

The Blotting Out of An Iowa Town

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THE BLOTTING OUT OF AN IOWA TOWN.

BY THE LATE CAPT. S. B. EVANS.

“*Aqui fue Grenada!*” This was the terribly suggestive legend inscribed on bulls’ hides and erected on the ruins of the city destroyed by the rough riders of William Walker, the gray-eyed man of destiny, during the invasion of Nicaragua by the filibusters. Yet there were ruins of Grenada to mark the spot and to invite the rebuilding of another city greater than the one that had perished through the calamities of war. There was an Iowa town, however, that at one time was of considerable importance and now there is not a vestige of it remaining. There is nothing to identify the site except tradition and the records that confine its limits within certain boundaries. There are no remains; no foundation walls; no more to mark the site than if it had been but an Indian village of wickiups. The town was known as Iowaville, situated on the borders of Van Buren and Davis counties. If its location is to be preserved it is well that its site be recorded in *The Annals*, and that there be set up a tablet of stone on which may be inscribed, “Here was Iowaville!”

The village of Iowaville was laid out by a company in 1838. The Sac and Fox Indians had sold 1,250,000 acres of land in this vicinity and reserved two years’ time on the land, after which James Jordan, William Phelps and John Tolman bought the Indians’ time for \$3,000. The sale of time was made in the fall of 1837; in 1838 the Indians vacated and in the spring of that year the place known as Iowaville was laid off. Black Hawk and a few Indians remained. Phelps and Jordan were the earliest settlers, they having come in the fall of 1837. Jordan had the first trading-post. The next settlers to arrive were Joel T. Avery, John Newport, Job Carter and Crittenden Forquiraen, and their families, and Peter Avery, William Avery and William McMullen, unmarried.

William Avery was the first postmaster, the mail being brought in on horseback. Lanson Smith, who came later, was the first physician. The first blacksmith was Robert Rathbun. The first boat up the river as far as this point was the "Pavilion," belonging to the American Fur Company. This boat arrived in 1838. The death of Daniel McMullen was the first in the place. Minerva Forquraen was the first child born. Thomas Gardner and Sevidia Moody were the first couple married. William Avery was the first justice and William Kirkman the first constable. Missionaries preached here, but there was never a church building erected. A schoolhouse was built in 1843 and a Mr. Clark was the first teacher. From Hon. Robert Sloan, who in his early years was a school-teacher in Iowaville, I get the following: William and Peter Avery made their first appearance in the region in 1832; they were agents of the American Fur Company and established a trading-post on the river opposite the site of Iowaville; building a blockhouse there for protection. They continued this trading-post until the year 1842, when the new purchase was open. The Indians removed as far away as Monroe county and spent a winter there, on a creek that has since been known as Avery Creek. The Avery brothers removed with the Indians that winter and went with them to Indian Territory. James Jordan, who is so prominently identified with Iowaville, came to Iowa or Wisconsin Territory in 1819, first stopping at St. Francisville, Missouri.

Black Hawk's residence was on the Des Moines river and opposite Iowaville. The little town of Black Hawk was situated there and it was there that A. J. Davis had his famous distillery which was the foundation of the fortune that his heirs fought over several years ago in Montana. In 1851 there was high water until the water covered the prairie in the locality of Iowaville. The river was about three miles wide. The north and south line of the Black Hawk purchase ran through the town. Iowaville flourished in 1855-56, but subsequently the D. V. railroad was established and it began to go down. In 1870 the town of Eldon sprang up and Iowaville disappeared. Until the year 1860 the council ring of Black Hawk was preserved at the western boundary of Iowa-

ville, about three blocks from the river. The diameter was 40x70 feet, egg or oval shape, thrown up on the outer diameter about one foot. There were two entrances; one was the head of the council ring, where sat the chief.

Iowaville was situated on that part of the west side of section 7 lying north of the river—a small part of section 7 is south of the river on which the town of Black Hawk was located. The western line of Black Hawk and Iowaville is the western line of that section. The old ferry was immediately across the line and in Davis county.

The decadence of Iowaville was gradual; it never numbered more than 200 population, yet there were men of mark connected with its history. Among these ought to be numbered Hon. Henry Clay Caldwell, the distinguished federal jurist; Hon. Robert Sloan, the honest and able Iowa jurist; James Jordan, the Indian trader, and A. J. Davis.

Iowaville is blotted out entirely; the site is occupied by the corn fields of Capt. Abraham Hinkle, who married one of the daughters of James Jordan. It would be a gracious act on the part of the State to secure a few feet of ground in the center of the old site and erect there an enduring monument on which should be inscribed: "Here was Iowaville."

OTTUMWA, IOWA.

THE MORMON DELUSION: The Fort Desmoines (Iowa) papers give some details of the passage of a band of Mormon emigrants through that place a few days since. In the broiling sun, these poor creatures, the majority of whom are women, moved along slowly in Indian file, dragging behind them in little carts the necessaries for the journey, sometimes two women dragging the cart, at other times a man and a woman together. The company was from Europe, and mostly consisted of English people, who had left their comfortable homes, their early associations, and all the attachments which render the English people such unwilling emigrants, and here, with a journey of more than a thousand miles before them, of which 200 would be through a perfect desert, without shade or water, these miserably-deluded people were trudging forward.—*St. Charles City Intelligencer*, Sept. 18, 1856.

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