

McCarver and Tacoma

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NEW PUBLICATIONS.

McCarver and Tacoma, by Thomas W. Prosch. Lowman & Hanford, Seattle, 1906, pp. 198.

The history of that part of the United States which lies west of the Mississippi river, if not of equal, is of common importance with that which lies east. It is the history of a larger area, with a greater diversity of soil, climate, and resources, and a larger population eventually. It shows a march of civilization unprecedented in any former age. In this progress, it is a notable fact that pioneers of Iowa were also pioneers in Oregon and California and in the intervening States.

This book records the life of one of the founders of a city upon the Mississippi river, Burlington, Iowa, who was also one of the founders of a city upon Puget Sound, Tacoma, State of Washington.

Morton Matthew McCarver was born on a farm near Lexington, Ky., Jan. 14, 1807. After adventures in his youth down the Ohio and the Mississippi on a flatboat to New Orleans, and tramps in Texas, he came to Illinois in 1829. Upon the opening of Iowa to settlement, June 1, 1833, he made a claim with his brothers-in-law, Simpson S. White and Amzi Doolittle, to the site of Flint Hills, an old Indian trading post, and laid out a town. He engaged in business there, and was one of the Commissioners under the acts of Congress, 1836-7, for laying out Burlington and other towns on the Mississippi river. In 1839, Governor Lucas appointed him Commissary General of the Territorial militia. In 1842 he went overland to Oregon, and the following year with Peter H. Burnett laid out Linnton, on the Willamette, which he named for Lewis F. Linn, half-brother of Henry Dodge, and which he expected would be a capital city; but the fates carried that fortune ten miles up the river to Portland. He was an enterprising citizen in Oregon, developing its capacity for grain and fruit culture by experiments on his farm, and publishing the results in newspapers of a wide circulation. In 1844, under the first popular government in Oregon, he was a member of the Legislative Committee of Nine, and was elected Speaker. He gave his influence for the prohibition of slavery and of the liquor-traffic.

This volume, pp. 32-'3, contains a letter written soon after his arrival in Oregon to A. C. Dodge. Among the papers preserved by the latter is another of his letters, which shows the sympathy that existed between them.

OREGON CITY, April 25, 1847.

MY DEAR FRIEND: For I shall still call you so, although I have not received the first scratch of a pen from you since my arrival in Oregon, but I do not expect communications from active politicians; you have your hands full, no doubt, with your immediate constituents, but permit an old friend who can never forget you to trouble you for your personal influence in his behalf.

You recollect I received a recommendation for the office of Indian Agency by a majority of the members of the Iowa Legislature, and

since then by a majority of the Oregon Legislature and by the principal officers of this Government; the latter was forwarded to you. It strikes me that these are claims, together with those which may be urged by my friends in Iowa, that the President would not willingly disregard. Let me then bespeak your kind influence in this matter. If there is any opposition to the appointment I am not aware of it, although I have taken a warm part in politics, measuring arms, as will be perceived from a perusal of the *Oregon Spectator*, with the champions of the Hudson Bay Company; yet if there has been opposition, it must come from this source, and is done in a clandestine manner. I suppose that most of the appointments have already been made, as we learn that a treaty has been concluded in relation to the boundary question, and cannot think that the claims of your old friend have been neglected. I am not tenacious about having the Indian Agency; the Marshal's place, or that of Commissioner for settling land claims, or Register or Receiver in the Land Office, would be equally acceptable. As you are personally acquainted with all the members of the new State of Iowa, be pleased to give me your kind assistance in this matter. I have not succeeded in my town operations at Linnton as I expected. Mrs. McCarver died last fall with the consumption; my little ones are in fine health.

I am very respectfully your obedient servant,

M. M. MCCARVER.

Hon. A. C. Dodge, Burlington, Iowa.

In further illustration of the connection between Iowa and Oregon pioneers, it is worthy of remembrance that W. W. Chapman, a law-partner of James W. Grimes, and the first delegate to Congress from Iowa, and Berryman Jennings, a brother of Mrs. McCarver, and teacher of the first school in Iowa, were Oregon pioneers; and also that Samuel R. Thurston, a Burlington attorney, and editor of the *Burlington Gazette*, became the first delegate to Congress from Oregon (ANNALS OF IOWA, iv., 624-'5).

Upon the discovery of gold in California, 1848, General McCarver joined in the rush thither, going over the Cascade Mountains, with pack-horses. After working a mining claim on Feather river, he associated with the Sutters in laying out the town of Sacramento and went into business there. He was a member of the Convention which formed the Constitution of California, and supported the prohibition of slavery and of lotteries, the disfranchisement of any person who engaged in a duel, a liberal provision for public schools, biennial sessions of the legislature, and economy in public affairs. After a few stirring years in California, having both seasons of great gains and reverses of fortune, he returned to Oregon, and continued to employ his energies in many enterprises to the end of his days in 1875. As the founder of the beautiful city of Tacoma, laying out its lots and streets and parks with fine taste and skill, his name is assured of a lasting memory. This volume is written by his son-in-law, and contains many interesting personal details that give a graphic view of a unique period in American history.

W. S.

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