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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 Lincoln Pole Raising

The presidential campaign of 1860 is interesting not only on account of its importance but also because of the election methods employed. Both of the great political parties organized bands, marching squadrons, and glee clubs in the principal cities of Iowa, while in the rural communities and smaller towns the enthusiasm was scarcely less manifest. Rallies, processions, picnics, and barbecues were the order of the day throughout the State. The raising of a Lincoln flagpole furnished the opportunity for an outburst of enthusiasm and a celebration not to be surpassed by any of the more common political activities.

On July 28, 1860, approximately two thousand people gathered in Jackson Township, Henry County, Iowa, for the purpose of promoting Lincoln's candidacy by the erection of a flagpole. Republican farmers of the neighborhood, chief among whom

were William F. Jones and W. C. Woodworth, sponsored the celebration. The place selected was the convenient spot on the old Burlington to Agency military highway at the junction with the road leading to Hugh Boyle's grist mill on the Skunk River a mile north. At that central point the people were accustomed to assemble for the celebration of the Fourth of July, and there was the rendezvous of the home guards during the Civil War. So intense was the excitement in 1860 and so earnest were the people that they came from miles around to attend this political rally at the important country crossroads where north and south traffic between Mount Pleasant and Lee County towns crossed the artery of the east and west travel to and from Burlington. Lincoln Poles were erected in many towns but the raising of one in the country was unique. A newspaper reported that "many ladies graced the occasion with their presence, good looks and smiles of approval."

Primitive pioneer methods were used in constructing and raising the pole. Four perfectly straight trees of different sizes were selected so as to form a strong, uniformly tapering pole when spliced. The ends of the trees were then hewn at a long angle and laid together. Through the splices two-inch auger holes were bored into which wooden pins were driven. Strong iron bands of the proper sizes were then slipped over the small end of the pole and pounded down over the tapering splices. A heavy

log, about twelve or fifteen feet in length, was used for the base, into which the lower section of the pole was mortised and firmly braced laterally. When the pole was finished, a trench, long and wide enough to admit the base log, was dug to the depth of about eight feet. This contrivance was designed to prevent the pole from swinging sideways or overbalancing as it was being raised.

Long pikes with iron spikes in the end were provided for the men who were to do the actual work of raising the pole. Ropes were attached to the top of the pole for the purpose of steadying it in the course of erection. A heavy, forked pole was also ready to be used for steering the flagpole and holding it in place between hoists.

When all was in readiness a captain was chosen and the work of raising began. The small end of the pole was lifted from the ground, the pikes were jabbed in, the ropes were manned, and the guide pole put in place. "Heave, O heave!" cried the captain. All together the pike men heaved with all their might. The great pole raised a few feet, the guide pole was slid farther down to bear the weight, and the men rested from their strenuous efforts. Again and again this process was repeated. Gradually the base log slipped into the trench and at last the pole stood erect with the earth tamped firmly around the base.

How the eager throng cheered when the work was done! From the top, a hundred feet above the

ground, floated a large American flag about eight by fifteen feet in dimensions. Inscribed on the banner in large letters were the names of Lincoln and Hamlin.

In raising the pole one error was made. When the guy ropes were attached to the top no one thought of tying them so they could be loosened from the ground. After the pole was in place the guy ropes were still hanging from the top, and a means of releasing them became the problem of the hour. Finally, John Hall, who lived in the vicinity, volunteered to climb the pole. He ascended to the top, using nothing but his bare hands and feet, released the ropes, dropped them to the ground, and descended without injury to himself, although he was much exhausted. Later, young Hall enlisted in the Union army, and never returned.

After the pole raising had been completed, a bounteous picnic dinner was spread by the women, and all were invited to partake freely. Dinner over, the speaking began. A large "Wigwam" had been previously erected, in which the meeting was held. Samuel McFarland of Mount Pleasant was the principal orator of the day. His vigorous speech, described as "one of his very best," caused great enthusiasm. McFarland afterward became lieutenant colonel of the Nineteenth Iowa Infantry and was killed in 1862 at the battle of Prairie Grove, Arkansas.

Two or three days after the big rally, some mis-

creant, probably under the guise of campaigning for the Democratic party, razed the Lincoln Pole to the ground. This act of vandalism so far violated approved methods of campaigning that it was criticised even by followers of "The Little Giant", while among Republicans it was universally denounced. G. W. Edwards, editor of the Mount Pleasant *Home Journal*, commented as follows: "We learn that some villainous Douglasite has bored down the Pole raised by the Jackson Township Republicans. We should be very sorry to trust a flock of sheep near the residence of a man who would be guilty of such an act, and it is to be hoped that the perpetrator will be discovered and held up to the contempt of the community, as he deserves to be."

Not disheartened by the loss of their Lincoln Pole, erected with so much labor, the Jackson Township Republicans made another pole, taller and better than the first, and held a second celebration. I shall never forget the erection of that Lincoln Pole. As a small boy, I went with my father, Joel C. Garretson, and William F. Jones to the Prairie Creek bottoms to cut the forked steering pole to be used in hoisting the flagpole. A suitable tree was soon secured. As it was being dragged along, the front end struck a stump or a stone and the other end swung around suddenly, hit me with terrific force, and threw me to the ground. Mr. Jones pulled me from under the tree, examined my leg, and remarked that there wasn't any bone in it or it would have been broken.

One leg was so badly lacerated, however, that a scar remained as a permanent reminder of Lincoln Poles and the campaign of 1860.

The second pole raising was characterized by even more enthusiasm than the first. Invitations were extended to Republicans of the surrounding towns, many of whom responded. Mount Pleasant "turned out a delegation about a hundred strong, including the Wide Awakers", while Salem was represented by three or four hundred men and women. Pilot Grove, Primrose, and other places to the south in Lee County sent large delegations. By noon of August 9th, almost "one thousand persons were on the ground." Some came on foot, others on horseback, but most of them rode in farm wagons. One six-horse team and several four-horse teams were there, bedecked with American flags.

Two bands and the Wide Awake Glee Club added materially to the entertainment. Several Wide Awake marching clubs attracted considerable attention. They wore black oilcloth caps and shoulder capes. Usually officered by a veteran of the Mexican War, they were drilled according to the infantry manual of that day. At the pole raising they presented a rather spectacular appearance as they went through their maneuvers. One spectator voiced a sentiment that must have been in the minds of many that day, "This looks like war, and I believe we are going to have war."

The first attempt to hoist the pole failed. When

it was partly up the middle splice broke and the top half came down with a crash. No one was hurt, however, and in about an hour the pole was respliced. The second attempt succeeded without accident. This pole was fully eighteen inches in diameter at the base and extended a hundred and twenty feet into the air "as straight as an arrow". When the flag was run up, the crowd gave three cheers "and three groans for the scamp who bored down the other pole."

"A free dinner was prepared by the ladies of the neighborhood, of which the multitude partook with a will." After dinner, Rufus L. B. Clark of Mount Pleasant delivered an address. He spoke for about an hour and those who heard him said that he made a "capital speech". When he concluded, six cheers were given for the speaker and three more for "Honest Abe".

The second Lincoln Pole was not molested, and stood until after the election. When the first news of Lincoln's victory came, a large placard was tacked to the pole bearing the well-known words of Commodore Perry: "We have met the enemy and they are ours."

Time effaces all things. The Lincoln Pole was soon destroyed and forgotten. The historic Burlington and Agency road, over which government troops once marched to their outposts on the border, was later one of the thoroughfares of western migration. Thousands of prairie schooners lumbered

along that route. To-day it is merely a side road used only by local citizens. Hugh Boyle's famous mill, once the nucleus of an important industry in that region, is no more. But at the site of the pole raising, the old oaken base log probably still lies buried where it was placed by the zealous adherents of Abraham Lincoln almost sixty-five years ago.

O. A. GARRETSON

When Iowa Was Young

Two hundred years ago most of North America belonged to France. From his seat of authority in old Quebec the personal representative of King Louis XV sent his agents — the explorers, soldiers, and traders — far into the wilderness surrounding the Great Lakes, while Louisiana — the vast, unmeasured region west of the Mississippi — was ruled from New Orleans. At strategic points along main-travelled routes, little settlements of Frenchmen flourished. Impregnable Quebec stood at the doorway of the continent. Farther up the broad St. Lawrence, Three Rivers and Montreal prospered in none too friendly rivalry, while distant Mackinac and Detroit were the chief outposts on the Lakes. In the Illinois country — the very heart of New France — Cahokia and Kaskaskia, stimulated by John Law's fantastic "Mississippi Bubble", were thriving villages of several hundred *habitants*, and Fort Chartres, thirty or forty miles below the mouth of the muddy Missouri, was known as "the centre of life and fashion in the West." But throughout the whole country the population consisted mainly of Indians.

For a century and a quarter French soldiers, bold explorers, black-robed priests, and venturesome traders had been penetrating toward the interior —

each intent upon his own mission. Conquest, exploration, missionary zeal, and the fur trade were the interests that had driven the pioneers of France into the wilderness of the new world, seeking their heart's desire in the face of untold danger and hardship. Hither and thither on the lakes and rivers they had plied their birch canoes. Forts had been built, lonely trading posts established, and heathen savages converted to the white men's faith. But the Indians as a whole had clung tenaciously to their customary habits of life — hunting their food along the streams and on the prairie, making "medicine" against disease and famine, moving their abode where circumstance directed, and raising the tomahawk against their foes.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, however, the red men had lost their economic independence. Trained in the ways of French traders, the savages of the "Upper Country" had developed new tastes. Silver and copper ornaments from Paris seemed far preferable to their former wampum belts and colored feathers; spears and arrows lost their potency in comparison with thunderbelching firearms; and they wanted whisky with a passion that would not be denied.

In return for the goods of civilization, the French traders demanded peltries. The greed of the Europeans seemed inexorable. No longer were the Indians free to go on the hunt when they pleased. They were compelled to range farther and farther

into the forest in search of game, and their catch was never sufficient. They abandoned their former villages and clustered their tepees around the trading posts at Green Bay, La Point, Mackinac, Miami, and Detroit. There they were fed and clothed by the French, while Jesuit and Sulpician missionaries baptized their papooses, counselled the wayward, and buried their dead.

The French and Indians might have continued to live together in harmony had it not been for the recalcitrant Foxes who refused to submit to white paternalism. The Foxes lived in a strategic location along the Wisconsin River and consequently were in a position to cut off communication by way of the famous old Fox-Wisconsin route to the Upper Mississippi and the rich fur-bearing lake region of Minnesota. No Frenchman passed that way except at the risk of his life. Moreover, the Foxes, by means of an alliance with the warlike Sioux to the west, were able to contend with the French on somewhat even terms. They made war incessantly upon the Illinois and other faithful tribes, until at last the scalping knife became so busy there was no time or place for gathering peltries. The fur trade was on the verge of ruin. Trappers and traders were no longer safe, and energy that would have been used in tracking the beaver was employed in hunting human Foxes.

The story of the warfare which followed during the next half century of conflict presents a repulsive

succession of cruel deeds and bloody scenes. At one time two hundred Fox warriors were put to death without mercy at Detroit. Neighboring tribes continually harrassed the hated Foxes. In 1730, after a season of fierce fighting, the fleeing Renards, as the French called the Foxes, were overtaken and almost exterminated. This terrible blow seemed to have so completely destroyed all possibility of further resistance that the French decided to reëstablish their post at Green Bay and to resume their former sway.

In 1733, however, an incident occurred which led to renewed hostilities. A French officer, Nicolas Coulon de Villiers, was shot by the Indians while imprudently visiting a Sauk village without a guard. The Sauks, conscious of their inability to atone for the death of such a prominent Frenchman, cast their lot with the remnant of the Foxes and sought refuge beyond the Mississippi in the land of the Ioways. There the combined Sauk and Fox tribes continued to prey upon French traders and to pursue the timid Illinois.

In order to maintain its prestige, the government at Quebec decided to avenge the death of De Villiers and at the same time destroy the new alliance of the Sauks and Foxes. Accordingly, in the summer of 1734, Governor Beauharnois selected Nicolas Joseph de Noyelles, one of the best-known French Canadian officers, to lead a punitive expedition against the Indians in Iowa. Captain de Noyelles was said to be "greatly loved by the Savages" and to be capable

of enduring the fatigues of an arduous campaign and the hardships of inclement weather.

Reports from Jesuits and traders seemed to agree that the Sauks and Foxes had established themselves on the Wapsipinicon River, "two or three days' journey below" the Wisconsin. The two tribes occupied separate villages and it was thought that the Sauks were so anxious to obtain pardon that they could easily be induced to desert their allies. With that in view, De Noyelles was instructed to grant peace to the Sauks "if they consent to give up the Renards", but if they should refuse he was ordered to "destroy both nations" and let the "Savages eat them up".

Eighty-four Frenchmen eagerly volunteered to go on the expedition. The force consisted of seven officers, fifty or sixty cadets, sergeants, and soldiers, and "some settlers". Approximately two hundred Iroquois, Hurons, and Pottawattamies also "expressed the greatest willingness" to join the party. On August 14, 1734, this motley throng set out from Montreal on their long and perilous journey to Iowa.

At Detroit more Indians joined the expedition, impatient to taste the blood of the hated Foxes and the traitorous Sauks, but a large party of Ottawas and Algonquins failed to arrive. They sent word that they wished to live in peace and had decided that the French should forgive the Sauks.

On January 2, 1735, Captain de Noyelles marched away from Detroit at the head of his nondescript

army, and the overland journey of hundreds of miles in the dead of winter began. The route lay around the southern end of Lake Michigan, through the country of the Ojibwanons where the French had a post on the Wabash River about four miles from the modern city of Lafayette, Indiana. There the Indians began to cause trouble. They had discovered six lodges of Sauks not far away and wanted to put on their war paint. In spite of the captain's explanation that the lives of the Sauks should be spared if they consented to desert the Foxes and that the murder of these Indians who had sought refuge among the French would destroy the confidence of other tribes in their white friends, eighty Hurons and Pottawattamies left to "eat up those six cabins". The Iroquois remained with the expedition but took no pains to conceal their disaffection.

Some Kickapoos told Captain de Noyelles that if he went to their principal village on the Rock River near Rock Island he could find out where the Renards were dwelling. After holding a council with his men and the savages, he decided not to proceed to the Illinois villages as he had planned, but to take a more direct northwesterly course. The expedition had already "been detained by the ice" for twenty-two days and provisions were scarce. On snow-shoes and suffering from the cold of mid-winter, the company of approximately two hundred and fifty men made their way across northern Illinois to the Mississippi. There they were joined

by about forty Kickapoos who, being friendly with the Foxes, led the expedition astray and greatly lengthened the journey. Some captive Sauks reported that the Foxes were no longer living on the Wapsipinicon but "had withdrawn to the Rivière sans fourche", the Des Moines. The Sauks were told that if they did not lead "straight to the Renards" they would be "tied to the Stake to be burned".

On the twelfth of March, De Noyelles and his band reached the old Fox village on the Wapsipinicon but "found Nobody". There they remained two days on account of "the intense cold" and "without any food". Provisions were completely exhausted, "the Buffalo were moving away", and a long fast seemed to be in prospect. The savages had refused to "load themselves with dried meat so that they might advance better, for they thought that they were close to the Enemy." As the invaders moved westward, they had to be content with one "very inferior" meal a day.

Meanwhile, a scouting party which had been sent out reported the discovery of four recent camping grounds. Two days later they saw smoke. The little army moved forward stealthily by night, crossing "several Rivers" with water up to the men's waists. Finally, they halted behind a hill and the Frenchmen, "greatly fatigued, wet through, and very hungry", wrapped up in their robes to await daylight. In the morning they "reached a Wood

bordering on a River." The Indians, "who wished to have the glory of arriving first", thinking that the goal was at hand and that the hostile camp numbered only "four cabins", ran on ahead about twelve miles with the Frenchmen following as best they could. The race ended abruptly on the bank of the "very wide and rapid" Des Moines River which was full of floating ice. On the opposite side was the Fox village that they had come so far to find, but instead of four lodges there were fifty-five. The place was probably not far from the present site of the capital of Iowa.

An Iroquois chief proposed that the whole party should swim across and attack the enemy forthwith. To this suggestion De Noyelles prudently demurred. He pointed out that it was impossible to swim the river when the cold was so great, that many of the men might not be able to swim, that they would wet their arms and ammunition, that only sixty of the men had arrived, and that the enemy would be able to kill them as fast as they landed. He, in turn, proposed that the party should withdraw, move farther up stream, reassemble their full force, build rafts, and cross the river in a position to attack with some prospect of success. The Indian taunted De Noyelles for not being a man, to which the captain angrily retorted, "Dog, if thou art so brave, swim over and let us See what Thou wilt do." The chief did not avail himself of this opportunity to display his valor, but instead, accompanied by about forty

of his band and several Frenchmen, he departed into the forest.

Captain de Noyelles moved up the river about three miles in the hope of joining other parties of the expedition who had scattered in search of the enemy. Suddenly he heard death cries and came upon a wounded Indian who reported that the fighting had begun. Seven Frenchmen and twenty-three savages had crossed the river on a jam of driftwood and found themselves face to face with about two hundred and fifty Sauks and Foxes. Determined to sell their lives as dearly as possible, they fought so fiercely that the enemy took refuge in the woods. The victory was brief, however, for their adversaries soon pressed forward to surround them. De Noyelles, having crossed the river, dispatched all of the men who were with him as reinforcements. Half an hour later the captain himself deployed what forces had joined him in the meantime and advanced to the combat.

For several hours the battle raged savagely. One of the French officers was mortally wounded. Toward night the Foxes attempted to scalp some of the wounded Iroquois, whereupon De Noyelles ordered a retreat and divided his force into two bands — one to continue the fighting while the other constructed fortifications where they could protect the wounded and defend themselves. Meanwhile, the Kickapoos had quietly watched the struggle from an eminence, waiting to join the victorious side.

During the night the disgruntled Iroquois established communication with the Sauks, and on the following morning they sent for De Noyelles to come to a council of war. He went "without any hesitation". At the meeting he found some Sauks whom he tried to persuade to abandon the Foxes and return to Green Bay, but the Sauks hesitated to surrender for they feared the French would not be able to control their Iroquois allies who, when the friends of the Sauks were at a distance, would "put them in the Kettle". To this De Noyelles replied that the Sauks had nothing to fear because if the Iroquois wished to act treacherously he would oppose it and, though the French were few in number, the Iroquois "would not play" with them. But the Sauks were still skeptical, and well they might be. In truth, the Iroquois held the power of Captain de Noyelles in such utter contempt that they openly beat French soldiers in his presence and he, to maintain a semblance of authority, was compelled to pretend not to see it. Another obstacle prevented the Sauks from joining the French. The weather was too cold for their women and children to travel.

If the Sauks really had any desire to make peace with the French, the Foxes promptly suppressed it. The next day they sent word that their Renard allies had declared, "Dogs that ye are, if you abandon us, we will eat your women and children as soon as you have gone out. We will then fight against you and afterward against the French."

For four days the French in their temporary fortifications faced the Sauk and Fox village on the Des Moines River. Neither party made any move against the other. The invaders suffered severely from hunger, for during all that time they had nothing to eat but twelve dogs and a horse. Some of the soldiers ate their moccasins. When De Noyelles requested the Iroquois to send a party of braves to hunt, they blusteringly replied that the whole company must fast four or five days longer. A little later they asked to be allowed to go home. The soldiers begged their commander to lead them to the assault, for they preferred death in battle to the slow torture of starvation.

Convinced that his men could not hold out any longer, Captain de Noyelles sent a token of peace to the Sauks with the message that their father, the Governor of Quebec, would grant them their lives on condition that they terminate their alliance with the Foxes. This they agreed to do — as they had promised several times before. Obligated to be content with an empty promise that was never fulfilled, the French troops marched away down the river to old Fort Chartres and never again returned to the borders of Iowa.

JOHN ELY BRIGGS

A Voyage of the Omaha

The navigation of the Missouri River played no small part in the building of Iowa towns, especially Council Bluffs and Sioux City. Even before western Iowa was settled, the fur trade was responsible for considerable river traffic. The name of the American Fur Company was prominent in most of the early Missouri River expeditions, but as the frontier of the fur traders was superseded by homesteads the steamboat trade came to cater more and more to the transportation of settlers and the supplies of civilization.

The decade from 1850 to 1860 witnessed the rapid settling of western States, the reopening of the slavery dispute by the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the intensified California and Oregon immigration, and the Pike's Peak episode — all of which contributed thousands of travellers to the western trails. Large numbers of people affected by these events came to St. Louis or Jefferson City by rail and there took the steamboat packets to some convenient cross-country starting point on the Missouri River. On this account enterprising little river villages grew into important marts of commerce. Of the Iowa towns, Council Bluffs was the first to command a large share of the river traffic, but after 1856 Sioux City began to demand better and more constant

steamboat service, so that by 1859 there were at least a half dozen regular packets working the Sioux City trade. The most famous and most faithful of the Sioux City boats during the fifties was the steamer *Omaha*.

Missouri River steamboats of the *Omaha* type were the pride of the western waters. Although they were not as large as the Mississippi River steamers they were fully as well equipped and were mechanically as perfect. The splendid passenger steamers during the golden age of Missouri River steamboating were properly described as "floating palaces". They cost as much as thirty thousand dollars. Some of them were equipped with as many as forty-six staterooms, all comfortably appointed and finished in fine style. The cabins were furnished with Brussels carpets. Convenient mirrors provided the young swains of the day with ample opportunity to take full stock of their personal appearance. Each steamboat of the better passenger type had a nursery for the use of small children. In ornamentation some of the boats were unique, even rivalling the famous *Western Engineer*. Gilding seems to have been the most prominent characteristic in the art of steamboat decoration and the curious pride of many a workman was exhibited in the construction of the Missouri River steamers. A boat that did not meet the standards of the times could not hope for a large share of the commerce of that river.

Almost as much attention was paid to the entertainment of passengers as to their physical comfort. Many of the steamboats were equipped with a piano and some boasted a string orchestra. The decks were thronged every evening, while the young people danced the Virginia reel, the polka, and perhaps the daring waltz. The convivial bartender no doubt contributed his share to the gaiety of social life on board. In the cabins, Pike's Peakers and hardy frontiersmen made and lost fortunes at poker.

The *Omaha*, like the other Missouri River packets, prospered from the Pike's Peak migration. A large part of the up-bound freight consisted of the prospective gold miners' equipment. Mr. Wilcox, the clerk of the *Omaha*, recommended the following outfit: "100 lbs. of flour, 2 bbls. of whiskey, 50 lbs. bacon, 49 gallons of whiskey, 100 lbs. of venison, 18 demi-johns of whiskey, 2 boxes herring, 1 bbl. whiskey, 1 bbl. crackers, 55 gallons whiskey, 3 bbl. pickles, $\frac{3}{8}$ bbl. whiskey, 12 quart mugs." He further explained, in the light of experience by "one who has been thar", that a little more whisky might be required but that the other articles should hold out.

Officers and crew on the Missouri packets exerted every effort to attract patronage. No abler and probably no more popular steamboatman navigated the river than Captain Andrew Wineland who commanded the *Omaha*. He enjoyed the reputation of being one of the squarest and most courageous men who ever measured wits with the fickle Missouri.

One beautiful spring day in March, 1859, the gangway of the *Omaha* presented an animated scene quite in accord with the general hurly-burly all along the wharf at St. Louis. Deck hands were hustling to and fro with freight, passengers were finding their quarters on board, and Pike's Peakers were making frantic last-minute preparations for their journey to the golden El Dorado.

It was the heyday of river traffic and the steam marine of the St. Louis wharf presented a solid mass of boats extending for more than a mile along the river front. Huge piles of freight cluttered the wharf. Each steamboat was the center of a whirlpool of activity.

For days in advance the officers of the *Omaha* had advertised ample accommodations on their first trip of the season to the village of Sioux City far up the Missouri. At last, after much bustle and confusion and several postponements, everything was declared ready and on the evening of March 24th Captain Wineland rang the bell as a signal to cast off. After the first day of their thousand-mile voyage up the turbid Missouri the weather changed from cool to chilly, from chilly to raw, from raw to cold, and the eighth day ended in an old fashioned northeast snow-storm. By that time the *Omaha* had reached Brownsville. The snow that fell every day thereafter for more than a week added greatly to the normal difficulties of wooding, avoiding snags, and skirting sandbars.

After a stormy voyage of eighteen days the *Omaha* wharved at Council Bluffs where sleighs were in waiting to carry the passengers to town. The river was out of its banks at this point and the Platte a few miles below was shooting out large chunks of ice which spread all over the Missouri River bottom. With the painstaking care and wizardry of a Missouri River pilot Captain Wineland had directed his gallant craft through the floating ice. Uncanny skill was required to steer the boat up the Missouri under the most favorable conditions, beset as it was by innumerable snags and constantly shifting sandbars. It is said that "Uncle Davy", one of the most noted of Missouri River pilots, not only remembered the exact location of sandbars on former trips but had the gift of knowing where they would next be formed.

After a cordial reception at Council Bluffs, where the usual quota of passengers disembarked, the *Omaha* pursued her course up the sinuous Missouri. It was remarkable that after passing the mouth of the Platte no more ice was encountered on the trip to Sioux City although the weather was extremely cold. On the seventeenth of April the packet arrived at Blackbird Hills in the Omaha Indian Reserve where a large delegation of the tribe visited the steamer. They were anxiously looking for their agent and were not a little incensed to learn that he was not on board.

To conciliate the savages Captain Wineland pre-

sented them with a large barrel of hard biscuit scraps which was borne ashore in triumph by two stalwart braves named White Cow and Lone Buffalo. The feast was distributed in a unique manner. Very dexterously and with the utmost nonchalance, White Cow picked up an old iron skillet with an amputated handle, filled it with biscuit scraps, and emptied them into his capacious blanket. This process was repeated by the other Indians and they permitted the boat to depart, well satisfied with their work.

Then ensued days of battling with the ever-increasing force of the current in the upper reaches of the river. After passing Omaha, fire-wood became scarcer and of poorer quality so that much time was spent with the *Omaha* tied up to the bank while the crew cut wood. There was a current joke among river men which illustrates the immense amount of wood required for fuel by these packets. A steamer was once pulling against a strong current when the fuel gave out. Instead of tying up to the bank, there being nothing to tie to, the captain kept the engine going. When over a hundred cords of wood had been loaded they turned to proceed up stream, only to find that the whole amount had been consumed in holding the boat to the bank.

About noon on Friday, May 8th, the forty-fifth day out, the *Omaha* hove in sight of the straggling village of Sioux City. Long before she reached the levee the whole population — merchants, townsmen,

women, children, Indians, and dogs — gathered at the river to answer the *Omaha's* guns with a similar salute. No wonder. This was the first time their eyes had been gladdened by the sight of a steamboat for seven months. The *Omaha* had been the last boat down in the previous season, having left Sioux City on October 11, 1858. During the winter there had been no opportunity to replenish the stock of goods in the local stores. All spring the merchants had advertised that fresh supplies would be on board the first steamboat to arrive, and here at last was the *Omaha*, the faithful Sioux City packet, laden with groceries, farm implements, and, most important of all, mining tools.

The crew of the *Omaha* had a reputation for being very businesslike. Remembering that "time is money" all hands set to work with a will and in less than five hours over one hundred tons of freight had been unloaded, fifty tons of potatoes and corn taken on board, twenty-two passengers accommodated, of whom fifteen were ladies, all accounts had been settled, and the *Omaha* had turned her prow southward for the long journey to St. Louis.

This voyage of the *Omaha* is especially significant on account of the fact that the corn and potatoes taken on board were the first to be shipped down the river from Sioux City. In previous years the *Omaha* had carried these products to Sioux City. The event was indicative of the rapid development of the Missouri Valley, particularly in northwest

Iowa. J. Jewett Wilcox, the clerk of the *Omaha*, reported that no better corn or potatoes were grown in the whole Missouri Valley than in Woodbury County and in the rich valleys of the Big Sioux and Floyd rivers. On the return trip Captain Wineland took on board also a considerable quantity of earthenware manufactured at Dakota, a few miles south of Sioux City on the Nebraska side of the river. This was another article which had hitherto been transported in large quantities from St. Louis to the settlements up the river.

Running down stream was much easier, and by Sunday, May 10th, Omaha and Council Bluffs had been passed and the steamer tied up for the night at Bellevue, Nebraska. A number of passengers intended to transfer to the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railway at St. Joseph, but due to the unsavory reputation of that railroad at the time, they decided to complete the trip to St. Louis on the steamboat.

Just below Council Bluffs the *Omaha* met her first up-bound rival, and from there to St. Louis many others were encountered. The *Robert Campbell* passed on the twelfth of May at White Cloud where the *Omaha* wooded at the rate of "one dollar for coard". On May 13th she met a whole fleet of boats, each jammed with eager Pike's Peakers and heavily freighted with their outfits.

After an absence of fifty-two days, the *Omaha* dropped anchor at the St. Louis wharf on Friday, May 15th, having negotiated with safety a trip of

over twenty-one hundred miles on the most irresponsible river in the world. Thus the *Omaha*, and others of her kind, served in the settlement of the Missouri Valley and the development of the young towns in western Iowa before the railroads came to ruin the river traffic.

EDGAR A. HOLT

Comment by the Editor

THE ELEMENTS OF HISTORY

History is a marvelous fabric of human affairs woven from the records of the past. People and places and time furnish the substance of which it is made. No one of the elements by itself is sufficient; but, combined with the others to constitute the warp or woof of the cloth of life, each tells its share of the story.

Human experience is the vital part of history. Except for the thoughts and deeds of man, time would have little significance; for the measure of time is the duration of life and the rate of its flight depends on a person's achievement.

A day to childhood seems a year,
And years like passing ages.

Locality, too, without people is only a spatial abstraction, just as sound without ears to interpret is no more than ethereal vibration.

In history, nevertheless, events should have locality and date. Answers to the questions when and where are quite as pertinent as statements telling who. The factors of time and place contribute certainty and lend perspective to the hopes and fears, the thoughts and acts of humankind throughout the ages everywhere.

The design of any historical fabric depends on the weaver. With the threads of fact he can fashion the pattern however he pleases. It is all a matter of emphasis. In biography the dominant element is the career of a person, though the dates of his life and his place of abode are also presented. History may also be written from the viewpoint of place. Such are the records of land titles and the annals of cities or counties or States — like the exploits of generations of people depicted on a single tapestry. So, too, the story of a day or a month or a year might be told, involving men and women at the ends of the earth and unified by time.

THE FACTOR OF TIME

In the writing of history the factor of time is very important, although not always prominent. It is the warp upon which is woven the woof of people and places. Beneath the surface of appearances can be found that all-pervading, ever-present element of time, binding into proper sequence and relation the portrayal of human traits and actions.

People may differ in race and culture and creed, while places are as varied as nature can make them, but under every sky and in every land that silent, illimitable thing called time remains the same. It is universal. The present instant is simultaneous throughout the world, and passing, joins the common heritage of the past.

Time is a permanent element — the fixed factor of

history. Viewpoints may change, conditions may vary, new facts may be found, and even the actors may shift in the scenes, but the dates remain unaltered. It is fitting that time should be the distinctive feature of history. In the words of Austin Dobson:

Time goes, you say? Ah, no.
Alas, time stays; we go.

J. E. B.

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