

Early Settlement and Growth of Western Iowa, Or Reminiscences

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Deputy United States Surveyors from 1836 to 1845, shows that some errors have crept into the recent map, and that some of the criticisms are justified. The map was drawn from blue prints furnished from the office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. In a later number we hope to give the exact or proximate boundaries of the various cessions of territory within the State, for the purpose of opening them to settlement, based on the field notes of the original surveys made under instructions from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

Early Settlement and Growth of Western Iowa, or Reminiscences, by Rev. John Todd of Tabor, Iowa. Des Moines, The Historical Department of Iowa, 1906, pp. 203.

The author of this interesting and valuable contribution to Iowa history was of Scotch-Irish stock, and brought into his life-work the sturdy elements which equally with the principles of the Puritans, of the Huguenots, and the Quakers, have made America the homeland of Liberty and of an advancing civilization. He landed upon the rich lands of the Missouri Bottom at Civil Bend, in October, 1848, moved to the high lands near Tabor in April, 1852, and for forty-five years was a leader in transforming what had recently been an Indian wilderness into the cultivated fields and comfortable homes and pleasant cities and villages of American people. He threw his whole ardent nature and all the vigor of his quick and enlightened mind into the advancement of morality and religion, of industry and enterprise, with an unbounded zeal for temperance and human freedom, and for the establishment of schools and churches and Tabor College. Educated at Oberlin, Ohio, and thoroughly imbued with its spirit of sacrifice and self-denial, he was always looking forward and moving onward for the improvement of human life both in the individual man and in the social order of the world. In missionary work an independent, making the essentials of religion his supreme concern, he affiliated with preachers of other denominations, and labored harmoniously with the Rev. William Simpson, the first Methodist, and the Rev. Launcelot Graham Bell, the first Presbyterian minister, on the Missouri slope.

In 1854, the repeal of the compromise of 1820, that admitted Missouri into the Union as a slave state and prohibited slavery west of it, proved a prelude to the civil war of 1861-'5. The repeal broke up the old Whig and Democratic parties, and led to the election of James W. Grimes as Governor of Iowa. He had canvassed the State in opposition to the repeal, and was elected on that issue. Upon learning that citizens of Iowa who had moved to Kansas were being spoiled and robbed by the minions of slavery, and that neither the authorities of the Territory nor of the Federal Government would give them the protection of law, Governor Grimes, August, 1856, wrote President Buchanan a letter of remonstrance, in which he stated that it would be the right and duty of the State of Iowa to protect her former citizens in Kansas, if the National Government failed to perform that duty. The Governor expressed

the same opinion in his message to the Legislature of Iowa, Dec. 1, 1856. The people of the State concurred in that opinion, and sent contributions for the relief and protection of those suffering in Kansas. Similar sympathy was felt throughout the North for the Free State settlers in Kansas, and companies of men went forward to join them. The Slave Power, however, had blocked the ordinary roads to Kansas through Missouri and up the Missouri river against Free State men, and there was no way for them to reach Kansas but through Iowa. In this emergency, Tabor as the nearest point to Kansas, in Iowa, where there was a strong body of friendly people, became a rendezvous for those on their way thither. Here John Brown found shelter and assistance from time to time, and his arms and stores were securely housed. Here came General James H. Lane and Samuel C. Pomeroy, afterwards U. S. Senators from Kansas, Dr. Samuel G. Howe (his wife the author of the finest lyric of the civil war), of Boston, Thaddeus Hyatt of New York, Thomas W. Higginson, and agents of various Kansas Aid Societies. Persons were passing through Tabor almost daily, alone or in companies. The lathstrings were always out, and much of the time houses and granaries and hay-mows were occupied. Provisions were free and plenty and without price. Arms and ammunition were stowed in barns, corncribs, and cellars. John Todd had one brass cannon in his hay-mow, another on wheels in his wagon-shed, and boxes of clothing, ammunition, muskets, sabres, and twenty boxes of Sharpe's rifles in his cellar one winter. Later, when John Brown began to "carry the war into Africa," bringing off slaves from Missouri, killing their masters in the contest, the citizens of Tabor at a public meeting, to which John Brown came, Feb. 7, 1859, resolved "That while we sympathize with the oppressed, and will do all that we conscientiously can to help them in their efforts for freedom, nevertheless we have no sympathy with those who go to slave states to entice away slaves and take property or life when necessary to attain that end." John Brown left the meeting grieved and indignant before this resolution was adopted. He hastened off with the eleven slaves he had captured to Grinnell and Springdale, where he had a cordial reception. Furnished with supplies of food and clothing, and with railroad transportation, he saw them on the twelfth of March upon the ferry across the Detroit river for Canada. He was again at Tabor on a flying trip less than two months before his mad and fatal foray at Harper's Ferry. He said on leaving the same Sabbath day, "Enough said about 'bleeding Kansas;' I intend to make a bloody spot at another point; I don't say where, but you'll hear from me." To John Todd in after years this daring deed seemed "one link in the long chain of events which hastened the overthrow of legalized American slavery." In 1864, he was chaplain of the Forty-sixth Iowa Infantry, and served in western Tennessee.

In addition to a plain, unvarnished tale of these things, the volume has thrilling narratives of the author's pioneer life, his missionary travels, adventures as a conductor on the "Underground Railroad," etc. It is prefaced by a sketch of his life by his son, Prof. J. E. Todd, of Vermilion, South Dakota. Printed by the Republican Printing Company of Cedar Rapids, it is in evidence that in the art of book-making Iowa can produce work equal in style and finish to that of the best publishers in the United States.

The author, p. 184, represents the Iowa tribe of Indians as having come with the Sacs and Foxes into Iowa. The truth is that they were here much earlier. They were of Dakota stock, and had villages on the river that bears their name, before the Sacs and Foxes came over from the Lakes and Green Bay to the Mississippi. On p. 194, the date 1824 should be 1804.

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