

# The **P**ALIMPSEST

AUGUST 1922

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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

EDITED BY JOHN C. PARISH

ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

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## Robert Lucas

There are at least three known portraits of Iowa's first Governor, Robert Lucas. One is a water color painting of a young man in uniform with a high crowned hat decorated with a military cockade. It represents, no doubt, the period of Lucas's life when he was a somewhat swashbuckling young officer in the Ohio militia. The view is a profile and shows a rather long nose and prominent brows; but the mouth — too well-shaped for reality — and the large dark eye, make one suspect that the artist did not get them from life but culled them from some drawing manual which provided sample illustrations of human features for the benefit of young draughtsmen. Naturally there is little of character reflected in this picture.

But in the second portrait the subject has laid aside his military hat and epauletted coat, arrayed himself in the black stock and white linen and severe coat of civilian life and turned his face to the front.

It is a strong face with a mien somewhat stern and imperious. The portrait is that of a man in middle life and probably shows him as he looked in his years as a legislator and Governor of Ohio.

His hair is combed up and back like a modern pompadour, leaving a high expanse of forehead. His eyes are set wide apart under level, strongly marked eyebrows. His nose is long and slightly aquiline, his mouth straight and his chin square. The general shape and set of his head give the impression of a spare-framed wiry man of erect and unrelaxing carriage.

The third picture is that of an old man. In his seventy-second year, Lucas wrote of having a daguerreotype taken and remarked: "It is thought to be a good likeness." No doubt it is from this primitive photograph that George Yewell painted the oil portrait which shows Robert Lucas as Iowans must have known him. The picture is much like the second. It faces unequivocally to the front, a black stock wraps itself about the white collar whose wide-spread points rise up on each side of his chin. His hair is still combed up and back away from his forehead, but it has turned white with the years.

In his face one can read the story of his tempestuous governorship in the new Territory west of the Mississippi. Every feature has sharpened and intensified its characteristics. His nose is thinner than ever and his nostrils curve up like those of a restive horse. His high wide cheek bones seem more pro-

nounced and the cheeks below them thinner. But in the eyes and the mouth particularly the story has written itself. The mouth has tightened into a thin line of habitual determination as if the continual practice of pressing his lips together had set them there in an unrelaxing union. And the eyes. Deep-set beneath the straight ledge of white eyebrows, they burn with an intensity that was merely hinted at in his earlier portrait. There is a sternness in them that must have seemed almost malignant to his enemies.

Uncompromising he was, beyond the venture of a doubt; and as he slipped over into his seventies the mellowing years seemed to have failed to soften the expression which had settled upon his face in the long years of a stormy career.

Now that the reader has looked upon these portraits it may be well to turn back to the story of the life of this vehement figure if only to find the three portraits matched by periods of his existence. Lucas was by heritage a Quaker, but his father had been a Revolutionary soldier, and the paths of peace he himself was seldom content to tread. He was an enthusiastic militia man and rose to the grade of major general in the Ohio organization.

His life as a young man in pioneer Ohio was full of turbulence; and it was probably mixed with some lawlessness. In 1810 a suit was brought against him and the sheriff of Scioto County attempted to take him into custody. Lucas, however, resisted ar-

rest. He was a formidable and determined man, a prominent officer of the militia, and he had many friends in the community. The sheriff decided to resign his office rather than persist in his dangerous duties. Thereupon the coroner, upon whom the task then devolved, also resigned. Lucas then swore vengeance upon the clerk who issued the writ and he too resigned.

But men were soon found who would make the arrest, and a small posse proceeded to Brown's tavern where Lucas was then living at Portsmouth, Ohio, and started with him to the jail. As the procession got under way, John Brown, tavern-keeper and father-in-law of Lucas, fiery in disposition but small in stature, tried to effect a rescue. One of the larger men of the posse, however, rudely threw him into a clump of jimson weed and the son-in-law remained in the hands of the law.

Lucas, from the secure fastnesses of the jail, cast about for some means of escape, and the militia occurred to him. So he wrote letters to various officers asking them to come to the rescue of their unfortunate commander. Eighteen years later, when he was running for State senator, an opposing newspaper printed one of these letters written to a militia captain, asking that he and his men gather at Mr. Brown's and unite in supporting the constitution of the State by coming to the defense of their constitutional officer whom the revolutionist party had by violence forced into prison. On the fold of

the letter was a list of the five men of the posse and opposite the names this legend: "The dam raskels that mobbed me". But though in that year Lucas had succeeded to the duties of a brigadier general, there is no evidence that the militia effected a jail delivery.

As early as 1803 he was interested in military affairs, being engaged in that year upon one occasion in recruiting volunteers for the Ohio militia. When the United States ship Chesapeake was fired upon by a British commander in 1807, Lucas was called upon to furnish a company from his regiment to hold itself in readiness for immediate active service, an invasion of Canada being in contemplation. The company was formed by volunteers from the regiment and they chose Lucas to act as their captain. The occasion for action, however, did not materialize. In the War of 1812 there was real need of military duty, and Lucas served under General Hull at Detroit. He must have continued his interest in military affairs after the war was over for in February, 1816, he was elected major general of the 2d division of the Ohio militia.

But the business of politics now engrossed him. He had been sent to the lower house of the Ohio legislature in 1808, and after the War of 1812 he was elected to the State senate. From 1814 to 1832, with the exception of only four scattering years he served in the legislature of the State of Ohio. He was a Democrat, an ardent supporter of Andrew

Jackson. In fact he looked like Jackson, he had come up through somewhat similar experiences, and he had many characteristics that matched those of Old Hickory.

In May, 1832, at Baltimore, Lucas had the honor of presiding over the first national convention ever held by the Democratic Party and then he came home to a campaign that landed him in the Governor's chair at Columbus. In 1830 he had been an unsuccessful candidate for the governorship of Ohio, but in 1832 he was elected by a large majority, and two years later he was chosen to fill a second term.

He was now in the prime of life. He had come from Virginia to Ohio a generation before when it was not yet a State. He had surveyed land in the new country, had helped organize its militia, and had served for many years as legislator. Too early for railroads, he had pushed persistently for a widespread system of canals. He had seen Ohio grow from a wilderness with only here and there a solitary settlement to a State with more than a million inhabitants and hundreds of thriving towns.

Meanwhile he had learned to control the impetuosity of his youth and turn his energy into constructive channels. He still loved and hated with intensity, and he always would. But now, his enemies instead of being "the dam raskels that mobbed him" became invested with terms more polite if not less positive. Positiveness was fundamental in the psy-

chology of Lucas. He made up his mind definitely and held to his opinions unswervingly. Yet it must be conceded that his decisions were usually backed by a sound judgment and common sense.

The most enlivening episode in the period of his governorship was the Ohio-Michigan boundary dispute. A strip of land between Ohio and the Territory of Michigan was claimed by both, and at one time Governor Lucas, with 600 Ohio militiamen, glared across the line from Perrysburg at Stevens T. Mason, the "Boy Governor" of Michigan, who had gathered about a thousand troops behind him at Toledo. Both Governors were determined and the citizens of State and Territory were inflamed, but Lucas refused to make it a struggle between State and Territory, claiming that it was a question between Ohio and the United States; and though over-patriotic Buckeyes assured him they would "follow him through blood to their eyes", he averted bloodshed and the question was settled by granting the disputed tract to Ohio and admitting Michigan to the Union with a peace-offering in the shape of an addition of land beyond Lake Michigan.

When he laid down the duties of Governor he was quite desirous of becoming United States Senator. It was the third time he had been considered for this post, and now he felt that he was the logical man for the position. But he was disappointed. A much younger man was chosen. The fruits of his long career of public service were to be used in an-

other and far different field, for his friends at Washington secured his appointment as Governor of the newly created Territory of Iowa, out on the frontier of the nation's growth.

Lucas was of a race of pioneers. Born in western Virginia a few weeks before the surrender of Yorktown, he had come to Ohio just as he reached maturity and there he grew up with the country for a third of a century. Now, as he journeyed down the Ohio River by steamboat to his new post in 1838, he found himself at the age of 57 coming again into a land of beginnings, a region of scattered settlements and primitive political life. The new Territory could well profit by the political experience of Robert Lucas. And his well formulated ideas on such questions as education, gambling and intemperance, and public improvements were worth their consideration. But he had a stormy time for three years.

His first conflict was with William B. Conway, the Secretary of the Territory. Conway was a very young and very ambitious man. He arrived in Iowa before Lucas, and taking prompt advantage of the provision of the Organic Act which made the Secretary a sort of vice-Governor, he began forthwith to occupy himself with the duties of the major office. When Lucas arrived it was difficult for the young man to step down. Relations between the two men became increasingly difficult. Conway next quarreled with the legislative assembly but soon patched up his differences with the law-makers and made

common cause with them in an altercation which they had developed with Governor Lucas over Territorial expenditures and the veto power.

The Governor, in accordance with well-fixed principles of his political faith, used the power of veto which the Organic Act gave him. The legislators rebelled even so far as to ask the President of the United States to remove him from office. They were unsuccessful but the veto power was changed to a limited form.

He attacked with vehemence the prevalent frontier vices of gambling and intemperance, and refused to appoint any man guilty of these habits to an office. This made him enemies who succeeded in getting his appointive power reduced. He arraigned the habit of carrying concealed weapons, and referred to the recent killing of a member elect of the legislature by a prominent Burlington attorney, and thus made another bitter foe. He pointed out the extravagance of the legislative expenditures and the looseness of Secretary Conway's accounts and still more men ranged themselves against him. But the Governor, unrelenting and uncompromising, pursued his way unmoved. Legislatures changed, Secretary Conway died, and public affairs took on a semblance of stability.

Another event occurred in which Lucas found himself more at harmony with his fellow citizens. A dispute arose as to the boundary between the Territory of Iowa and the State of Missouri. Lucas

surely was not without experience in this sort of controversy. But now he was the champion of the Territory rather than the State. He was just as positive. And he still maintained that the Territory could not oppose the State. Only as a representative of the United States government could he participate in any way. But in this capacity he had duties to uphold, and he supported the contention of the Territory with vigor.

Again occurred the spectacle of two conglomerate bodies of troops facing each other across a disputed tract of land, and again they disbanded without a clash, leaving the question to be decided as Lucas contended it should be — by the United States government. Theodore S. Parvin recorded in his diary: "The Border war turned to be a Humbug — troops returned — a drinking frolic followed."

With the change of presidential administration in 1841 Lucas was removed to make way for a Whig. He spent the remainder of his life for the most part in Iowa, serving as a prominent member of the Constitutional Convention of 1844, participating intermittently in public affairs, and dying at last in 1853 at his home on the edge of Iowa City.

As one turns back to the last portrait of Robert Lucas, the grim old face carries its own interpretation. The wide, high forehead bears out the impression of a mind that could reason clearly and logically, and look upon public matters with some foresight. The eyes, deep set and dominating, show an

intensity of spirit, and the unsmiling mouth bespeaks an inflexible determination. But in the eyes there is a suggestion of bitterness, and nowhere in the dramatic old face is there any indication of a quality that would have enriched his life and increased his influence among his fellow men—a sense of humor.

JOHN C. PARISH

## Iowa in the Days of Lucas

The State of Iowa to-day covers an area of about 55,000 square miles. In 1838 when Robert Lucas came out to Burlington as Governor he found the Territory of Iowa spread over a tract of land approximately three times that size. It included besides the present Iowa, all of modern Minnesota lying west of the Mississippi River, and all of what is now North and South Dakota east of the Missouri. On the north the Canadian line was the boundary and on the northwest in the faraway land of the Sioux the line followed the White Earth River southward from Canada until it joined the Missouri.

But if the area was large the population was exceedingly small. In 1838 there were 22,859 persons in the Territory and this is less than one per cent of the present population of the State. Furthermore over half of these had come in within two years.

These people lived almost entirely in the Black Hawk Purchase which extended back from the river not more than fifty miles. The chief centers of population were a half dozen or more towns on the west bank of the Mississippi; but in 1838 the counties which ranked second and third in point of numbers were two interior counties — Van Buren and Henry.

Iowa City in that year was not yet thought of; Des Moines was merely the name of a river and a county;

and the western part of the Territory was an unpeopled wilderness save for bands of Indians. It is true that near Council Bluffs Father De Smet had a mission post; on the Red River of the North in the present Minnesota was the group of Selkirk colonists; and west of the Mississippi near Fort Snelling were a few white squatters. But it is doubtful if Lucas or any other officer of the Territory realized their existence.

Before Lucas went out of office in 1841, the population had no doubt doubled itself for it had almost done so when the census of 1840 was taken. This survey showed 43,112 persons in the Territory. As might be expected in a pioneer Commonwealth, the men greatly out-numbered the women, the proportion being roughly 4 to 3. Scattered throughout the various counties were 188 colored persons. Most of these were free of course, but the United States census returns list 16 as slaves — all from the county of Dubuque. This same county is credited by the census taker as possessing among its inhabitants a woman over one hundred years old. This must have been the mother of Alexander Butterworth of Dubuque, who was reported to have danced at her son's wedding in 1837, despite her 107 years.

The presence of so large a number of free colored persons and especially of the sixteen slaves is in line with the fact that Iowa in the time of Lucas had been peopled to a considerable extent from the Southern States. Lucas himself was a native of

Virginia and his successor came to Iowa after nearly a half century of life in Kentucky. The first legislative assembly which Lucas faced in 1838 included in its membership twenty, or more than one-half, whose birthplace was south of the Mason and Dixon Line. New Englanders there were in abundance but they did not predominate as has so often been claimed. — As the Civil War approached, the southern influx weakened while that from the northeast increased, but in the years of the early Territorial period, the migration from Virginia, Maryland, and the Carolinas — sometimes with a few years stop-over in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois — was large. Kentucky and Tennessee sent many young men into this new and promising Territory. And the contributions of Missouri to this upstream migration included such men as George Wallace Jones and Augustus Caesar Dodge, the first two United States Senators from Iowa, and Stephen Hempstead, the second Governor of the State.

In the early days they had come to trade in furs and to mine lead but by 1840 they came to farm. Over 10,000 in that year were listed as farmers while all the other occupations together gave employment to less than 3000. They were men of little wealth, but of sturdy ways. They were democratic and independent, accustomed to labor and frontier hardships, but unaccustomed to restraint. They were intelligent but not many of them were highly educated. Only 365 in 1840 practised the learned professions.

The steamboat *Tempest* from Cincinnati brought Lucas to the landing at Burlington. This was the leading town of the Territory, proud of the honor of having been the Territorial capital of Wisconsin and eager to continue its position as the seat of the government. Dubuque was a strong rival, while Davenport, Fort Madison, and Bloomington (later taking the name Muscatine) were smaller but were growing rapidly. In the interior, settlements had sprung up at Salem, the Quaker village, at Mt. Pleasant, Keosauqua, and a dozen other places but they could not hope to rival the river towns. Iowa City was laid out in 1839 and grew with a rapidity due largely to the fact that it had been founded as the seat of government.

Dubuque was still essentially a miner's town, Burlington a lawyer's town, while Iowa City became the dream town of the politicians. And each of the other smaller towns had its own ambitions and characteristics. Some of the ambitions came to naught, as in the case of Ivanhoe which died a natural death, and Rockingham, which, after fighting a valiant contest for supremacy in the county with Davenport four miles away, was worsted and finally engulfed by its rival. But most of the settlements persevered and grew into thriving and permanent towns.

When Lucas arrived the great highway was the river. Steamers shuttled back and forth between Dubuque and Burlington and brought increasing numbers of settlers from the East and South by way

of the Ohio River and St. Louis. But the overland immigrants also were numerous. They came to the river and crossed on ferries at Dubuque or Davenport or Burlington, and then proceeded to roll their wagon wheels inland.

Trails developed into roads; ferry crossings and fords at the small streams caught the moving tide of migration into little knots of settlement. A military road was laid out in 1839 from Dubuque to Iowa City, and in 1841 Burlington boasted four tri-weekly mails, "one to Peoria, Illinois, with splendid Troy post-coaches; one to Dubuque, via Bloomington and Davenport; one to Fort Madison, Montrose, and St. Francisville, Missouri, continuing to St. Louis; one to Macomb, Rushville, and Springfield, Illinois, continuing east; and one is shortly to be established to Iowa City."

The census of 1840 tells us that fifteen men in Iowa were employed in the turning out of newspapers. Weekly sheets were issued in Dubuque, Davenport, and Burlington, the latter town enjoying the luxury and excitement of two rival papers, the *Hawk-Eye and Iowa Patriot* published by James G. Edwards, a Whig, and the *Iowa Territorial Gazette* published by James Clarke, a Democrat who became Governor of the Territory in 1845.

The columns of these newspapers reflect a virile but heterogeneous population. There were good men and horse-thieves in most of the communities. The settlers built churches soon after they had

founded their towns, and schools came not much later. But the tavern was even an earlier institution. Gambling and intemperance were common vices, the carrying of firearms was prevalent, and organized bands such as the "Linn County bogus gang", and the group that brought on the Bellevue War in 1840, did not hesitate now and then to add murder to the crimes of counterfeiting and horse-stealing.

The better element, however, was strongly in the ascendant, the incoming migration held a constantly larger proportion of law-abiding citizens, and the vigorous administration of Robert Lucas did much to establish peace and order in the frontier Territory. It was still the edge of civilization, with wilderness and the Indian close at hand; but the Indian was more often a victim than an aggressor, and the forces that were to conquer the wilderness had crossed the Mississippi and established themselves invincibly on the western side.

JOHN C. PARISH

## Three Early Taverns

Around the big bend of the Mississippi steamed the side-wheel packet, the *Gypsy*, upstream to the mud bank landing of the little settlement of Bloomington, now Muscatine, Iowa. The year was 1839. The passengers on deck bound for the newly created Territory of Iowa saw the brush and timber-covered bluff and ravines and, scattered among the cottonwood and oak trees on the slope of the hill and along the shore, some twenty-five or thirty shanties and log cabins almost hidden by the foliage. A rough and uneven road half concealed by the hazel bushes at its sides stretched along what is now Front Street.

Stumps upon the river front served as seats for the townspeople who, hearing the hoarse throaty whistle of the approaching steamboat, came down to the shore curious to see the new arrivals. The deep toned bell of the *Gypsy* rang out as the boat warped into the landing and the gang plank was thrust out upon the mud bank for the eager newcomers to go ashore.

A passenger landing here and asking for a tavern would probably be directed to fat, jolly Bob Kinney, who occupied the largest stump along the bank, and be told that he was the owner of the Iowa House which stood some sixty feet to the north.

Robert C. Kinney, a rotund, pleasant old fellow,

was the first landlord of Bloomington. He had constructed the rear part of his tavern, a story and a half frame structure, in 1836. This building, about sixteen by thirty feet in size, contained three rooms below and three above, and stood well back on the lot.

In two years increased business, due largely to the steady arrival of immigrants to the new country, made it necessary for Kinney to enlarge the Iowa House. Accordingly, he added a front part some thirty by forty feet in size and two stories high, built at right angles to the rear portion. This addition filled the lot to the street.

A two-story veranda extended along the entire front, the lower porch up some four feet from the ground and reached by a flight of steps in the center. This porch became a favorite loafing place because the cool breezes off the river swept it of an evening and it commanded an unobstructed view of the broad curve of the Mississippi, the wooded island down stream, and the green, brush-covered Illinois shore opposite. Usually the ladies occupied the upper porch, while the men on the lower part smoked, told stories, and slapped mosquitoes.

The entire structure, both the new and old parts, was built largely of lumber prepared near the site. The floors, doors, and window frames were made of sawed lumber; the lath, shingles, studding, siding, and rafters were split or hewn from large oak trees which had grown nearby. It was the stumps of

these trees which afforded comfortable seats for the townspeople who came down to view the boats and the river.

The popular landlord of the Iowa House was fat and lazy but big-hearted and generous, and his boarders — nearly all the unmarried doctors, lawyers, and merchants of Bloomington — delighted in playing tricks on him for the fun of getting him excited. The knives and forks at the Iowa House were the common iron type then in use. If one of the tines of the two-tined forks became bent or blunt some one of the boys would jab it up under the bottom of the table top and there let it stick. Then he would call for another one. The lumbering innkeeper, finding that his forks were disappearing, would drawl, "Gor Almighty, Meriah, what got all the forks?"

Kinney set as good a table as the times would permit. Bacon, beans, and bread were staple dishes and occasionally apple sauce added a pleasant variety. He had neither stove nor range; all the cooking was done in a large stone fireplace in the house and in a baking oven located in the back yard. He gave notice that a meal was ready by ringing a bell which hung in a sort of a chicken coop arrangement on top of the tavern. The clang of the dinner bell brought the boarders pell mell into the dining room and at the same time served as a sort of town clock for the settlement.

Another favorite trick of the young men of Bloom-

ington was to remove this bell under cover of darkness and to hide it in the brush. Great was the glee at the excited outburst of the landlord when he pulled the bell rope the next morning and heard no resulting clang.

Whenever an itinerant minister came along Bob Kinney threw open his doors and permitted the free use of his tavern for a religious service. Likewise, he permitted the few travelling exhibitions or shows to use his dining room for an amusement hall. His tavern, too, was always open as a hospital for the sick who needed the special care and attention of the bachelor doctors who boarded with him. Fat and clumsy though he was, Bob Kinney had a generous heart and sacrificed his own income to help those in need.

Dances also were held in the old Iowa House, the quadrille being the favorite although the "Virginia Reel", the "French Four" and "Money Musk" were likewise popular. One Bloomington young dandy of 1840 trapped muskrats to get money enough to buy him a fashionable outfit to attend the cotillion parties at Kinney's tavern.

He bought broadcloth, mouse colored, for the coat, and the local tailor made him a stylish garment of the claw hammer pattern with long wide padded tails. His waistcoat was a double breasted effect in black satin, quite fancy; his trousers, light colored and tight fitting, spread at the ankles in the so-called spring bottom style and fastened under his calf skin

boots with a strap. A standing collar reaching up to his ears, tied around with a black silk stock, and a tall gray beaver hat completed his stylish attire. Little did he begrudge the two dollars he had to pay for his ticket the first time he wore the suit, for he knew that his chances would be good to dance every tune even though there were only two women for every three men.

The Iowa House offered few of the accommodations of the modern hotel. Three or more beds occupied each room and they were not considered filled unless at least two people slept in each. Oftentimes they held three. No screens kept out the mosquitoes and flies, and bathing facilities were crude. It is related that a stranger arrived and stayed over night. In the morning he asked landlord Kinney where he might wash. Bob inquired if he had a handkerchief. The roomer replied that he had. Whereupon Bob drawled, "Wall, thar's the river, wash thar, and wipe on your handkerchief."

In the early '40's Kinney decided to abandon the more or less unprofitable business of keeping an inn and arranged to rent his tavern to Captain William Fry. Feeling that he should have an iron-clad lease drawn up, Bob went to his lawyer boarder, S. C. Hastings, and stated his requirements. Hastings, seeing a chance to square up a goodly portion of his unpaid board bill, took up the job. He covered several pages of legal cap with old English law terms, then read the finished product to Kinney. It suited

the latter entirely who seemed to like its legal verbiage and he accepted the document. Thus Hastings paid, some say \$25, others \$50, of his long overdue board bill, and Kinney turned over his Iowa House, Bloomington's first hostelry, to a new landlord.

If the newcomer to Bloomington in 1839 was dissatisfied with the accommodations and hospitality at Bob Kinney's tavern he could walk one block east and another north to the Lawson House located on what is now the corner of Iowa Avenue and Second Street.

This house, the second tavern in Bloomington, had been erected in 1837 for John Vanatta by William Gordon and half a dozen workmen who boarded at the Iowa House during the time of construction. Oak timber for this building was cut on and near the site where it stood. The shingles, weatherboards, framing timbers, and floors all were of oak hand-hewn.

When completed, the house was a two-story affair about twenty by forty feet in size with a one-story kitchen forming an L at the rear. A double porch ran the entire length of the building on the Avenue side, the upper part being sheltered by the projecting roof of the house. The porch and roof over it were supported by plain posts, and a railing ran along the front and sides of the upper veranda. There were doors above and below with windows on either side fronting the Avenue, and another door,

on the corner near Second Street, afforded an entrance on that side. A square wooden post with chamfered corners stood on the street corner supporting a lantern which burned fish or whale oil. All in all the new tavern with its light post sign was the most pretentious effect in the little town and the residents pointed with pride to their new hostelry.

John Vanatta, a large, heavily built man who had been a captain in the Black Hawk War, opened a tavern in the new building as soon as it was completed. However, he soon grew tired of the position of landlord and rented his hotel. In 1839 Josiah Parvin secured the Lawson House and began to give Bob Kinney real competition.

Parvin, a kind-hearted courteous host, ran the hotel for a year when his greatly increased business made it necessary to build a new structure to accommodate his guests. His own sociability and the friendliness of his accomplished family created a type of hospitality that brought guests to his tavern. Moreover, a table loaded with the best the times afforded soon gave his establishment a reputation that extended up and down the river and to the interior of the new Territory. Consequently, he captured the lion's share of the hotel trade of Bloomington.

Governor Lucas and his suite stopped with Landlord Parvin in 1839 when they visited the new town. The presence of the tall, dignified Governor of Iowa Territory and his staff at the Lawson House was an honor indeed and it gave the place added prestige.

It became the stopping place for all the notables who came to Bloomington.

Parvin though pleasant and kindly was also excitable, and the boys took fully as much delight in baiting him as they did his rival, Bob Kinney. All that was necessary to send Josiah into an excitable tirade was to suggest that Andrew Jackson was dishonorable. At such a time his vigorous language would attract a circle of amused listeners who would urge him on by other jibes at the Democrats.

A third hostelry of early Muscatine was the picturesque and unique tavern kept by Captain James Palmer, which became known to the trade as "Captain Jim's".

He occupied the one story frame house which stood back a little from the street, on the north side of what is now Second Street, about half way between Iowa Avenue and Chestnut Street. This building had been begun by Suel Foster and his brother, a stone mason, in 1838, but not completed for want of lumber. They had built the basement of white stone blocks blasted and quarried out of the sandstone bluff. On this solid foundation they built the framework, studding, braces, joists, and rafters of split white oak.

Judge Joseph Williams who had come to Bloomington and was looking for a home purchased the partially completed house from the Fosters and secured William Gordon, the builder of the Lawson

House, to complete the work. When completed in 1839 the house made a snug and commodious dwelling. The roof sloped down over a porch in front which was supported by plain posts or pillars, and several steps led up to this veranda.

After the house came into the possession of Captain James Palmer he ran the following notice in the *Bloomington Herald*:

A PROCLAMATION

Whereas, I, Capt. Jim, long a dispenser of food to the hungry and a couch to the weary, as well as a "horn" to the dry, having taken possession of that large and commodious house on Second street, Bloomington, Iowa, formerly the residence of His Hon. J. Williams, do hereby declare and make known to the world that I am now prepared at the sign of Capt. Jim, to accommodate those who may call upon me, in a satisfactory manner, otherwise they go scot free. That the statement may the more fully prove true, I hereby declare and make known that the following are my charges, for all of which the best the market can afford are furnished.

Single meal	25
Board per day with lodging	75
Three days, per day	62½
Per week	3 00
One horse feed	12½
Horse per night	25
Horse per week	1 62½

All other bills in proportion. I, the said Capt. Jim, do hereby further declare to those indebted to me for eating, sleeping, drinking, or upon contract of any kind whatsoever, that unless they come forward immediately and make

settlement, Michael Scot was never in Scotland if I don't send a constable after them to bring them to "taw". So look out for Conklin or Ward.

Thankful for past favors, he hopes to receive a share of public patronage corresponding with his efforts to minister to the tastes and render comfortable those who may favor him with their patronage.

CAPT. JIM PALMER.

Captain Jim like Bob Kinney was a large fat old fellow and he was a good customer at his own bar. His place was not as quiet as the Iowa House but, nevertheless, it was a good place to stop, for the bluff old landlord treated the stranger who had no money as well as the man who had plenty. His tavern was a favorite loafing place for the boys who wanted to smoke, to swap yarns, and to get a drink, but Captain Jim, while enjoying his fun with the rest, usually kept his customers in hand.

His sign hung some twelve feet above the ground on the ugliest piece of timber obtainable, a crooked stick about eight inches in diameter. Crooked branches about twenty inches long had been left sticking out at irregular intervals to embellish the main stock. This sign of Captain Jim's was easily the most prominent object on Second Street.

Dan Rice, the old showman, relates that the first time he played Bloomington early in the forties, he stopped at "Capt. Jim's" with his troupe and arranged to give his performance in the tavern. The landlord suspicious of the showman's financial status demanded his pay in advance but agreed to

wait when Rice offered to make him doorkeeper and ticket seller for the show. Rice, therefore, proceeded to stage his exhibition.

When the show was over Rice asked Captain Jim for the money but the host hadn't a cent. He knew everybody in Bloomington and everybody knew him, and being of a generous and accommodating disposition, he did not have the heart to charge his friends admission. Consequently he had no receipts for Rice and the latter had no funds with which to pay his lodging.

Thus did the bluff old Captain along with his contemporaries dispense hospitality in the early days of Muscatine, and perhaps in some respects his tavern surpassed the others in conviviality.

These three taverns of Bloomington were typical of the early Territorial lodging places and are unique only in the fact that incidents which occurred in them have been preserved. Their fireplaces furnishing warmth and cheer on wintry evenings, their tallow dips in tin reflectors hung on the wall and affording feeble illumination, their total lack of the comforts of the modern hotels, were duplicated in every town of the Territory. Governor Lucas found no better conveniences or greater hospitality in his swing around the Territory he governed than he did at Bloomington. The taverns and their landlords everywhere were conspicuous and always played a prominent part in the pioneer drama.

BRUCE E. MAHAN

## Comment by the Editor

### THE BAEDEKERS OF IOWA

It was not for the information or the entertainment of those who lived in the countries they described that the little fat red books full of fact and historic lore and legend and description used to appear, but for the enlightenment of those who might come from afar. So in the early days when Iowa was the goal of tourist and emigrant, there appeared little pocket-size books, slender but full of optimism, and usually accompanied by that most alluring of all baits — a bright-colored folding map.

They were usually published in New York or Philadelphia; they had wide circulation in the east, and some of them found publication and circulation in England and other European countries. They constitute in all a goodly number of volumes, but there is time before we come to the last page of this sketch to take down from the shelf and examine at least one of those handbooks which were published in the Territorial days.

The most interesting of all is probably the earliest. The copy before us — one of a very few in existence — is a thin paper-bound volume not quite four by six inches in size. On the blue stained cover one reads: *Notes on the Wisconsin Territory; particularly with reference to the Iowa District or Black*

*Hawk Purchase.* It is the work of Lieutenant Albert M. Lea, of the United States Dragoons, and bears the date of 1836. The title is somewhat misleading for the content of the book, save for a copy of the act establishing the government of the Territory of Wisconsin, deals with the part of the Territory lying west of the Mississippi River, a tract of land which here has associated with it for the first time the name of Iowa.

Lieutenant Albert M. Lea had travelled over much of the country he describes, in company with the United States Dragoons in the summer of 1835, and he tells us in a preface that he "has been sedulous in collecting information from surveyors, traders, explorers, and residents."

In forty-two pages and a map he gives to the world this information. He locates the land and describes the climate and the seasons, all of which he finds charming. He commends the soil, but not being a prophet he does not do it full justice. He waxes eloquent, however, when he describes the "general appearance of the country". The products, the wild game, the population, trade, government and land titles he touches with a facile and enthusiastic pen.

One chapter deals with "Water Courses" and the final one with "Remarks upon Towns, Landings and Roads", wherein we find familiar names and some that are not so familiar. Under the heading "Kasey's", we learn that "A gentleman of this name intends laying out a town at the head of the Musca-

tine Slue." Next comes the name "Iowa". "This is the name of a town to be laid out at the mouth of Pine river, about 330 miles above Saint Louis." Lieutenant Lea has great hopes for this town. "It possesses the most convenient landing from Burlington to the head of the Upper Rapids; and no place could be better adapted to the erection of buildings. The harbour of Pine river runs through the town, affording good landings on both sides; and boats may land anywhere on the Mississippi shore, for a mile and a half above the mouth of Pine." And he is so impressed with its location that he remarks: "Should the seat of Government of the future State of Iowa be located on the Mississippi, it would probably be fixed at Iowa." On a modern map we have located Pine River, or rather Pine Creek, ten miles above Muscatine, but no town named "Iowa" seems to be yet ranged along its harbour.

The lieutenant mentions Parkhurst and says: "Of this place, not yet laid out, it is sufficient to say that the site is beautiful, the landing good, building material convenient, and the back country fine. There is nothing wanting to make it a town but the people and the houses, and these will soon be there." The town of Parkhurst did actually materialize but it soon merged with Le Claire and lost its original name. Burlington, Dubuque and Davenport each has a paragraph or two, and so have Throckmorton's Landing, and Clark's Ferry, Catfish, and Riprow.

In spite of its early date no book with the same amount of information appeared for at least five years. Yet to Albert M. Lea it was only meant as a beginning. "The reader will perceive", he says in his preface, "that the following '*Notes*,' are confined to such subjects only as are interesting, particularly to the emigrant, the speculator, and the legislator. The author reserves for another work, the notice of such topics connected with that country, as are better suited to the more general reader." Unhappily Lea never fulfilled the promise which his good intentions led him to make.

J. C. P.

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