

The PALIMPSEST

MAY 1944

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

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

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

THE MEANING OF PALIMPSEST

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

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

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THE PALIMPSEST

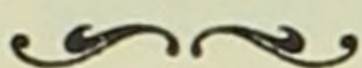
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The Mapleton Meteorite

At about eleven o'clock in the forenoon of June 17, 1939, Harvey Meevers, a farmer residing a few miles east of Mapleton, in Monona County, was cultivating corn in the field southeast of his house. It was his birthday and no doubt his thoughts dwelt occasionally upon that anniversary. Accidentally his cultivator caught behind a heavy object, which seemed so unusual that he stopped his team and dug it out of the ground for closer examination.

"It seemed heavier than any other stone" he had ever struck, so he put it on the back of his cultivator for a weight. Driving in from his work in the late afternoon he took it along with him. As he lifted it off the plow he came to the conclusion that "it was a mass of iron", and decided to save it, putting it in the barn for safe-keeping. After doing the usual chores he went to the house for supper. Very soon, however, a severe thunder storm came up and he remembered the large

piece of iron in the barn. Fearing that it might draw the lightning, he went out immediately and carried it to a safe distance from the building.

Eventually, the object was shown to a number of friends and neighbors, and naturally their curiosity concerning its true identity was considerably aroused. Strangely coincident, the July issue of the *National Geographic Magazine* carried an article on meteorites, by F. Barrows Colton, which furnished them the clue needed to solve the problem. This was truly fortunate, and probably responsible for saving the specimen. Had its nature not been early recognized, it would doubtless, sooner or later, have been cast aside and eventually lost altogether. Such has probably been the fate of other finds in Iowa.

So confident was Harvey Meevers of the correctness of his identification, that he took the curious rock to town where it was exhibited in the window of the local bank as a meteorite. The specimen weighed 108 pounds, and possessed all the characteristics of "meteoric iron", including a dark brown, somewhat rust-stained surface pitted with peculiar prints known as "thumb marks", which appear as if someone had pressed his thumb at random into a plastic surface which afterward became indurated by nature. The dimensions of the meteorite, taken from careful

measurements made at the time, were: length, $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches; width, $9\frac{7}{8}$ inches; and thickness, $6\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

In several respects, this was a novel event in Iowa meteoritics. The Mapleton specimen is the only authenticated meteorite found within the State, of which the time of its fall is uncertain. The four great falls, or showers, in Iowa were actually witnessed. How long the Mapleton meteorite may have lain buried in the ground before it was discovered by Harvey Meevers can not be determined. This period may have been a few years or perhaps several hundred. Its appearance, however, particularly the lack of extensive weathering, would seem to indicate a relatively short time.

A number of people surmise that it might have been connected with a great fireball which went streaking across the sky at about ten o'clock one evening during the winter of 1916-17. The consensus of opinion seems to be "that the ground was frozen hard at the time, that some people had already retired for the night, and that it was certainly before" the United States entered the war. Mr. Meevers, himself, thinks that this occurred on Thanksgiving night in 1916. Be this as it may, the fireball was observed by a number of people in the vicinity of Mapleton, traveling apparently,

in a "northeasterly direction, giving off a great deal of light, and was followed by a loud explosion." An observer at Emmetsburg, some eighty-five miles northeast of Mapleton, reported that the bright light and explosion occurred southwest of his point of observation.

If this was actually the meteorite found by Meevers, it is difficult to account for the fact that it buried itself so deeply in the soil as to elude detection in a field which must have been plowed and cultivated many times in the previous twenty-five years, for under such circumstances meteorites usually bounce on striking the frozen ground, rather than penetrate deeply into it. The explosion would also indicate that the meteorite must have been broken into several fragments, no others of which have yet been found.

Astronomer David E. Hadden, of Alta, Iowa, writing in *Popular Astronomy*, described a brilliant "Detonating Meteor" which went streaking across the western sky in a southerly direction at about 9:55 P. M. on the evening of May 31, 1917. At this time of the year the ground would not have been frozen, and there is the possibility that this event might have had some bearing upon the Mapleton "iron".

While the physical appearance of the Mapleton meteorite would apparently indicate that it is

a complete individual, rather than a fragment broken from a larger one by an explosion, Dr. H. W. Nichols is of the opinion that its extremely thin crust, "not over 0.25 millimeter, suggests that the meteorite burst at so late a period of its fall that there was not time for any noticeable penetration of heat. If this should be the case, there is a chance for a future find of another individual within perhaps ten miles."

The Mapleton meteorite also differed from the other Iowa falls in that it was a typical "iron" or "siderite" — the only one of this class thus far recovered in the State. The Estherville fall was of the rarer mesosiderite, "ironstone" type, and the Marion, Amana, and Forest City falls were of the more common "stoney" variety known as areolites. While on exhibition in Mapleton, a small chip for a sample was sawed off the meteorite with a hack-saw by a local blacksmith. This revealed a bright metallic interior, which confirmed the theory of the local scientist that it was composed principally of iron.

Being somewhat anxious, no doubt, to turn his new possession into cash, Meevers sent the following letter on July 22nd to the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago.

"Gentlemen: I have recently discovered a meteorite on my farm. It is of quite considerable

size, weighing 108 pounds. This, I understand, is large as meteorites go.

"I wonder if you would be interested in securing this relic for your museum, and if you would make an offer for the same. I have a small chip I could send in case you would want to analyze same to determine its authenticity. Of course, I would expect to get the sample back again."

In response to this letter, Clifford C. Gregg, Director of the Museum, immediately replied to the effect that his experts would be glad to examine the sample, and notify him of the results of their findings.

In mailing the "small chip" to the Museum on July 26th, Meevers showed the utmost confidence in his own judgment of the value of the find, saying: "I am sure that your report on this sample will be that it is a genuine meteorite and that it will have considerable value as a historical piece as well as conveying some leads which will give additional information which is of interest to geologists and astronomers."

The letter containing the above paragraph and the "chip" referred to, were received by the Museum on the morning of July 28, 1939. An examination was made at once and the sample immediately pronounced to have come from an iron meteorite. Arrangements were made be-

tween Elmer S. Riggs, who was acting as Chief Curator of Geology, in the absence of Dr. H. W. Nichols, and the administrative department of the Museum "for an immediate examination of the meteorite with the view of entering into negotiations for the purchase of the same."

Consequently, on the following day, Bryant Mather, the Associate Curator of Mineralogy, accompanied by Warren Raymond, the Assistant Register, went to Mapleton, where they visited Mr. Meevers. They were very cordially received, and after assuring themselves of the authenticity of the specimen, began negotiations for its purchase. At first, Mr. Meevers seemed reluctant to consummate a sale on such short notice. He had apparently written letters to other potential buyers, but only the Field Museum had replied by the time their representatives had appeared on the scene.

Before he would consent to the sale, he withdrew to consult at length with advisers by phone and with Mrs. Meevers in person. The desirability of having the meteorite preserved in the Midwest, rather than in the East where it would be much more difficult for him and his friends "to come and see it on display", was one of the deciding factors, according to Mr. Mather, which eventually "led him to accept the offer we made

and to pick up the five-dollar bills we had been lining up along the edge of the porch floor," as the negotiations proceeded.

And so, for a nominal sum, the title to the fifth Iowa meteorite, the only one to be found in the present century, passed to the Museum to become a worthy part of a collection containing the largest representation of individual falls of any collection in the western hemisphere, if not in the entire world. At the Chicago Natural History Museum, it is now on exhibition with generous portions of each of the other four great falls that had occurred in Iowa.

Upon completion of the transaction, Mather and Raymond made detailed notes concerning the circumstances of the recovery of the specimen, particularly the exact location at which it was found, which proved to be the northeast quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 15, Township 85 North, Range 42 West, about three miles east and one mile north of Mapleton, Monona County, Iowa. By a careful comparison with available maps, Stanley E. Harris of the Iowa State Geological Survey determined this position to be $42^{\circ} 10' 47''$ north latitude, and $95^{\circ} 43' 18''$ west longitude, this being the location of the center of the particular forty-acre part of the section.

"It was also agreed", reported Mr. Mather,

that, "we would make an effort to have notices of the finding of the meteorite placed in the Mapleton and Sioux City newspapers, to have copies of whatever publicity that might appear sent to him, and finally, to suggest that he be made a member of the Museum and sent a card entitling him to free admission." It was late in the day when the specimen was carefully placed in Raymond's car, adieus were said, and the scientists departed for Chicago, where the Mapleton meteorite was safely delivered into the permanent care and keeping of the Field Museum of Natural History (now the Chicago Museum of Natural History).

The first official notice of the Mapleton meteorite was prepared by S. K. Roy of the Department of Geology of the Field Museum and appeared under the title "Field Museum Obtains First Iron Meteorite Ever Reported for State of Iowa" in *Field Museum News* for September, 1939. In the following month, *Rocks and Minerals* also published a brief account, evidently copied from the information given in the Field publication. In both of these articles the name Mapleton Meteorite was assigned to the object.

In due time, the Museum authorities began the scientific analysis of their newly acquired treasure, which included such matters as chemical composition, specific gravity, and internal structure. In

determining the latter, it is necessary to saw off a section, whereupon the flat surface is first polished very smoothly and then etched by dipping it repeatedly for brief intervals into a weak solution of nitric acid. This brings out the so-called Widmanstätten figures in relief, thus revealing the internal structure of the meteorite, by which means it is classified. The Mapleton "iron" proved to be of the type called medium octahedrite, which is not uncommon.

While the specific gravity of most "iron" meteorites is relatively uniform, this feature has incidental significance. As determined from a small section, the specific gravity of the Mapleton meteorite was found to be 7.70, which is about the average for such an "iron".

Chemical analysis, made in the Museum laboratory by Henry Herpers, disclosed the following elements present, which are given in percentages: iron, 92.16; nickel, 7.61; cobalt, 0.036; copper, 0.003; carbon, 0.14; sulphur, 0.01; and phosphorus, 0.10. These elements are all common to meteorites of this type. And so it appears that there has been nothing new or startling revealed to science by Iowa's latest contribution to this particular field of knowledge.

Dr. Nichols did, however, state to the writer, that it was one of the toughest "irons" that the

museum technicians had ever attempted to saw, and that the working blade would on occasion apparently make little or no progress for hours at a time. This he said might possibly be due to inclusions of microscopic diamonds (crystallized carbon), of which there was a sufficient quantity shown in the chemical analysis to account for the phenomenon, but that no test had yet been made to prove the theory of their presence.

The Mapleton meteorite is now displayed in a cabinet of Meteorite Hall of the Chicago Natural History Museum where it has been assigned the catalog number Me2286. Its weight is stated as 108 pounds, and in addition one fragment of 34 grams, presumably the sample originally sent in by Mr. Meevers. It was sawed into a number of sections which consist of two "end pieces", of 35.5 and 47 pounds each, and three "slabs" weighing 10 pounds, 7 pounds, and 4290 grams respectively, all of which have been retained by the museum, with the exception of 20 grams which have been exchanged with H. H. Nininger, a meteorite collector and specialist of Denver, Colorado.

Fortunately, there are many men scattered over the country, like Harvey Meevers, with a wholesome bump of curiosity in their nature who are continually uncovering new facts and new ob-

jects for science. Were it not for such individuals, the progress of civilization would have been greatly retarded. No one knows how many other such "finds" may be lying around on the hills and prairies of Iowa, only to await discovery under similar circumstances.

BEN HUR WILSON

Iowa in 1844

One hundred years ago, John Tyler, a Whig, was President of the United States. But 1844, like 1944, was a presidential election year. Henry Clay was the leading candidate among the Whigs, while Martin Van Buren and James K. Polk were the principal contenders for the presidential nomination on the Democratic ticket. Polk favored territorial expansion — the annexation of Texas — and perhaps because of that fact, he secured the nomination and later won the election.

During Territorial days, the Governor of Iowa was appointed by the President of the United States for a term of three years, "unless sooner removed by the President". His salary, as well as other Territorial government expenses, was paid from the United States treasury. John Chambers, a Whig, who had been commissioned Governor by President William Henry Harrison in 1841 was still serving in that office in 1844. Augustus Caesar Dodge was Iowa's Delegate to Congress. Charles Mason, Joseph Williams, and Thomas S. Wilson constituted the Iowa Territorial Supreme Court. James P. Carleton was Speaker of the Iowa House of Representatives

and Thomas Cox was President of the Council in the Legislative Assembly.

By the first of April, 1844, thirty-one counties had been established in Iowa Territory but county government had been organized and put into operation in only eighteen of them. Twenty-five of the counties had their present boundaries. Fayette County, established in 1837, still officially extended west to the Missouri River and north to the Canadian border, embracing an area of more than 140,000 square miles, most of which had not yet been ceded by the Indians or opened to settlement.

From December, 1843, to the middle of February, 1844, the Sixth Legislative Assembly was in session in the new Stone Capitol in Iowa City. This Assembly was composed of twenty-six Representatives from the counties which were fully organized, apportioned on the basis of population. Lee and Van Buren counties each sent two members to the Council. Des Moines, Henry, and Jefferson counties each constituted a separate district with a single member, while Louisa and Washington counties, Muscatine and Johnson counties, Cedar, Jones and Linn counties, and Dubuque, Jackson, Delaware, and Clayton counties were districted together with one member from each district. The apportionment in the Council

as in the House was roughly according to population.

The Sixth Legislative Assembly remained in session until February 16, 1844. It passed one hundred and forty-four laws and twenty joint resolutions. The laws dealt with subjects ranging alphabetically from adjutant general to wolves and writs of error. Among the most typical statutes were provisions for the taking of the census, the organization of new counties, the building of dams, the operation of ferries, the establishment of roads, the organization of corporations, and the collection of taxes.

The act relative to the census would be criticized now for its duplicity, because it dealt with two distinct subjects — counting the inhabitants and also calling for a special session of the Legislative Assembly to convene on June 16, 1844. It was later discovered that the date designated came on Sunday.

Relative to the census the law provided that it should be the duty of the county, township, or precinct assessors to ascertain "the number of white inhabitants" residing within their respective counties, townships, or precincts on May 1, 1844, and certify the results to the clerk of the board of county commissioners on or before the second Monday in June. Accordingly, a census was

taken in twenty-one counties, including newly established Davis, Kishkekosh, and Wapello. Kishkekosh County, which was later renamed Monroe County, was not yet organized, but for governmental purposes was attached to Wapello County and the census returns were made by officers of that county. Two other counties — Keokuk and Mahaska — which were organized by law in February, 1844, but had not yet elected officers, did not make census returns in accordance with the new law.

Complete returns of the census of 1844 apparently were never published. A summary of the count in Johnson County, however, appeared in June in both the *Iowa Standard* and the *Iowa Capitol Reporter*. The report showed that there were 296 families residing in Johnson County — 186 families in Iowa City and 110 in the county. The total population of the county was 1525, and of this number, 916 were residents of Iowa City. This newspaper summary included data not required by the census law, such as the number of cattle, horses, sheep, and hogs in the county. It also gave the assessed valuation of livestock together with that of other personal and real property. The total assessed valuation for the county was \$312,197.

The organization of new counties was a subject

of much interest in 1844. One of the acts passed by the Sixth Legislative Assembly provided for the organization of Keokuk and Mahaska counties and for attaching Poweshiek County to Mahaska County for governmental purposes. Another law authorized the attachment of Kishkekosh County to Wapello, while a third provided for the organization of Davis County and the attachment of Appanoose County thereto.

Perhaps the most unique statute in this connection was a measure which authorized the division of Lee County and naming the southern part of that area Madison County. This law, however, provided for a referendum, and the division would become effective only if it were approved by the people of that area at the general election in April, 1844. As this measure was not approved by the people, the law did not become operative, and the county was not divided.

One hundred years ago, grist and saw mills were being constructed along Iowa streams, and mill dams were needed to increase the water power. One of the measures designed to aid this development authorized proprietors of mill dams to increase the height of dams previously constructed, provided the increased height did not cause the stream to overflow and damage adjacent property.

Another law authorized Hugh Boyle of Lee County and Ralph Bissell of Henry County to construct a dam across the Skunk River. It was provided, however, that the dam should contain a convenient lock, not less than one hundred and thirty-five feet in length, and thirty-five feet wide. The dam and lock were to be so constructed as to allow the passage of flatboats, rafts, and other water craft "when the river is in a good stage for safe navigation".

Seven measures passed by the Sixth Legislative Assembly provided for the establishment and operation of ferries. These were to be located at Montrose, Dubuque, Burlington, Keokuk, Fort Madison, at the mouth of Nassau Slough near Keokuk, and at the lower end of Rock Island, all on the Mississippi River.

In 1838, John Wilson had been authorized to maintain a "horse or steam power" ferry at Rock Island. A new law authorized the operation of "a swing ferry boat" at that place, to be propelled "by the force of the current" of the river. The boat was to be attached to one end of a cable, the other end of which would be fastened to the island. The law provided that when this new type of boat was completed and ready for operation it should be inspected by the county commissioners of Scott County to see if it would furnish "a suf-

ficient and safe conveyance of passengers, horses, cattle, hogs, and other property" without unreasonable delay. Apparently the new design did not work successfully, for swing ferry boats were never commonly used.

Education was a subject of much interest to the pioneers of Iowa in 1844. Among the laws which were passed by the Sixth Legislative Assembly were nine measures which dealt with the establishment of educational institutions. Citizens of Des Moines County were especially favored with legislation relative to schools. Special acts provided for the incorporation of the Burlington Mechanics' Institute, Burlington University, and Jefferson Academy in Des Moines County. In Henry County provisions were made for the incorporation of the Mount Pleasant Lyceum and the Mount Pleasant Collegiate Institute. Other acts incorporated the Mechanics' Mutual Aid Association of Iowa City, Farmington Academy, Clinton Academy at De Witt, and Washington Lyceum of Jackson County. Some of these schools in later years came to be important educational institutions, Mechanics' Academy, founded by the Mechanics' Mutual Aid Association of Iowa City, had a long and noteworthy history, and Mount Pleasant Collegiate Institute, which later became Iowa Wesleyan College, was at the end of a

century, the oldest college in continuous service still operating in Iowa.

Transportation was a subject of increasing importance in 1844. Some thirty laws passed by the Sixth Territorial Assembly made provisions for the establishment of roads. In some cases these roads were to be located between frontier towns. Thus one act provided for a road from Farmington to Ottumwa — spelled in the law "Autumwa". Other roads were to extend from Delhi to Cascade, from "Bellview" to Iowa City, and from Fort Madison to "Iowaville". Sometimes roads were established between two mills. One statute authorized the marking of a road from Deed's mill in Jefferson County to Crippen's mill in Washington County. Another road was to extend to "Indian Agency" and another to the Missouri State line.

Interest in transportation was stimulated by reports of three steamboats which ascended the Iowa River as far as Iowa City during the year 1844. The *Agatha* arrived at the capital city on Tuesday, March 12th. It had left Burlington the previous Saturday evening and "during each night she lay by". The *Agatha*, propelled by a stern wheel, was in size and appearance "a very respectable craft". She towed two keelboats "as far as the mouth of the Cedar", but the amount of freight

brought up to Iowa City was not large. No doubt the crew hoped to have a larger cargo downstream. However, much of the pork and wheat produced in this section had been previously "waggoned off, owing to the uncertainty of having steamboat transportation".

On June 29, 1844, the *Iowa City Capitol Reporter* noted that on the previous Saturday the steamer *Emma* "very unexpectedly hove in sight of our usually quiet little city". This was "by far the largest craft of the kind" that had come to the capital.

During the first week of September, the *Maid of Iowa* arrived at Iowa City. It was then believed that the "practicability of steam navigation" was assured in all favorable seasons of the year. But, alas, this prophecy failed. Steamboat navigation never flourished on the Iowa River.

By 1844, legal controversies of a wide variety were being appealed to the Iowa Territorial Supreme Court. During that year, forty-five cases were settled by that court. Three men, who later became Governors of Iowa, were employed as attorneys. Ralph P. Lowe served as counsel in ten of these cases; and James W. Grimes, who, like Lowe, was later United States Senator as well as Governor, was an attorney in four of the cases. In one instance, the case of a promissory note ap-

pealed from Louisa County, Lowe was attorney for the plaintiff and Grimes for the defendant. In two other cases, Stephen Hempstead, the second State Governor of Iowa, was one of the attorneys. Other prominent attorneys in these cases included David Rorer, S. C. Hastings, and Stephen Whicher.

Three of the Supreme Court cases are of interest today because of the parties to the litigation. One case came up on a writ of quo warranto by George W. Jones against Timothy Fanning, both prominent residents of Dubuque. The action was brought to deprive Fanning of the right to operate a ferry which he pleaded was based upon a Territorial law of 1838. Jones replied that the law was void, and alleged that Fanning had not operated the ferry in such a manner as to acquire any rights under the law. The lower court had ruled that the law was valid and had been sufficiently observed. Accordingly, a verdict had been rendered in favor of Fanning, and the Supreme Court affirmed this decision.

Another case was an appeal on writ of error from the district court in Muscatine County. A suit had been brought in the lower court against Robert Lucas for the payment of a promissory note. Notice had been served by the sheriff by leaving a copy of the writ at the farm home of

Charles Nealley which was referred to in the return as "the usual place of residence" of Robert Lucas. At the time, however, the former Governor of Iowa was living in the town of Bloomington. He defended the suit on the ground that he was not properly served with notice, but the district court held otherwise. In the Supreme Court Chief Justice Charles Mason ruled that if an injustice had been done Mr. Lucas, his remedy was in equity and he had no ground of complaint against the ruling of the district court.

Perhaps the most interesting case which came to the Supreme Court in 1844 was one which arose from a sale of lots in Iowa City. Chauncey Swan, commissioner of Iowa City, had sold lot four in block ninety-seven to John R. Ewing and James G. Catham, who had paid \$66.21, which was one-fourth of the purchase price, and had given three promissory notes, each for a like amount, in payment of the balance. The certificate of purchase, through some error, was made out for lot three instead of four. Subsequently, Swan had sold and conveyed lot four to another party. When the notes fell due, the makers of the notes pleaded lack of consideration and refused payment. The local court directed that the advanced purchase money be refunded. In the Supreme Court the judgment was affirmed.

The most significant public question before the people of Iowa Territory in 1844 was the agitation for Statehood. This was not a new movement. Both Governor Robert Lucas, a Democrat, and Governor John Chambers, a Whig, had advocated the adoption of State government. Under their leadership the question had been referred to the people in 1840 and again in 1842, but in each instance the proposal was defeated by a large popular vote.

By the year 1844, Iowa Territory had a population of 75,000, and there was an increasing interest in Statehood. In the newspapers, at public gatherings, and in private conversations, the arguments which had developed for and against admission into the Union were presented with renewed vigor. On the one hand, it was argued that Territorial government was at most a temporary arrangement which must eventually give way to the more perfect constitution of the Commonwealth. Moreover, it was believed that a new State organization would lend political stability, and stimulate a wider interest in immigration. It would increase population, develop internal improvements, and greatly increase Iowa prestige, both within and beyond the borders of the State.

There was opposition, however, to the establishment of a new State, because under the Terri-

torial government, expenses were paid from the United States treasury. Statehood would increase taxes. Moreover, there had been substantial growth and prosperity and a large measure of freedom under the Territorial system, and many of the residents were quite content to remain under that form of government.

Territorial newspapers were divided on strong partisan lines. The Democratic newspapers favored Statehood, while the Whig papers opposed it. One reason for this division lay in the fact that the Democratic party had a majority of representatives in the Legislative Assembly, and it was clear that in case of Statehood the Democrats would have a controlling vote and secure most of the State offices.

Governor John Chambers, who succeeded Governor Lucas in 1841, took a broad and statesmanlike view of the question. Despite the fact that he was a Whig and knew that Statehood would mean the termination of his office, he advocated State government and urged its early adoption. Under his leadership, in February, 1844, the Legislative Assembly passed a measure which provided for another popular vote on the question. At the elections in April, the people returned a large majority in favor of calling a constitutional convention. Subsequently delegates were elected

and plans were made for the holding of a convention at Iowa City in the fall. Thus, 1844 is memorable as the year in which it was finally decided that Iowa should seek admission to the Union.

In 1844, Robert Lucas built a new home on a farm adjacent to Iowa City. Because of the plum trees near the house, he called it Plum Grove. There the venerable Governor was destined to spend his declining years. He had seen much of strife and hardship. In approaching the end of his life, he cherished the serenity of Plum Grove and contemplated the values of Christian faith. He spent much of his time leafing through a well-worn Methodist hymnal, and writing religious verses in the margins of newspapers and on the backs of public documents. In the hundred years that have passed since the Lucas home was built at Plum Grove, Iowa City has extended southward to include this area within the city limits. The house erected in 1844 still stands.

Owned by the State of Iowa, the building is being restored to its original condition. Walls and partitions that have been removed are being replaced. Fireplaces that have been boarded up or bricked in are being rebuilt, and the house will be made to appear substantially as it was in 1844. The surrounding area, too, is being made to conform with the original setting. Wild plum trees,

lilacs, roses, and a variety of native trees, bushes, and shrubs are being planted. Thus, Plum Grove as it originally appeared, will be restored and maintained as a historic shrine — the home of the first Governor of the Territory of Iowa.

Thus in retrospect, we span the years from 1844 to 1944. Not many buildings are standing now that were erected then. Not many laws remain unaltered that were enacted then. Not many scenes remain unchanged. But the men and women of Iowa who lived and served and built in those early days have left indelible imprints upon the history of the Commonwealth. The influences of one hundred years ago are still clearly apparent.

J. A. SWISHER

Dutton's Cave

In the days a generation ago when livery teams and human legs still were recognized means of transportation for persons bent on brief outings for recreation, Dutton's Cave, three miles and a half northeast of West Union, was a favorite picnic spot. Seldom a day went by without one or more picnic parties visiting the place, and on Sundays the cave premises often drew a large number of groups to total a hundred or more persons, building their campfires and preparing their picnic meals.

The cave, with a front sixty feet in height, is generally considered the most impressive piece of scenery in the West Union locality, and has shared with Falling Spring, five and a half miles northwest, the chief popularity as a picnic place, though Falling Spring has the advantage of easier climbs to reach the picnic grounds.

Dutton's Cave got its name from its discoverer, Lorenzo Dutton, who found it the first year he lived in Fayette County, in 1848. Although Mr. Dutton was not the first settler in what afterward became Union Township of Fayette County, he was the second. The first settler was Thomas J.

Smith, who built a cabin in August, 1848, about a mile northeast of the present courthouse square in West Union. Smith moved on soon, leaving no historic trace, and so, for something like sixty-six years, until his death in 1914, Mr. Dutton was rated "the oldest inhabitant" of the West Union community.

Lorenzo Dutton, who, in July, 1848, came from Meredith, Delaware County, New York, selected a cabin site about a mile and a half northeast of Smith's place. He went back to New York and when he returned in September he was accompanied by Henry Jones, Charles Jones, William H. Blanchard, and William W. Bailey. These men built a dwelling. It consisted of four upright corner poles, some other poles laid horizontally as a basis for a roof, while all the rest of the structure, sides and roof, consisted of prairie hay. They had a cook stove; they gathered abundant wild honey in the woods; and, as they claimed, "lived like princes" on slapjacks and wild honey. But within a month a prairie fire swept over the country and burned their happy home. They then put up a log cabin, which served them through the winter.

Mr. Dutton's first experience in log-cabin building occurred at the home of a neighbor, a mile and a half north of the Dutton farm, soon after he

arrived. When the "log raising" was finished, the pioneer settler got dinner for the crowd. His coffee pot had been burned up accidentally, and he had only one kettle to cook in. So he cooked beans in the kettle; then turned them out and boiled pork and potatoes in the same kettle; and finally turned out the pork and potatoes, and made coffee in it. Wooden chips were used for plates, and the seven men took turns drinking coffee from two tin cups.

One day in the fall of 1848 when Lorenzo Dutton and William Bailey were out hunting bees they heard the rattle of a snake. Having located the rattler, Bailey threw a stone at it. Curiously enough, the stone by fortunate chance rolled along till it reached the mouth of the rattlesnake den, stopped there, and blocked the hole. A home run thus became impossible for the whole rattlesnake family, who were out sunning themselves. So Dutton and Bailey kept on gathering stones, and had a field day at snake killing, disposing of eighteen reptiles, some of them large. One had twenty-one rattles.

It was on this occasion that Mr. Dutton discovered the cave which bears his name. His farm did not embrace the cave property, which was about half a mile from his home, though his land extended within a few rods of it. From the rocky

front of the cave a spring-fed stream of almost icy cold water led down between high hills, and thence along a pleasant, well timbered glade near a sugar bush for some two miles northeasterly to join the Turkey River. At that time it was possible to go back into the cave for three hundred feet, where a small lake existed. Tradition says that someone built a small boat and rowed around on this lake, but for thirty or forty years past the cave has been so silted up that going into its recesses has been almost impossible, very inconvenient, and possibly dangerous.

The chief historical interest which is still attached locally to the Dutton name comes from the fact that the farm on which he settled in 1848 and later bought from the government is still held in ownership by his descendant, G. L. Hackett of West Union, and never has been out of the family ownership in ninety-six years. In respect to continuous ownership by one family this farm holds the record for Fayette County. The farm of 125 acres, was left by Mr. Dutton in his will in 1914 to his only children, two daughters, Mrs. Carrie Hackett and Mrs. Lillie Helmer. Mrs. Hackett bought Mrs. Helmer's interest in 1921. Upon Mrs. Hackett's death on February 8, 1929, the farm was left to her five children. Her son, G. L. Hackett, bought out the other heirs one at

a time, until he had finally acquired full title in 1942.

After Mr. Dutton retired from the farm to West Union in 1896 the place was occupied by his daughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Hackett; then after their deaths by their daughter, Cora Hackett, and their son, Gordon Hackett, and his family. Gordon Hackett moved off a few years ago, and Cora Hackett moved to West Union in 1942, that being the first time in ninety-four years that the Dutton family occupancy had lapsed, except for one year about 1908 when the Hackett family spent a year at Hornell, New York. In respect to occupancy by one family line, also, this farm holds the record for Fayette County.

Lorenzo Dutton was a respected and beloved citizen of West Union. He had a great store of reminiscences and a quizzical humor; he was a reader and thinker, a good visitor, who delighted to meet and talk with his fellow men. In the later years of his life, for what he was and for what he represented, he lent much pleasure to the lives of those men along the street who enjoy "meeting the fellows" every day to talk things over.

WALTER H. BEALL

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