of the twenty-four post offices west of the river.

While lawmakers were on their way to Burlington on horseback and by steamboat early in November, 1837, the new capital was vibrating with preparation and expectancy. Thomas Cooper from Kentucky built a double-roomed house and a dry goods store. Another man paid a license to sell groceries and liquors. Hotels, rooming-houses, taverns, stores, and stables were getting

ready to welcome legislators, lobbyists, visitors, and politicians.

Farflung complaints of legislators over the bed and board at Belmont, where the first legislature had met, had not yet subsided. "Empty stomachs", ran a sour remark, "make clear heads, but not good laws. The Lord deliver us from a set of hungry Legislators."

Burlington promised to be more hospitable and more generous. Hotels were larger and boarding houses better, where excellent entertainment was promised for "man and horse". The hotels of Benson and Miller and of H. E. Dickinson were to be ready. Then, too, there was the "Exchange", always open at proper hours, "where a very civil and attentive host is on the *qui vive* for custom, and where a clean tumbler, fresh water, and an excellent glass, courteously served, may be had; and more — saddle of venison, a prairie chicken, a wild goose, duck, fish, &c. &c., prepared 'according to order' by a worthy disciple of that prince of cuisines, Monsieur Ude."

Never had the frontier village been so crowded. Visitors, office-seekers, legislators, immigrants, traders, and farmers tramped over the clayey streets which bounded the few squares along the river. "We put up at Mrs. Parrott's", wrote one visitor, "and were put in a room filled with some

half dozen beds, and two to a bed, and some times more." One wonders whether Burlington was then conscious of the blighting national panic of 1837.

Jeremiah Smith, an enterprising citizen, had hurried to completion a rude structure where the lawmakers were to convene. When the Governor, Colonel Henry Dodge, arrived on November 2nd the capitol was ready. "Instead of being crowded around a small table as heretofore," pointed out one observer, "each member is provided with a desk — a very great improvement, all will agree." On the next day the House was to be opened with a cotillion for all those fond of "fun, frolic, and flash". Tickets were to be on sale at stores and at the "Bar of the Exchange Coffee House."

Fall weather receded as a long, cold winter set in. A late steamer on December 13th brought the news of Elijah P. Lovejoy's murder on the previous November 7th — tidings greeted by a cheer from the crowd assembled at the wharf. Delegations came to the capital to ask for roads, county lines, town sites, county seats, and ferries. On the evening of December 13th a fire completely destroyed Jeremiah Smith's capitol and the House then met in the store of Weber and Renny.

It was a laborious session for Governor Dodge,

who, as reported by a friendly observer, could on occasion give a sample of "clean Anglo-Saxon swearing." One delegation from a straggling settlement about sixty miles to the north came with a petition for roads, bridges, and a post office. The Governor was surprised when, in answer to his question how many people there were in that neighborhood, he was told there were about 1500. The amazement of the other delegates was met by the later explanation that the Governor had not asked what color the people were!

Governor Dodge and the lawmakers left the capital on the adjournment of the legislature in January, 1838. Before the next assembly met, the Territory of Iowa had been separated from Wisconsin and a new Governor had come to rule the frontier settlements west of the Mississippi. Political events moved rapidly, keeping pace with the growth of population.

In August, 1838, Robert Lucas, the new Governor from Ohio, accompanied by his young secretary, Theodore S. Parvin, was travelling upstream toward Burlington. The secretary was bringing a sum of money and a wardrobe. His cargo of fifty law books and two hundred and fifty other volumes he valued at fully $500. When their steamboat, the *Tempest,* docked at the Burlington wharf on August 8th a large crowd had gathered

to welcome the Governor. Parvin was greeted by two lawyers who had been his classmates at a law college in the East. But more eyes followed the Governor as he proceeded to his quarters at the Burlington House.

A committee wished to honor him with a public dinner but the Governor plead that "official duties of high importance" required him to make a tour of inspection. A few days later the *Knickerbocker* with Lucas and Parvin on board departed for Dubuque. On their return early in September about a hundred persons sat down to a public dinner where the Governor made a "very handsome speech". The secretary's toast, not worse, better, or longer than the many others, was: "Iowa Territory — the youngest *Daughter* of our common *Parent,* fast ripening into *Woman*-hood, she will soon be ready for *Union*."

A heavy snowfall early in November added to the hardships of travel to Burlington. Cold weather set in to form so much ice that neither ferries nor steamboats dared to make their trips. No mails could cross the river. The isolation of Burlington could, however, be forgotten at a merry party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lockwood. "There were in attendance", wrote an unmarried man of twenty-one, "about 20 couple. Gentlemen & their Wives. 1 Single Lady and about 10 or

more Single Gentlemen. It was a fine Collection & time passed off very pleasantly as much so as could be expected during the absence of the fair (single) sex."

Ice and snow were soon dispelled by downpours of rain. Muddy boots tramped on the floors of the Methodist Zion Church where the legislators assembled on November 12, 1838. One member a few days before had been shot and killed in a street brawl — a tragedy which provoked a severe reproof in the message of Governor Lucas to the lawmakers.

This session, in the shelter of a church, was not, however, marked by reverent calm. The halls resounded with the bitter quarrel between Secretary Conway and the legislators over the necessity of pen knives. Partisan prejudice, lengthy vetoes, sharp issues over appropriations, and struggles over appointments brought out debates marked by heat as well as light. The final day furnished both spectacle and entertainment to a large crowd including ladies. "Legislature adjourned in confusion", recorded young Parvin's diary. "All drunk with few exceptions."

At the legislative sessions the social barometer of Burlington rose high and its business life became animated. Its hotel keepers and the white-aproned hosts with stick pins could not rejoice

when the Governor laid the corner of the new capitol at Iowa City. Of the twenty-six House members meeting at Burlington in 1840, seventeen were farmers and the others lawyers, mechanics, a miner, and a doctor. Seven members of the legislature were natives of Kentucky and four of Ohio. The westernmost State furnishing a member was Illinois. In November the Council removed from the basement story of the Methodist Church to the Catholic Church, "a fine spacious hall" where young Father Mazzuchelli preached on Sundays.

Either bad tobacco or respect for lady visitors prompted the House resolution that "no person be allowed to smoke a pipe or cigars in this hall". After the campaign of 1840 the speaker and the chief clerk gave a "Hard Cider Treat of Apples". One member, complained a visitor, abandoned his duties to frequent the grog-shops. Another onlooker at the House sessions noted that most of the members were absent and playing billiards.

One day occurred the annual debate over the question of letting the public printing to the Democratic editor or to his Whig rival, James G. Edwards. A Democratic member described himself as an "honest good man and didn't never vote for politic capital." Nor was he opposing Edwards on "politic grounds". Ripples rose to roars of laughter when this legislator hastened to add

that he had no personal dislike of Mr. Edwards and "thought very well of his wife". Such scenes eased the strains in debates that sometimes tested the tempers of early lawmakers.

Politics, like religion, was a survival of inheritance among the pioneers of Burlington rather than a product of reasoned thought. The settlers brought their Democratic and Whig allegiance along with their household goods and family traditions. In spirited campaigns they found an outlet for emotion comparable to the patriotic fervor that leads men to war. Lads who marched and sang in the log cabin and hard cider campaign of 1840 might serve in the Mexican War a few years later. Others might be destined to wear the blue uniform of 1861.

LOUIS PELZER

Land, Elixir, and Staples

Less picturesque than politics, but more vital to the Burlington frontier, were the sales of public lands begun on November 19, 1838. Buyers came from points many miles distant on horseback and by wagon. About two thousand men were encamped in and about the village where Governor Lucas addressed a throng on settlers rights. "The hotels are thronged to overflowing", wrote one of them. "Barrooms, dining rooms, and wagons are metamorphosed into bed rooms. Dinners are eaten from a table or a stump, and thirst is quenched from a bar or a brook."

Settlers from nearly every State in the Union had flocked to the little frontier village. The Massachusetts Yankee was there to seize any bargain; the Kentuckian with his soft southern accent mingled with his brethren from Virginia, Maryland, and Tennessee; large numbers were gathered from Illinois, Ohio, and Indiana; the Granite State was represented; the Hadleys were registered from South Carolina; and besides there were a considerable number of settlers who had but lately come from the District of Columbia.

Township bidders equipped with maps, plats,

descriptions of tracts sold, and names of claimants crowded about the public land office. Augustus C. Dodge, a young man of twenty-seven, was the register, but Bernhart Henn, a clerk, acted as the crier at the sales. Scores — hundreds — of claims were quickly sold and the settler then felt secure in his home. "He is the lord of the soil. With an independent step he walks into the land-office, opens the time-worn saddle-bags, and counts out the 200 or 400 dollars, silver and gold, takes his certificate from the general government, and goes his way rejoicing."

Settlers paid for their land in Missouri bank notes, silver, gold, and Spanish coins. One German paid for his half section in old Spanish quarter-dollar pieces. Speculators and money sharks hovered around the land office to lend money to the settlers at high rates of interest. In the first two weeks the sales netted $295,000. It was estimated that ninety per cent of these lands fell into the hands of actual settlers. Perhaps nowhere in the history of settlement and immigration can there be found a more democratic and a sounder economic condition.

Again in October of the following year, a public sale of land in sixty-three townships was announced. One resident expressed doubt as to the need and wisdom of such sales: times were hard,

temptations would be offered to speculators, money-eyed men might charge as high as fifty per cent, and farmers would be forced to accede to "these modern Shylocks" or to lose all. "Where all this purchase money is to come from is yet to be ascertained." Only gold, silver, and bills of the banks of Missouri and Mineral Point were receivable for lands sold. "Rags for the people", complained one editor, "but gold and silver for the office holders."

Hundreds of farmers came from great distances and at heavy expense to attend these sales. There was no bidding against the claims of *bona fide* settlers in the slow process of transferring titles from the government to the actual occupant of a farm. Speculators and money lenders supplied sums of money at interest rates from twenty to twenty-eight per cent. But they also gave bonds to transfer in full when all principal and interest should be paid. By April the receipts from these sales amounted to over a quarter of a million dollars of which the sum of fifty thousand dollars was shipped to Saint Louis on the steamboat *Brazil*.

If security of title to his land was important to the pioneer, the preservation of his health was a subject of general concern. Medicines and pills were quick to penetrate the frontier region of Burlington to combat pains and to cure diseases — now unknown or happily forgotten. "What need

of Aladdin's lamp", once remarked James R. Lowell, "when we can build a palace with a patent pill." Even the staid *American Journal of the Medical Sciences* in 1839 advertised John B. McMunn's "Elixar of Opium", a drug for five or six maladies such as tetanus and hysteria. Recommended by eleven doctors, the compound was sold at thirty-seven and a half cents per bottle.

The frontiers along the Mississippi sometimes shook with fevers and ague but these were curable by Dr. Sands Vegetable Tonic Pills. Moffatt's Life Pills and Phoenix Bitters were remedies for a dozen different ills, including "general derangement of health". With due modesty the vendor was unwilling to abuse the gift of Providence and to assail the health of the Burlington community. He urged that the pills should not be taken in "inordinate quantities".

Dr. Fall's cure for "consumption, coughs, colds &c" was an Indian remedy discovered during a residence of twelve years among the Cherokees. The medicine, he promised, would provide the "greatest blessings that inventive genius and labors of men have ever bestowed upon suffering humanity in any age of the world." If such medicines satisfied patients on the Iowa frontiers, nature might cure their diseases.

Hasbrouk, a vendor of Wahoo, which was an

extract of herbs and a certain cure for fever and ague, declined to "resort to certificates to prove the wonderful cures affected by this medicine." Dr. Harlan's Mixture was also a cure for ague and fever. No cases of failure among a thousand patients were known — or recorded. The doctor trusted that the charge of "empiracy" would not be brought against him because only practising physicians were acting as his agents. Money refunded without cure. Quintel's Itch Ointment was a nostrum for skin diseases such as ringworm or an imported affliction called the "Illinois Mange".

But no measure or record exists of the cures by Jayne's remedies. His Tonic Vermifuge was medicine against worms and dyspepsia. His "Expectorant" was a remedy for eleven diseases and ills — from a cold to consumption. Nine diseases, including cholera, were curable by his Carminative Balsam, for "thousands of certificates have been received from Physicians, Clergymen, and families of the first respectability." "Attention! Bald Heads" in heavy type directed the plight of unfortunates of one sex to Jayne's Hair Tonic which promised to stop falling hair. In nineteen out of twenty cases it "will bring out a new and beautiful head of hair."

Though the vendors of patent medicine may have been foremost in the exploitation of adver-

tizing, they by no means monopolized attention. Dealers in staple ware proclaimed their services and catalogued their goods. Long prosaic lists of articles to be sold by Bridgeman and Partridge appeared in 1839 in the *Hawk-Eye and Patriot*. Burlington people were invited to buy mattresses, clover and timothy seed, boots, shoes, life preservers, plough moulds, bonnets, palmetto hats, saddles, bridles, wagons, hammers, nails, and mason's wedges. The store also had for sale a thousand barrels of salt, blasting and rifle powder, leather and hair trunks, and Madeira and Malagra wines. Housewives were told about shelves of drillings, shirtings, and calicoes, besides sugar, coffee, and snuff. "And a thousand and one other articles, which with the goods they are daily expecting, will render their assortment more complete than any ever offered in this Territory."

At C. J. Starr's store customers found a stock of groceries, boots, shoes, and hardware. In a home-made rhyme he cried his inventory of hardware:

> Knives and Forks and Files
> Wood Saws and Norfolk Latches
> Candle Sticks and Coffee Mills
> Halter Chains and Friction Matches.

William S. Edgar's drug store supplied the wants of many and ministered to their ills. Henry

W. Moore's advertisement of Rochelle brandy, Jamaica gin, rum, sherry, and American gin and brandy was given — and perhaps needed — but one insertion in the *Hawk-Eye and Patriot*.

Privation was a normal concomitant of pioneer life. Men and women worked hard and expected to have little more than necessities. But if any one in Burlington was ragged, hungry, or thirsty it was not the fault of the merchants.

LOUIS PELZER

Comment by the Editor

ACTUAL HISTORY

"I know histhry isn't thrue," observed Mr. Dooley to his friend Hinnessy, "because it ain't like what I see ivry day in Halsted Sthreet. If any wan comes along with a histhry iv Greece or Rome that'll show me th' people fightin', gettin' dhrunk, makin' love, gettin' married, owin' th' groceryman, an' bein' without hard coal, I'll believe they was a Greece or Rome, but not befure."

In the effort to discover grand patterns in the course of events, historians have neglected the details of the design. It is as though a connoisseur, observing a tapestry which depicts the heroics of a nation, should see only the general plan and ultimate effect. His viewpoint is remote, impersonal, aloof. He looks at a pageant of the past, reviewing what is finished.

But the weavers of the mural cloth knew every thread and shade of color. To them each object had the familiarity of an intimate friend, each allegorical episode possessed reality in fabric, and the whole tapestry attained vitality in the process of creation. Their viewpoint was near and personal. Their eyes were on the present — not much con-

cerned with past and future, with completed figures or the shape of things to be.

A similar disparity separates the makers of history from those who write of it. To busy men and women, the even tenor of normal affairs is seldom disturbed by contemplating the significance of Hammurabi's code or measuring the consequences of the sudden death of an emperor's nephew. Yet the historians, yearning for oracular vision, overlook the habitual activities of the multitude. In their zeal for decisive events, dramatic unities, and the cause of effects, they ignore the general experience of the race.

Actual history consists of the daily lives of common folks. To most people the consumption of kind, satisfactory cigarettes may be more important than the protective tariff. Vast industries are founded upon the decline and fall of pedestrianism. Custom is the crucible of history. The true chronicles of any community are the sayings and doings of matrons and merchants, lawyers and litigants, barbers and bus drivers, workmen and widows. Bob Burdette's "Hawkeyetems" may be a better guage of Burlington civilization than the political sagacity of Editor Edwards and his successors.

J. E. B.

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