

## Reminiscences of Early Settlers

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highly favorable report of the prospects of the mines in the Pike's Peak regions.

This seemed to settle the question, and indeed, from this time no one was hardy enough to deny the existence of gold in the new mining region. The emigration went steadily forward, and the wagons of the emigrants lined the roads and filled the valleys, during the summer season, of Iowa and Nebraska, until the construction of the Union Pacific railroad furnished a quicker, cheaper, and more convenient mode of travel to the mountains, and the rich mines with which they abound.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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### REMINISCENCES OF EARLY SETTLERS.

BY R. B. GROFF, MARENGO, IOWA.

HENRY SPRAGUE came to this city from his advanced trading-post, some thirty-five miles above this place, on the Iowa river just above what is now called Raven Creek. He had selected this as a point for trading with the Indians. The company consisted of his father, brother, wife, and himself. After having constructed his temporary log shanty, he returned to his former home at Brush Run (now Homestead), for some implement that had been forgotten. A trip there and back (eighty miles) would now be considered quite an undertaking. (When he came back here it was late in the fall of 1848.) It was snowing very fast—large, plushy flakes fell so fast that he feared his progress would be impeded. He tried to buy a pair of snow-shoes from an old Indian here; but, failing in this, he bought some coffee, sugar, and tea at the only store we then had in this place, and started homeward.

After he left this place it ceased snowing; a light, drizzling rain set in, and the snow became soft and slushy. He had nothing on his feet but an old pair of moccasins. Being an excellent walker he made good headway. About four o'clock it commenced growing cold. He was then about ten miles from home. He ran down hill and walked up to keep warm. He found the buckskin moccasins were freezing to his feet. He thought he would stop and take them off; he proceeded to do so, but found on examining his pockets, that he had no knife. He tried to open the firmly tied knots with his teeth. Failing in this, he tried to arise and walk; but found that his feet were so frozen it was impossible to do so. He actually crawled some five miles on his hands and knees, and reached home that night. Unfortunately, they applied warm water to his feet, to get the moccasins off. The consequence was, his feet were ruined. He has hobbled around for the last twenty years, on his knees.

As his wife was about to be confined, they concluded that it would be best to construct a hand-sled, and try to reach home on the Iowa river, on the ice, and abandon their trading-post. Next morning they started on their long journey, following the serpentine course of the river, probably about seventy-five miles.

About ten miles above this place, on the <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> Iowa river, his wife was delivered of a large, healthy boy, which has since grown to be a man. There was no one present that dreary night, but her husband, his father, and brother; the two latter only could render her any aid, and she was more successful than many under similar circumstances, in kingly palaces.

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