

## A History of the County of Montgomery

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during the second year of Mr. Lucas's tenure as Governor of Iowa, the quarrel with Missouri assumed an acute form. It now became his duty to maintain the rights of a Territory against the claims of a State. In the case of Michigan the people of the Territory for a time repudiated the authority of the United States and set up an independent government of their own. Mr. Lucas was careful not to make this mistake. He secured the aid of the co-operation and authority of the general government at every stage in the excited controversy, so that the quarrel should at no time appear as an affair of the Territory, but rather as that of the United States itself. The Iowa dispute was not finally settled until a State government had displaced the Territorial organization and suit was brought in the Supreme Court of the United States. That court supported the claim of Iowa. In both disputes, therefore, our Governor made good his position.

It would be difficult to find a book which more aptly illustrates than does this one the close relation of history to biography. The history of the life of Robert Lucas involves the political history of the State of Ohio from the beginning of the century to 1837, and the history of Iowa to the middle of the century or to the death of Lucas in 1853. Every chapter is full of interest in that it adds the personal touch to the interesting and important facts entering into the process of state-building in the West.

Iowa College.

JESSE MACY.

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*A History of the County of Montgomery, from the Earliest Days to 1905. By W. W. Merritt, Sr. Published by the Express Publishing Company, Red Oak, Iowa. 1905.*

Those who have in any way been interested in the history of localities in this State have doubtless learned something of the faulty character of most of our county histories. They have been extremely slipshod affairs, which few would purchase for their libraries. True, there are exceptions, but out of the entire number, the works of real merit may be counted on the fingers of one hand. A large part of many volumes is taken up with general history of some sort, having no reference to any particular county. This matter is used as a preface to all the volumes issued by one publishing house. The biographical matter, often accompanied by portraits of the local magnates, is usually compiled by illiterate fellows who are out of a job and are hired to procure answers to a certain set of questions because they will work for very low wages. A price is set upon each sketch and portrait and only those who pay liberally are thus honored. One of these peripatetic biographers once called upon Senator James Harlan with a proposition to immortalize him with a portrait and sketch of his life. "Do you propose to include Presley Saunders in your book?" queried the Senator. "No, Sir!" responded the biographer. "He is dead, and there seems to be no one to pay for these things." "Then," said the Senator, "please leave me out. I do not wish to appear in any history of Henry county which omits the name of Presley Saunders," and the biographer went his way. Presley Saunders was one of the earliest settlers and merchants of Henry county, a good man whose memory is revered by all the aged people of that region, and a brother of Alvin Saunders who was later on Governor and United States Senator from Nebraska. He was one of the most important factors in settling Henry county.

But a better day has arrived touching the qualities of Iowa county histories. This work on the rich and beautiful county of Montgomery

will take a high place in this department of our historical literature. Its author is Hon. W. W. Merritt, a man of education and ability, who has resided in that county nearly all the time since its organization. Of all the events which he has recorded he can well say, "All of which I saw, and part of which I was." He has been an active participant in building up the local institutions, churches and schools, and has been active at times in the politics of the county and of that part of Iowa. He is a man well known throughout the southwestern quarter of the State and enjoys the confidence of all who know him. His book, lately issued, records every local event of importance and shows the progress of the county from its earliest days to the present time. One of its attractive features is 100 fine half-tone portraits, every one of which is inserted as a matter of personal justice to the party represented. The familiar "graft" of securing pay for these portraits has been eliminated. The book was manufactured by the Express Publishing Company of Red Oak, which is noted throughout the United States for its fine calendar printing. While its patronage will to a large extent be local, it will be found necessarily to contain much historical, biographical and genealogical information relating to Iowa and the country at large. We feel that both the author and publishers are to be congratulated upon this advanced step in placing upon record in readable and attractive form the history of their county. The book is, however, sadly marred by its lack of an index. Otherwise, we can give it high commendation.

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A LUCKY EDITOR.—Well, our turn has come at last; we always thought it would; we had faith; but were getting a little impatient for *sight* too. On Monday, July 27, who should come to see us but John Jessup, of Moresville, known to everybody in the town who eats cheese, and to sweeten an acquaintance he brought a box of honey—white as snow, containing some ten pounds! Ah, those Moresville farmers! they have the name of doing things up in the very best style, and we begin to believe it! If anybody else has proof to present, we are open to conviction. And now, speaking of honey, the transition to sugar is very natural; and we confess our fault in failing to notice a subscription which we received from James Spray of Bridgeport, last spring, of ten pounds of maple sugar of his own manufacture, which was the most beautiful we ever beheld, and our tongue certainly agreed with our eyes in the verdict.—Indianapolis, *Western Farmer & Gardener*, August 1, 1846.

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