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Rumors of War

This facetious account of mustering the Scott County militia to defend the Territory of Iowa in the boundary dispute with Missouri is adapted for THE PALIMPSEST from Fifty Years in Iowa by J. M. D. Burrows, a pioneer merchant in Davenport. — THE EDITOR.

In December, 1839, we were called upon by Governor Robert Lucas to volunteer to march to the Missouri line, and drive the Missourians from our sacred soil. We were all fighting men in those days. The war between Rockingham and Davenport for the county seat was suspended for a short time, and we all united to resist this invasion of our Territory by the miserable Missourians. Davenport was selected as headquarters for Scott County.

Nearly every man in the county was present to be enrolled in the Iowa army on the appointed day. Our colonel, Sam Hedges, made a patriotic speech. But what a sorry lot of soldiers he had to drill! Not having any guns, many came with pitchforks, scythes, hoes, and clubs. One man had a sheet-iron sword, six or seven feet long. Many were drunk, and all were noisy and dis-

posed to make fun of our officers. The whole affair was taken lightly. At last Colonel Hedges, thoroughly exasperated, ordered out of the ranks all who were drunk or improperly armed.

We who remained were getting hungry and asked for rations. When we were informed that we would have to furnish our own blankets, whisky, and hardtack, which the government would refund at some future day, we objected. We were willing to shed our blood for our beloved Territory and, if necessary, to kill a few hundred Missourians, but we were not going to do that and board ourselves besides.

At this juncture, we saw approaching, in solemn column, our fellow soldiers who had been discharged, led by the man with the sheet-iron sword. They charged on us and, notwithstanding we were three to their one, we were badly defeated and scattered in every direction. The Knight of the Sheet-Iron Sword made for Colonel Hedges, and nothing but the colonel's superior fleetness saved him. As he ran he informed us that we could go home; nothing more would be done until he received further orders.

J. M. D. BURROWS