

## The Lee County Pioneers

ISSN 0003-4827

Material in the public domain. No restrictions on use.



This work has been identified with a [Creative Commons Public Domain Mark 1.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

---

### Recommended Citation

"The Lee County Pioneers." *The Annals of Iowa* 13 (1921), 136-137.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.4296>

Hosted by [Iowa Research Online](https://www.iowaresearchonline.org/)

## THE LEE COUNTY PIONEERS

FROM GREGG'S DOLLAR MONTHLY AND OLD-SETTLERS' MEMORIAL,  
VOL. I, No. 4, AUGUST, 1873

The Lee County pioneers have advertised to hold their next reunion at Sargent's Grove, about ten miles from Keokuk, up the Des Moines Valley road, on Friday, August 8. We learn that preparations are being made to have a large meeting and a good time.

Pioneers from neighboring counties have been invited to join them. We know of at least one such, who has never had the pleasure of meeting with them before, who intends to be there; one who was among them for a brief period in the days of yore, in the days of Black Hawk and Keokuk, and when the names of "Henry Dodge, Governor," and "William B. Slaughter, Secretary," gave force to all executive documents in the then Territory of Wisconsin.

The Des Moines at that day was a mere rivulet, especially in September and October, and even the Gate City on the bluff, that has since become so famous over the whole world, had no legal existence. Bushes and briars and rocks and snakes occupied the bluffs, and the Indian wy-ke-ups dotted the river shore, while John Gaines dispensed "something soothing" near the steamboat landing.

Then the Missouri Fulton, the Ariel, the Monsoon, the Boreas, and the Rosalie, with other boats, traversed the Mississippi, carrying flour and merchandise from Cincinnati and St. Louis, and lead from Galena and Dubuque, the latter one of the far off outposts of civilization.

Then, too, the Half-breed Claim War had not begun, but was only brewing; and "New York companies," and "settlers," and "decree men," and half-breeds in blankets, and half-breeds in calico dresses, and "Reddick heirs," had not begun to wool and worry each other.

Then, too, the chief occupation of all who hadn't something else to do was to lay out towns and plant stakes for future cities; and scores of New Yorks and Londons went up like kites, to come down afterwards like sticks.

But those times are past, though not forgotten. And now, on August 8, 1873—more than a third of a century afterwards—the few remaining ones of the actors of those early days, are to meet together in one of the great state of Iowa's beautiful groves, to live those scenes over again; to join hands that have long been parted; to refresh old memories; to laugh at the ludicrous side of the past, and to drop a tear over the graves of departed ones that have fallen by the way.

It will be good to be there.

---

#### FOLKLORE CONCERNING THE MEADOW LARK

The meadow lark is a great favorite with the people of the Dakota nation. An old man of that nation was asked if his people ever used the meadow lark for food. He said they did not. When it was said that white men sometimes eat them, he said he knew that. Then, when asked why Dakotas would not eat the meadow lark, he said, "We think too much of them. They are our friends." They call the meadow lark "the bird of promise," and "the bird of many gifts," for they say it promises good things to its friends, the Dakotas. They apply words of the Dakota language to the songs of the bird. They say it calls to the people with promises, words of counsel, advice, encouragement, and good cheer. They say it gives words of advice on all manner of subjects. One of the things which it used to sing out to the people was "Koda, pte kizhozho," i. e., "Friends, I whistle for the buffalo," that is to say, it would whistle to call the buffalo in order that its friends, the Dakotas, might supply their needs of meat and clothing.

The white people speak of the United States government as "Uncle Sam," but the people of the Dakota nation call the government "Tunkashila," which means "Grandfather," a term of highest respect. In the summer of 1918, while the United States was at war with Germany, many of the Dakotas said they heard "the bird of promise" singing "Tunkashila ohiyelo!" "Ohiyelo" means "will be victorious," or "will have victory," so the meadow lark, "the bird of promise," was singing to them, "The United States will have the victory!"

—MELVIN RANDOLPH GILMORE

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.