

## Clayton County As Described to a Resident of Connecticut in 1838

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business life of Boston who has died in recent years." Mr. James J. Hill said: "He was a great man, his was the greatest railroad intellect of the country. He did a great work and there is no one to fill his place." Another kindred spirit familiar with many men esteemed great called him, "One of the truest men and finest gentlemen God has given to America." Many men of all classes and conditions have testified their high regard for him in words true and inspiring, but no tribute so quickens the memory of those who knew him or so stirs their imagination as that, beautiful in its fitness and simplicity, which by the suspension of all the work of the railroad at the hour of his funeral enabled all those employed in its service, though scattered along its thousand leagues, at once and by a common impulse to pay their reverent homage and together to say farewell to him whom for these many years they had regarded as peculiarly their own.

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CLAYTON COUNTY AS DESCRIBED TO A RESIDENT OF CONNECTICUT IN 1838.

Clayton Co., July 7th, 1838.

Dear Father:

\* \* \* I am in latitude  $42\frac{1}{2}$ , a considerable distance north of what I intended when I left home. One great reason why I came thus far north is that on inquiry of many who had lived in the southern part of Indiana and Illinois, I found that it was unhealthy on all those flat extensive prairies. Besides all the good land was taken up. And the same reason which made it unhealthy for man would render it difficult keeping sheep, one object which I had in view when I left home. And to conclude my reasons for stopping here it is in the vicinity of the lead mines, where there are a great many persons engaged in mining, which makes a good market for everything which the farmer can raise so long as there is a market on the Mississippi River. I suppose it is as good a farming country as it is farther south, and the lead mines are said to be richer than the gold mines of Mexico, that is, there is more profit in working them.

The claim I have to the land I am improving is like all the other claims in the Territory (perhaps thirty or forty thousand in number). There is not a man in Ioway Territory who has a deed of his lands. There is a sort of combination among the settlers to support one another at the day of sale, and keep the spec-

ulators out. So sure are they of the lands they claim that they make as much improvement as though they now had government deeds for them. So great is the number whose interest is to keep the speculator out, he durst not come, neither would it be safe for him to bid on a settler's improvement, for it is the avowed intention of many of them to protect their's with rifle, and defend their claims at the hazard of their lives. It was tried at Chicago and the squatters came off victorious. I write this, not that I approve of the measure, but seeing that the measure is adopted to receive its benefits. Should the lands come into market before I have time to make money to enter it I shall look at home for a supply for the purpose.

I have bought me part of a prairie team and am breaking prairie with another man, and intend putting in spring wheat and oats in the spring, and fencing this winter. I am at present boarding in the family of an eastern doctor, but think I shall soon follow the custom of the country, which is keeping bachelor's hall.

This is to all appearances as fine a sheep country as ever saw the light of the sun. When the country becomes a little older and the wild animals thinned off, I think I shall enter into wool growing, as I think there is a considerable extent of country that will be fine for this business. All the grasses that will grow at the East will flourish here in abundance. It produces white clover in abundance. The natural grass is not such as I supposed, tall as a man's head. It is not more than knee high on the dry prairie. The tall grass is on the low, wet land or close in the edge of the timber. I could as easily have summered 10,000 sheep as father can five hundred. The soil is a rich black loam with good wood and fine springs of water, which two things are greatly needed in a great many parts of the country farther south.

I think now that I shall not come home until the land comes into market. Ioway extends west of the Mississippi about one hundred miles and from Missouri about four hundred miles. It has lately been set off from Wisconsin Territory.

From your affectionate son,

GEORGE A. WHITMAN.

Turkey River Post Office,  
Thirty Miles Above Dubuque, Iowa Territory.

CORRECTION of second and third sentences on page 296, *Annals*, January, 1908, to read as follows: Mr. Benton had been defeated for re-election to that body, because of his opposing measures that led, under Mr. Douglas, to the repeal of the Compromise, under which Missouri came into the Union. Mr. Benton regarded that repeal as a breach of faith, an act of dishonor.

W. S.

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