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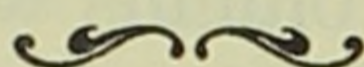
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Guides to Iowa Territory

The Iowa country was the western frontier in 1839. Moving in from the Old Northwest, from the South and from the East, down the Ohio and up the Mississippi, came thousands of pioneers eager to claim the land recently occupied by the Indians. United States dragoons patrolled the border, explorers made long expeditions to the sources of the rivers, and surveyors with rod and chain marked section lines and platted town sites.

Through the Territorial period, there were many factors which encouraged immigration. Besides the more obvious attractions, such as the beauty of the country and the fertility of the soil, lesser influences contributed toward rapid settlement. Without the emigrant guides, prospective pioneers would have been dismayed by the difficulties of western migration. The effect of the handbooks and colored maps can scarcely be measured, but no doubt they contributed to the popularity of the West. The Black Hawk Pur-

chase was not neglected. Indeed, the first Iowa publicity consisted of exuberant praise of the resources of the future Commonwealth. Promoters wrote their enthusiasm into emigrant guides; military explorers reported their journeys; and newspaper editors filled columns with enticing descriptions of the "beautiful land".

In several respects the most significant description of the Black Hawk Purchase resulted from the long march of three companies of the First United States Dragoons in the summer of 1835. According to a soldier in Company I, Captain Jesse B. Browne was sick, and so Lieutenant Albert Miller Lea commanded the company on the eleven-hundred-mile ride across the prairies of interior Iowa. When the dragoons returned to their barracks at Fort Des Moines on August 19th, the anonymous historian recorded that "upon the whole I can say we have had a pleasant Campaign."

The experiences of Lieutenant Lea on this "pleasant Campaign" resulted in an important contribution to the early literature of Iowa: Lea's *Notes on Wisconsin Territory, with a Map*. Impressed by the beauty and resources of the "Iowa District", he bought some land near the present site of Muscatine and began to promote the interests of a town he called Iowa — a town which he

thought might be the future capital of the State of Iowa. And "no place could be better adapted to the erection of buildings".

Lea obtained from the War Department the map he had drawn from data collected during the dragoon expedition in 1835. Elaborating a memoir which he had submitted with his map, Lieutenant Lea had a thousand copies of the book published in 1836 by H. S. Tanner of Philadelphia. The *Notes* were intended to retail for one dollar a copy.

The significance of Lea's contribution lies in the emphasis he gave to the term Iowa. On the blue paper cover of this fifty-four-page book is the title *Notes on the Wisconsin Territory; Particularly with Reference to the Iowa District, or Black Hawk Purchase*. But many copies of this description of climate, country, rivers, and towns met a strange mishap. While being shipped to a merchant in Burlington, half of the edition went to the bottom of the Ohio River with an ill-fated steamboat. Because of the rarity and significance of the little book, Lea's *Notes* were reprinted in the *Annals of Iowa* in 1913 and again by the State Historical Society (*The Book That Gave Iowa Its Name*) in 1935.

Nor was Albert M. Lea the only military man who contributed to the early literature of Iowa.

In the summer of 1837, Governor Henry Dodge made a journey to St. Peters in order to draw up a treaty between the United States and the Chippewa Indians. The treaty signed on July 29, 1837, does not bear the name of William R. Smith (although the well-known Iowans, Verplanck Van Antwerp and William W. Coriell, were noted as witnesses); but it is certain that he was present as an aide to Governor Dodge.

Partly as a result of this trip and partly from impressions gained through residence, W. R. Smith, the future president of the Wisconsin Historical Society, had E. L. Carey and A. Hart of Philadelphia publish in 1838 a book about the country he saw. The publication, *Observations on the Wisconsin Territory; Chiefly on that part called the "Wisconsin Land District"*, contains one hundred and thirty-four pages, ten of which are about Iowa. General Smith acknowledged that the "condensed view of the growing prosperity of the western side of the river Mississippi" was gathered from Peter H. Engle of Dubuque.

Explorers also contributed their share to the early history of Iowa. Joseph N. Nicollet in his report to Congress in 1840 on a survey of the hydrographical basin of the upper Mississippi River described the Iowa country. Captain James Allen's report of the march of his dragoons in the

Des Moines Valley during the summer of 1844 was published by the government in 1846. His *Journal* was a commentary upon land and weather. Though very matter-of-fact, it was in the romantic tradition of other explorers who travelled through the country and wrote about the conditions they observed.

John Plumbe, Jr., was not only a promoter of a scheme for a transcontinental railroad; he was an enthusiast for Iowa as well. In 1839, Plumbe had Chambers, Harris, and Knapp of St. Louis publish *Sketches of Iowa and Wisconsin, taken during a Residence of Three Years in those Territories*. The purpose of the volume, said Plumbe in the preface, was to "be the means of effecting some good, by assisting in directing the attention of Emigrants and others, to a portion of the United States, which all, who have examined it, unite in representing — to use the words of a distinguished English traveller — as 'one of the finest domains that nature ever offered to man.' "

Composed chiefly of quotations from Lea's *Notes* and from newspaper articles, Plumbe's *Sketches* described the topography and resources of the sister Territories. Of particular interest is a map which outlined the surveyed townships, it "being the only Map yet published, exhibiting the location of Iowa City the permanent Seat of Gov-

ernment of the Territory." In his description of towns, Plumbe said of Iowa City: "Its situation is a very beautiful one, having an abundance of timber near it; and a fine quarry of marble, of which the Capitol is to be constructed upon a very magnificent scale." This volume was reprinted in the *Annals of Iowa* for January and April, 1925.

Almost as romantic a figure in the history of Iowa as John Plumbe, Jr., was Isaac Galland. An adventurer in speculation, publishing, and religion, he was also by profession a physician, the compounder of "Dr. Galland's Family Medicines". Having settled in the Half-Breed Tract in 1829, he engaged in the fur trade and occasionally prescribed for ailing neighbors. He sponsored the first Iowa school. About the time he became agent for the New York Land Company in 1837, he began publishing the short-lived Montrose newspaper *The Western Adventurer*. On September 9, 1837, the *Iowa News* announced to its readers that the *Western Emigrant and Historian of Times in the West* was the title of a sixteen-page monthly periodical published at the office of the Montrose newspaper. "This periodical, as its title indicates," said the editor, "is devoted to the interests of the emigrant, and contains many selections of incidents in the West, as well as geographical descriptions." The price of

the magazine was two dollars a year "with liberal deductions to clubs".

While Galland was residing in Montrose he compiled and had William C. Jones of Chillicothe, Missouri, publish in 1840 a volume entitled: *Galland's Iowa Emigrant: containing a map and General Descriptions of Iowa Territory*. The guide was reprinted in the *Annals of Iowa* for January, 1921. Within the compass of thirty-two pages, Doctor Galland described the topography of the country, the character of the population, the animal life, and a list of civil and executive officers of the Territory. Of particular interest is his account of the Indians of Iowa. A descriptive work on Indian lore by Doctor Galland was published posthumously in the first *Annals of Iowa* in 1869. Soon after the Mormons settled at Nauvoo, he accepted that faith and served Joseph Smith in a secretarial capacity. In 1847, after the exodus of the Mormons to Utah, he published a few issues of *The Iowa Advocate and Half-Breed Journal*.

In contrast to the emigrant guides of a general nature was J. H. Colton's *Guide for the Territory of Iowa, with a correct map*. Published by the compiler at New York in 1839, the six-page guide seems incidental to the map, which was not really up-to-date. The demand for this first emigrant guide and map devoted exclusively to Iowa was

apparently so great that it was reprinted the next year.

In 1840 Jesse Williams had J. H. Colton of New York publish *A Description of the United States in Iowa* — being, said Williams, “a minute description of every section and quarter section, quality of soil, groves of timber, prairies, ledges of rock, coal banks, iron and lead ores, waterfalls, mill-seats”. And, concluded the compiler, “The book and map will furnish the possessor with more information concerning Iowa than can be obtained from any other source.”

Similar to the compilation of Williams was the volume by Willard Barrows, the United States Deputy Surveyor for Iowa. *Notes on Iowa Territory with a map* was published by Doolittle and Munson at Cincinnati in 1845. The *Notes* contain forty-eight pages of general information on the counties and a table of distances on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. The map, which was colored, showed the counties and townships.

There were other maps and general guides incidentally touching upon the Iowa country. For example, William Guthrie published at London in 1819 *A Geographical, Historical, and Commercial Grammar; exhibiting the Present State of the World*, which indicated the trading posts along the eastern fringe of the land that was to be Iowa.

Ten years later R. W. Chandler of Galena, Illinois, compiled and had published in Cincinnati a detailed map of Wisconsin Territory west of the Four Lakes, "giving the location of the few Indian villages, and all the lead diggings of that day". And in 1838 Samuel Augustus Mitchell compiled a map of the settled part of Wisconsin and Iowa, and Henry I. Abel of Philadelphia published it as *A Geographical, Geological and Statistical Chart of Wisconsin and Iowa*.

Of the books which contained a passing reference to Iowa, the following may be found interesting: J. M. Peck's *A New Guide for Emigrants to the West* (1836); Rev. Robert Baird's *View of the Valley of the Mississippi, or the Emigrant's and Traveller's Guide to the West* (1831, 1836); J. Calvin Smith's *The Western Tourist and Emigrant's Guide* (1840) and a reprint of this volume by J. H. Colton in 1843.

But the chief promoter of Iowa's interest was Major John B. Newhall. Coming in 1834 on the first wave of immigration, he could truthfully say that he had "witnessed the great work of civilization in all its various stages, from the lone cabin of the frontier settler, to a happy and intelligent population of 170,000 souls!" Always actively concerned with new developments, Newhall contributed three guides to the literature of Iowa.

In 1841 J. H. Colton published his *Sketches of Iowa, or the Emigrant's Guide*. Within this two-hundred-and-fifty-two-page book was "a correct description of the agricultural and mineral resources, geological features and statistics" as well as "a minute description of each county, and of the principal towns and Indian villages". According to the title page, this volume was "the result of much observation and travel during a continuous residence of several years". The purpose of the guide was clearly stated in the preface. Said Major Newhall: "Perhaps no portion of this fertile valley at the present time excites more general interest, or in detail is less known, than the territory of Iowa." Of the volume T. S. Parvin wrote in his *Diary*: "Just finished reading Newhall — too flowery."

With continuing enthusiasm, the Major lectured on "The Past, Present, and Future Resources of Iowa." Traveling abroad he talked to Englishmen at Birmingham, Liverpool, and London on the prospects of Iowa. And in 1844 he published a book of one hundred pages entitled *The British Emigrants' "Hand Book"*. This volume printed in London counselled that Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa were ideal for future settlements. "And if you do not happen to have a 'Home sick Wife', I can see no reason why, with

ordinary Good Luck, blessed with patience and perseverance, you should not prosper equal to your utmost expectations." There is little doubt but that this enthusiastic "Hand Book" was instrumental in attracting hundreds of British emigrants to Iowa in the years before the Civil War.

In 1846, Major Newhall brought out a second edition of his first book on Iowa. This one-hundred-and-twelve-page book was published by W. D. Skillman of Burlington, Iowa, and was entitled *A Glimpse of Iowa in 1846*. A brief directory of the leading cities and an appended copy of the new State constitution were features of the second edition.

Writing of *Sketches of Iowa*, Major Newhall said that "in little more than two months from the day of publication, to the final disposal of the entire edition, is, of itself, a sufficient commentary of its favorable reception, and affords the writer the most gratifying evidence that the spirit of inquiry is still abroad, to learn more and more of the condition and vast resources of this highly favored region."

Other evidence of the effect of these guides upon emigration might be inferred from the numerous letters and descriptions of the Iowa country printed in the newspapers. For example, "Veritas" wrote for the Burlington *Hawk-Eye* in

the summer and fall of 1843 a series of articles upon emigration. Obviously, these were intended to reach the eyes of eastern readers and were extensively reproduced in the eastern press.

Then too, the growth of Iowa during its Territorial period was phenomenal. Albert M. Lea in 1836 thought the Iowa country had a population of at least sixteen thousand. The census of that year, however, recorded only 10,531. In 1838 the population had reached 23,242, and two years later the number of inhabitants had again nearly doubled. When the Territory became a State, there were 102,388 persons in Iowa.

Can it be doubted that the numerous emigrant guides contributed their share to the founding of this Commonwealth? Having read the eulogies of Lieutenant Lea, Doctor Galland, and Major Newhall, the lusty pioneers perceived a vision of opportunity on the prairies beyond the Mississippi and joined the western migration. Indeed, the pen of the early promoters seems to have contributed as much as the sword of the frontier soldiers to the empire of Iowa.

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