

# The **P**ALIMPSEST

JUNE 1942

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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

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## 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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## Berries for Sale

Rap, rap, rap.

At the insistent summons, Mrs. Phillips opened the front door with a jerk. What met her eyes was not the peddler she expected, but a box of most luscious strawberries balanced on an extended hand. She peered around the door to locate the owner of that hand and those berries. There he was — a short, slim, well-dressed young man with a disarming smile and a twinkle in his blue eyes.

“Madam, I have a fruit farm two miles from Hiteman. Every afternoon I bring fruits and vegetables to town to sell, in that carriage out there. I should like to show you my berries today. Then on other days, if you want to buy from me, you can just come to the door and raise your hand when you hear the bells I have fastened on my horses. My time is valuable and I won’t bother you by coming to your door again unless you want some of my fruit.”

Intrigued by this entirely novel method of selling things, so different from the ways of the dirty, insistent peddlers whom she had sent away from her back door that morning, Mrs. Phillips pondered.

"What berries have you?"

"I have strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, and cherries, each in season."

"How much are they worth?"

"There is one price on each for the whole season. The strawberries, blackberries, and cherries are fifteen cents a box or three dollars and sixty cents for a crate. The raspberries are four dollars a crate."

"That's higher than other people are asking."

"I realize that, madam, but my fruit is of uniform quality and size and I guarantee it to be that way. You'll find very little waste because of over-ripe fruit."

Mrs. Phillips took the box of berries and stirred the fruit around with an exploring finger. The surprising thing was that the bottom layer of strawberries was of exactly as large size as the ones at the top.

"I'll take a crate of these now, if you have them, and probably more later if they're all as good as this box."

In this manner W. T. Richey went from house

to house in the mining town of Hiteman, adding more and more good customers to his already large list. In 1900 he had started one of the first fruit farms in Monroe County. It was at a time when berries grew wild and plentifully out in the country, and there was already an over-supply of fruit vendors selling wild berries. People told him that he was foolish, that his venture was sure to fail, but these advisers were poor prophets. Will Richey's fruit farm gradually expanded from the three acres, financed with money borrowed from a neighbor, to forty-five acres, entirely free from debt.

The secret of his success was partly to be found in the exceptionally fine quality of his fruits. His prices were higher than those of his competitors, but people paid him willingly. They knew that in a crate of berries only about six berries could not be used, instead of three boxes of bad fruit which was the usual amount to be discarded from a crate sold by any other peddler.

Moreover, Richey's salesmanship was different from that of the average fruit seller. He dressed, as he himself said, "so that I would be quite presentable if I had to go to a meeting." When he introduced his wares he went to the front door and not to the back of the house. His pleasant, deep voice and, above all, that twinkle in his eyes, made

people feel instinctively that he could be trusted.

One lady had a standing order each week for a certain amount of fruit, but usually was not at home when he came to deliver. "Now, Mr. Richey," she said, "I'm going to leave the back door unlocked. You walk right in with the fruit and put it on the kitchen table. And here on the third shelf of the cupboard is a tumbler and I'll leave the money for you in that."

"But I don't want to do that, Mrs. Gaines. If somebody else came in and stole things, I'd not want to be blamed for it."

"I know you're perfectly honest, and we'll do it this way or not at all."

And so the matter was settled. Each week Will Richey delivered his fruit to Mrs. Gaines's kitchen, opened the cupboard and took his pay from the tumbler on the third shelf. Sometimes the lady left a note on the table, telling him of a friend who also wanted to buy some of his berries.

There were some particularly nice late cherries for which Mr. Richey asked a higher price than was customary. Some of his purchasers protested about it. "But Mr. Richey, that's *much* more than other people are asking."

"I know that, but you are getting something extra fine when you buy these Montmorencies."

The supply of these excellent cherries was lim-

ited and so he always sold the whole crop. He found that the miners liked to "eat well", as they themselves admitted. Consequently the fact that his fruits were of superior quality was a guarantee of an adequate market.

"You know," a customer would often begin, "I'll have to tell you about this. I bought some of the cheaper ones, and they were perfectly terrible. They were small and poorly sorted, and had lots of waste to them. Believe me, I'm buying yours from now on, price or no price."

The pickers on his farm knew that their jobs lasted only as long as they did efficient work. During the twelve years when Mr. Richey controlled the enterprise, only two pickers were discharged. They were all allowed to eat as many berries as they wanted, if they also managed to pick the rows clean. Each picker had a card which was presented to Mr. Richey's small daughter, Mae, to be punched, whenever a "haul" was brought in to be sorted. Mae wore the punch on a ribbon around her neck, to be sure that it was not mislaid or stolen. It made a queer mark in the shape of a hand, and would have been hard to duplicate.

The berries were put in absolutely clean boxes. The sorters were careful to have the fruit of as uniform size as possible. There was none of that

reprehensible practice of putting the big berries on top to hide much smaller ones below.

About forty years ago, mining towns had a reputation of being rough and tough, though usually that character was imparted by a few persons. On the outskirts of Hiteman lived a group in bad repute, commonly known as the "Kentuckians". These men, mostly Napiers and Johnsons, were supposed to have been chased out of Kentucky because of their disagreeable habit of ignoring the law. They had come to Iowa and settled near Hiteman, ostensibly to work in the coal mines, particularly in the Enterprise and the Jack Oak. Employment of that sort fell to their lot occasionally, and they were good workers. Ordinarily, however, they lived well and with no visible means of support. Their soft, melodious voices were disarming, especially to strangers who later came to grief because of over-trustfulness in outward appearances.

One time Richey overtook one of the Johnsons along the road and, being somewhat venturesome, he stopped and asked the man if he would like to ride. So Johnson climbed into the wagon and rode to Hiteman. The conversation was confined to commonplaces, and the men parted with mutual expressions of good will. Richey chuckled to himself afterward, because his passenger had so per-

sistently emphasized his affiliation with and interest in the Baptist Church.

However, the Johnsons and Napiers were good customers, and never seemed offensive to Mr. Richey, although he knew them not only by reputation but because of actual lawless deeds in which they had been involved. He had heard, also, that one of the Johnsons never permitted anybody to get behind him. This alleged trait amused the fruit seller and he decided to test its truthfulness. His first opportunity came when he was selling some berries to the man one morning.

"I've got something in the wagon you ought to see," said Mr. Richey, edging back of Mr. Johnson to get to the wagon. Mr. Johnson stepped back close against the horses and Mr. Richey found himself going in front instead of behind the man as he had intended.

At another time, one of Johnson's sons was badly hurt in a mine explosion at Jack Oak and Mr. Richey volunteered to help care for the boy until the father returned from an unexplained absence. His offer was accepted, and he happened to be at the Johnson home when the head of the house reappeared. Again Mr. Richey thought about his original failure to walk behind Johnson who happened to be sitting in a chair in the center of the room.

"I need a drink of water", remarked Richey, getting up and moving to the right with the intention of passing behind on his way to the water pail. But Johnson picked up his chair, moved it back against the wall, and again sat down. Apparently the rumor about his peculiarity was well founded.

Will Richey's fruit route included all the small mining settlements within traveling distance of his farm, as well as some of the larger towns. People became accustomed to the jingle of his bells. And because of his honesty and kind disposition, he found not only regular customers but lifelong friends.

LOIS MARIE OLLIVIER

## Mississippi Pirates

The McGregor *North Iowa Times* had "the gratification of announcing . . . the rescue of a large amount of merchandise" and the break-up of "a system of thieving" on the upper Mississippi in the spring of 1858. For more than a year an old building on the west bank of the river, opposite the upper Prairie du Chien ferry, had been "the rendezvous of the robbers." From this base they ventured as far north as La Crosse, Wisconsin, in quest of booty. When sufficient loot had been accumulated, cargoes were loaded for sale down the river. Indeed, it was a carpenter, who had been employed to repair a boat for just such a voyage, who revealed their hideout and operations, following a violent quarrel about his wages.

On a Friday morning, late in April, constables Kee and Brown from McGregor, together with Sanford L. Peck and several citizens, acted on the carpenter's tip and started in search of the "pirates". They steered their skiff toward Big Island, nearly opposite Wyalusing. Since the river was high, much of the island was submerged and accessible by boat. The party could, there-

fore, make a "thorough reconnoiter" and soon discovered a camp on the island occupied by George Sciville, another man, and a nine-year-old boy. The posse took them into custody and learned from these captives that a boat commanded by a Dr. Bell was moored in one of the island sloughs and was "loaded with stolen goods to the amount of several hundred dollars."

The pirate hunters set out the next morning in search of Dr. Bell's boat. With the captive lad as a guide, they found it without difficulty and made a close approach before noting signs of life. A dog, on board the vessel, barked to rouse the captain and "he sprang out on the bow in his shirt." Because he recognized the boy, he probably mistook the party for friends and requested them to wait, for his "wife was not up". But they did not comply, for neither river etiquette nor the formalities of law made full dress a prerequisite for arrest. Neither did they present a warrant before Dr. Bell sensed danger and intuitively presented arms. "Without further invitation" Peck fired and Dr. Bell slumped to the deck. Bell's wife then started shooting at them from within the cabin, so the assailing party deemed it prudent to return to McGregor for a force sufficient to capture the boat and to bring it into port.

Upon their return to McGregor "the town was

soon at boiling heat." About fifty men, "armed with such weapons as could be conveniently obtained enlisted for the war." Captain Nelson of the *Alexander McGregor* was induced to run his boat "down to the battle-ground". When they arrived, no one on Bell's vessel offered resistance "but the bird had flown." Only Mrs. Bell and her young child remained on board. A guard was detailed to remain in charge while further search of Big Island was made. Two more boats "loaded with plunder" were found. One of them was promptly towed to Clayton City by a Junction Ferry Line boat, while the *Pembina* from St. Louis volunteered to take the other prize to McGregor. The *Alexander McGregor* brought Bell's pirate ship to the same place.

Since the next day was Sunday, Captain Nelson's boat, "with two or three hundred citizens on board," started for Clayton City to bring the pirate craft to McGregor. On its way it met the *Fred Lorenz* "with the booty in tow, and such a time of cheering and rejoicing was never before heard on the Mississippi," the *Times* reported.

At McGregor the prize vessels were taken into custody by the Clayton County sheriff. The loot on board was worth "not less than from \$4,000 to \$5,000," showing "the industry of the robbers". The booty included dry goods, boots, shoes,

books, drugs, clothing, household goods, liquor, groceries, stoves, grindstones, and "every conceivable article" that could "tempt the cupidity of a thief."

Dr. Bell was not apprehended, although several posses were organized to scour neighboring regions in Wisconsin and Iowa. However, a man fitting his description: "Well made . . . about 35 years old, weighs 160, sandy complexion, large red whiskers" stopped at Wyalusing to have a physician "take a ball out of his head." Eighteen persons were arrested, and "as the rope is applied to the necks of some as a persuader, they are telling all they know with great liberality," the *North Iowa Times* reported. Among those implicated was John C. Bishop, "the Osage land robber". Captives revealed that two weeks previously Bishop had sent a booty boat "containing \$10,000 worth of goods" to St. Louis. Indeed, the *Times* "feared that many men heretofore regarded as honest will be found deeply implicated in this astonishing villainy." It was "hoped" that the aggressive action already taken by officers and citizen vigilantes would "result in breaking up one of the most formidable bands of robbers ever organized in the West."

THOMAS E. TWEITO

## Remember Our Heroes

The world loves to honor and remember its heroes. This has been true in every age. When David slew Goliath, he was proclaimed a hero; when the Duke of Wellington met Napoleon at Waterloo and changed the current of European history, he was accounted a hero; when Washington won American independence on the battlefield, he was accorded the title of father of his country; when Grant demanded "unconditional surrender" of the Southern forces and obtained it, he was glorified; when Iowa "boys in blue" fought at Shiloh and Vicksburg and when they marched with Sherman to the sea, they were regarded as heroes; when Iowa men battled at Chateau-Thierry, at St. Mihiel, and in the Argonne Forest, many of them were cited for bravery and all were remembered as heroes; and when Iowa boys make the supreme sacrifice at the ends of the earth in the present struggle for liberty, surely they will be honored as heroes.

Iowa, throughout its history, has for the most part been a peaceful land. Indeed, since the coming of the white settlers, no major battle has been fought on Iowa soil. But Iowa men have partici-

pated in wars and have contributed much to the cause of freedom. Moreover, in every war in which Iowa men have fought there is an honor roll of Iowa heroes.

Iowa sent a company of 113 men to participate in the Mexican War. Many more enlisted but were not mustered into active service. A battalion of Mormons was recruited at Kaneshville, but they were only sojourners in Iowa. During the years from 1846 to 1848 Iowa supplied 209 men to the regular Army.

In a sense, all those who in war times have gone forth to battle are heroes. In a race, all must run; but not all will win the prize. So also in the struggle for freedom — all must strive and all will in a measure attain; but not all will be remembered as heroes. Among the Iowa men who served in the Mexican War the names of at least three leaders have remained distinct on the pages of history. Frederick D. Mills, Edwin Guthrie, and Benjamin S. Roberts deserve the tribute accorded to heroes.

A native of Massachusetts and a graduate of Yale, Frederick D. Mills came to Iowa in 1841, settled at Burlington, and began the practice of law. Five years later he was commissioned by President James K. Polk as a major in the Fifteenth United States Infantry, six companies of which were recruited in Ohio, two in Michigan,

one in Wisconsin, and one in Iowa. While leading a charge at the Battle of Churubusco, Major Mills was killed. His name was inscribed on a tablet in the chapel of the Military Academy at West Point as one of the heroes of the Mexican War. And the General Assembly of Iowa named a county in honor of him.

The only company of Iowa men that served in Mexico during this war was Company K, Fifteenth United States Infantry, of which Edwin Guthrie was captain. Guthrie was a native of New York who came to Iowa about 1840. He was warden of the penitentiary at Fort Madison before the outbreak of the war. As one of the organizers of Company K, he was elected captain and led his men in the campaign against Mexico City. Mortally wounded on June 20, 1847, in the skirmish at Lahoya Pass, on the road between Vera Cruz and Perote, Captain Guthrie died at Perote a month later. His name, like that of Mills, is perpetuated in the name of an Iowa county.

Benjamin Stone Roberts was a native of Vermont. Upon graduating from West Point, he was brevetted second lieutenant and assigned to duty in 1835 with the First United States Dragoons stationed at Fort Des Moines, a frontier post on the western bank of the Mississippi River. Later he retired from the army and began the practice of

law at Fort Madison. But when the war with Mexico began he reentered military service as a captain. He participated in several battles of the war. On September 14, 1847, he led the advance of J. A. Quitman's army into the City of Mexico, and to him was assigned the honor of raising the first American flag over the palace of the Montezumas.

For this distinguished service Roberts was highly commended by the Iowa General Assembly in 1849. A resolution was passed by that body referring to Captain Roberts as one who had "won for himself a brilliant distinction, which reflects a lustre upon the character of the American soldier, and an honor upon this State." Later he served as a colonel and brigadier general in the Civil War.

Iowa heroes of the War of the Rebellion were numerous and noteworthy. There were heroes on every battlefield; heroes in every regiment, in every battalion, and in every company. Every Cavalry troop and every Artillery battery had its heroes. Nor were Iowa heroes lacking in the Navy and Marines. Some, because of early training and long service, became officers of high rank. At the close of the war about one hundred Iowa men had attained the rank of colonel, in many instances on account of heroism in action.

There were those, too, who were heroes of the

hour — men who by sheer bravery changed defeat into victory. One of the most courageous exploits of the whole war was performed by Brigadier General John M. Corse of Iowa. While Sherman was advancing into Georgia, the Confederate General, John B. Hood, started to invade the North. In alarm Sherman at Kenesaw Mountain signaled to Corse, who was at Rome, to rush to the narrow Allatoona Pass and hold it "to the last extremity".

With only two thousand men, including the faithful Thirty-ninth Iowa Infantry, Corse hastened to the scene early in the morning of October 5th. Presently he received a message from the Confederate commander, calling upon him to surrender "at once, and unconditionally", to "avoid a needless effusion of blood". To this Corse replied: "Your communication demanding surrender of my command I acknowledge receipt of, and respectfully reply that we are prepared for the 'needless effusion of blood' whenever it is agreeable to you."

A vigorous attack followed this defiant reply. When Sherman saw the smoke of the fierce struggle he signaled Corse, "Hold on to Allatoona to the last. I will help you." To those who watched with him, Sherman said: "If Corse is there, he will hold out: I know the man."

At one time during the battle Corse fell unconscious on the field. When he was revived and questioned about his own welfare, he answered: "I am short a cheek bone and one ear, but am able to whip all hell yet." It was this dramatic "holding of the fort" that brought immortal fame to the Iowa general.

But not all heroes are renowned. Of the soldiers who fell in battle during the Civil War there are some whose names are remembered, and many whose names are forgotten. It has frequently been said that Private Shelby Norman, a youth from Muscatine and a member of Company A, First Iowa Infantry, who was killed in action on August 10, 1861, was the first Iowan killed in service. The Grand Army Post at Muscatine was later named in honor of Norman, and his likeness was used to typify the Infantryman on the Soldiers and Sailors Monument at Des Moines. More recent researches, however, reveal the fact that Cyrus W. West of Mahaska County, a member of Company H, Third Iowa Infantry, was killed in action on July 11th, and was, therefore, probably the first Iowan to give his life for the cause of freedom in the Civil War. But the matter of priority in this instance is not important. Each of these men in turn made the supreme sacrifice, and each is representative of the unnamed

heroes in the ranks of the Army. It was their bravery and sacrifice that saved the Union.

The circumstances of heroic deeds soon fade from memory, and the identity of heroes is presently lost in anonymity. To assure the preservation of records and to render honor where honor was due, President Lincoln, on December 21, 1861, placed his signature of approval upon legislation authorizing the medal of honor as the supreme American decoration for military valor. This is the only medal of the United States Government authorized to be presented by the President "in the name of Congress"; and for that reason it is frequently called the Congressional Medal of Honor. It is usually given to the common soldier, sailor, or marine for extraordinary deeds of valor while in service.

One of the first soldiers to receive this award was an Iowa man. At the Battle of Pea Ridge, on March 7, 1861, Private Albert Power, Company A, Third Iowa Cavalry, a resident of Davis County, under "a heavy fire and at a great personal risk went to the aid of a dismounted comrade who was surrounded by the enemy, took him on his own horse and carried him to safety". For this rescue Power was proclaimed a hero and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

The Congressional Medal is not frequently

awarded. But, through the years, on several occasions it has been bestowed upon Iowa men. Among other Iowans to whom it was awarded during the Civil War was James Dunlavy, Company D, Third Iowa Cavalry, a resident of Davis County, for the capture of Major General John S. Marmaduke at Osage, Kansas, on October 25, 1864. Corporal Luther Kaltenbach, Company F, Twelfth Iowa Infantry, of Clayton County, won the Congressional Medal for capturing a Confederate regimental flag at Nashville, Tennessee, on December 16, 1864. James P. Miller, Company D, Fourth Iowa Cavalry, of Henry County, and Andrew W. Tibbets, Company I, Third Iowa Cavalry, of Appanoose County, also distinguished themselves by capturing Confederate flags. In 1900 the medal was awarded to Calvin Pearl Titus, a former resident of Vinton serving with the Fourteenth United States Infantry in the Boxer Rebellion. He was the first "to scale the wall" of Peking. All the men who have received the Congressional Medal of Honor are officially recognized as heroes by the Federal Government.

The sinking of the battleship *Maine* in the harbor of Havana precipitated the Spanish-American War. To Iowa the tragedy was personified, for Assistant Engineer Darwin R. Merritt of Red Oak was one of the American sailors whose life

was claimed in that disaster. Soon after his graduation from the Naval Academy at Annapolis in July, 1897, he was assigned to duty on the *Maine*. The sacrifice of his life seemed particularly sad because it occurred without warning and the men had no chance to save themselves or retaliate.

And what shall be said of the Iowa heroes of the World War? That terrible cataclysm was so recent that most of the participants are still living. Yet thousands of their comrades lie forever "somewhere in France". They are all accounted heroes. But heroism is something more than service, something more than sacrifice; it is a quality of the soul. As flowers in the forest may bloom, send forth their fragrance, and fade quite unobserved by human eyes, so also heroes may serve and fall without recognition. Whole regiments fought bravely, but only the conspicuous instances of courage were specially honored.

The first Americans to fall in France were lost in a surprise raid by the Germans early in the morning of November 3, 1917. "A group was caught in a box barrage", reported General John J. Pershing, "and although the men made a courageous resistance against the large raiding party three were killed, five wounded, and twelve captured". One of the dead was Private Merle D. Hay of Glidden, Iowa.

A large number of French soldiers as well as American troops attended the funeral ceremony to pay tribute. "This joint homage to our dead, there under the fire of guns", Pershing said, "seemed to symbolize the common sacrifice our two peoples were to make in the same great cause. It seemed as though their death had sealed a new pact of understanding and comradeship between the two armies." For this achievement an Iowa boy was first to give his life.

Feeling the need of more adequate awards for heroic service President Woodrow Wilson in January, 1918, issued an executive order creating the Distinguished Service Cross. His action was confirmed by Congress in July, 1918. This decoration is a bronze cross, and bears an American eagle superimposed on a plain laurel wreath. A scroll below the eagle bears the inscription "For Valor".

The Distinguished Service Cross was awarded not only to World War soldiers, but it was also authorized "as a retroactive award". Accordingly, it was conferred upon soldiers of previous wars who had performed distinguished service. One of the most prominent of these cases was the award to Lieutenant Andrew Summers Rowan of Virginia who carried the "Message to Garcia" in the Spanish-American War. After a perilous trip

across Cuba, he met the revolutionary leader, General Calixto Garcia, on May 1, 1898, and returned to the United States with valuable military information. He received his Distinguished Service Cross with full military honors on August 21, 1922.

More than five thousand Distinguished Service Crosses, and nearly one hundred bronze oak-leaf clusters in lieu of a second award, have been presented for valor in the World War. Iowa men rendered their full share of heroic service during the war, and accordingly the pages of Iowa history are dotted with names of heroes who received this coveted prize.

In the 168th United States Infantry alone there were at least twenty-six Iowa men who won the Distinguished Service Cross. This list includes the following names: David V. Binkley, George R. Boustead, \*Arthur F. Brandt, Guy S. Brewer, \*Charles R. Burks, Charles J. Casey, John C. Christopher, Merl E. Clark, \*Emmett E. Collins, Clarence A. Davis, Thomas J. Gray, Byron W. Hamilton, Claude V. Hart, Glenn C. Haynes, James B. Lepley, Bernard Nelson, \*Oscar B. Nelson, Liberty Pease, Winfred E. Robb, Lloyd D. Ross, \*Mathew S. Spautz, Alt C. Wilken, \*George A. Wilkinson, Frank L. Williams, Earle W. Wilson, and John H. Wintrobe. The six

whose names are starred were killed in action and were given posthumous awards. It is interesting to note that five who received the Distinguished Service Cross — Casey, Christopher, Lepley, Ross, and Wilson — were residents of Red Oak. Brewer, Collins, Robb, and Williams were residents of Des Moines.

Iowa soldiers in other regiments and in other branches of the service were also awarded Distinguished Service Crosses for their bravery. Representative of this larger group is Hanford MacNider of Mason City, who as captain in the 9th Infantry, 2nd Division, near Medeah Ferme, France, on October 3, 1918, "voluntarily joined an attacking battalion, and accompanied it to its final objectives". During a second attack on the same day MacNider "acted as a runner through heavy artillery and machine gun fire". Later, when higher authorities could not be reached, he assumed responsibility and gave the necessary command to stabilize the troops. Moreover, leading new troops, he went forth to uncover and destroy German machine gun nests. For other deeds of valor and "extraordinary heroism", in the fall of 1918, MacNider was awarded the oak-leaf cluster.

Corporal Robert Colflesh of Des Moines was another Iowa youth who received the Distin-

guished Service Cross. "After his men had been caught in an intense artillery shelling, Colflesh although wounded, refused to seek shelter until all his men had taken cover. While aiding the last man into a trench, he received a second wound."

The Army Distinguished Service Medal was created in 1918 for the purpose of decorating persons who served with distinction in positions of great responsibility. It is usually awarded to officers. Colonel Mathew A. Tinley and Colonel Donald Macrae were two Iowa men who received this award. Colonel Tinley "displayed exceptional qualities of leadership in command of the 168th Infantry, 42nd Division, which under his able leadership fulfilled every mission assigned to it." Macrae, commanding officer of Mobile Hospital No. 1 at Coulommiers and Chateau-Thierry, June to August, 1918, rendered efficient service in a most difficult situation.

In addition to the American medals of honor, Iowa men were decorated by their allies. The French Croix de Guerre was pinned on many a breast as the ceremonial kiss was administered to the cheek. Similar decorations were received from the British, Belgian, and Italian governments. Two Iowans who attained the rank of major general were several times recognized. For heroism at Cantigny in May, 1918, Hanson E. Ely re-

ceived the Croix de Guerre and the distinction of Officer in the Legion d'Honneur. During the summer he was cited for the Distinguished Service Cross. Major General George W. Reed received the Distinguished Service Medal, was made Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath by Great Britain, and by France he was designated Commander in the Legion d'Honneur and decorated with the Croix de Guerre with a palm.

In 1939 war again broke out in Europe. America hoped to remain aloof. But it was a vain hope. Young men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five were required to prepare for battle. Military camps were established and large-scale maneuvers were practiced in anticipation of national defense. New tactics were learned. Mechanized warfare on land, sea, and in the air modified the character of military training and revolutionized industry. It was a period of uncertainty and hope. Then, in an hour when least expected, Pearl Harbor was bombed. Instantly the conditions changed. Duty and responsibility were clear and the people faced their destiny with heroic fortitude.

Iowa boys, many of them, were caught in the first onslaught. How bravely some of them died, the world may never know. How bravely others fought is now becoming a matter of history. But

whether it be at Pearl Harbor or in other areas; whether it be in the air, on the land, or on the sea, in every situation Iowa boys have responded nobly, and for this they have been signally honored. There are those among them who have been decorated with the Purple Heart, the Silver Star, the Navy Cross, the Distinguished Flying Cross, or some other award of honor.

Since the bombing of Pearl Harbor many decorations, awards, and citations have been given, and Iowa men have been granted their full share. Private Robert Eugene Taylor, Captain Robert Brice Moore, Sergeant Joseph M. Romanelli, and Greeley B. Williams are Iowans who have been honored in recent weeks. But these are only representative of the much larger group of Iowa men who have won distinguished honors. If it were possible to print today a complete list of Iowans who have been decorated for bravery, we would awake tomorrow only to find that the list had been supplemented. Surely in this new generation of Iowa youth, when their deeds have been recorded, there will be found a multitude of heroes.

Thus it has been throughout the years. It is fitting that now and again we should pause to remember our heroes.

J. A. SWISHER

## Peter Rice

Among the older settlers in and around Gilman, Iowa, there are few, if any, who did not know Peter Rice, or, as he was better known, "Nigger Pete".

I recall him vividly, as he was the first Negro I had seen, and I associate that ebony face with all colored folks I have since met. The questions, "Where was he born, and where did he come from?" were often asked. Even Pete himself could not have answered, for no public registry was kept of slaves. He used to say, when questioned about his early life, "I was born down South some place. I didn't know nothing about the State lines. I know that it was by a lonely mountain ridge with a spring hard by. I also recollect a large woman we called 'mammy', who gave us something to eat and cooed us to sleep. The Northern soldiers came into our country, and I was hungry and I just walked away. I was scared many times for fear the master with the bulldog might come and catch me, so I kept pretty close to the captain's tent. When the regiment came North, I followed, and we crossed over the big Mississippi River. When we got on the other

side, Captain Stoddard he say to me, 'Now, sonny, you stand on the sacred soil of Iowa where slavery never existed. You are free.' That sounded good to me, and I always think what the old captain said, but I was not so sure how long the freedom might last."

It was under those circumstances that "Nigger Pete" arrived in Iowa with the returning troops after the Civil War and became a member of the William H. Stoddard family when in his teens. He could not write or read, but he was finally taught to write his name. That was as much schooling as he had. In the course of a few years he got a job with the Beale Brothers in Gilman, and remained in their employ as long as he was able to work. He soon became proficient in the care of livestock, and was useful in and about the grain house and yards of the Beale Brothers. He also developed such reliable knowledge of the value of hogs, cattle, and horses that the firm sent him into the neighboring counties to buy stock.

Many stories can be told of Pete in Gilman, where he became in a short time a sort of a prominent character in the community. A woman of his own race happened to be employed in the town, and as they were both lonely they agreed to get married. This wedding was the talk of the town and the largest wedding ever held, for the boys

furnished not only music, but also the wedding cake and presents.

Pete was always a lover of horses, and in buying cattle and hogs for the firm he drove his own team. One day a man rode a fine black mare into town, which attracted Pete's attention. He asked the man how much he wanted for this mare, and the fellow replied he would take sixty dollars in cash. Pete was not long in making this bargain, and counted out the money. The next day he purchased a saddle, and prepared to ride his favorite animal around town to show what a good purchase he had made. The mare had never been saddled so when Pete mounted she began to buck and kick, much to the enjoyment of the citizens of the town, but not so much to the satisfaction of Pete, who could not get off without being thrown. The last they saw of him that day was as the mare galloped north along the Le Grande road with Pete still clinging to the mare's neck with both arms.

After this humiliating ride he skulked in his tent for a few days devising a way to get rid of this obstreperous animal. He hoped to make a trade. Presently he found a farmer named Peter Peterson, also a lover of good horse flesh, who lived a few miles north of town and had not heard of Pete's equestrian exhibition. The boys used to say that

Pete's reason for trading off this handsome mare for a bay scrub was because she was so black lightning bugs followed her around in daylight. The trade was made, and Pete was to get ten dollars to boot. It was not long before the irate farmer returned and wanted to trade back, as the mare had kicked herself out of her harness and kicked out the front end of the wagon box. Pete never got the boot money.

Pete was often invited to go to Chicago with stock but he refused, saying that Iowa was good enough for him. Here he was a free man with the right to own property, and his oath was as good as anyone's. He was a faithful servant who always looked after the property of his employers. In the winter he would sit in the cold office all night, going out every now and then to see if the stock in the yards was all right. He was always good natured, polite, talkative, and a booster for the State where he had found good friends and a comfortable home.

With age came sickness and other cares. Though ignorant of his parentage, carried by the tides of war to a strange but hospitable land, and fearful of losing his freedom, he made the best of his opportunity. As his vision dimmed he could perceive in retrospect the misery and degradation of slavery which he had escaped. In his declining

years he was grateful for his good fortune. At last his dark eyes were closed forever.

Glimpses of such humble and unselfish lives can be found in many localities. The story of Peter Rice — his faithfulness, his love and respect for those who befriended him, and his character — is worthy of commemoration. Few who came to Iowa loved the State more or served it more loyally. Born a slave, he achieved distinction in a free society and among people of a different race.

B. L. WICK

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