

ORIGIN of the NAME "CHARITON"

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Buckingham by James Harlan, distinguished United States senator from Iowa, who afterward became a member of the cabinet of President Lincoln. There were also held a number of debates from time to time by rival candidates for Congress and for the state legislature.

The schoolhouse was the scene of patriotic meetings at the outbreak of the Civil War. It was at Old Buckingham that a north Tama company was organized for war service by W. H. Stivers of Toledo, which became a part of the Fourteenth Iowa Infantry and saw its first active service in the battle of Fort Donelson, later being engaged at Shiloh, Vicksburg, and the disastrous Red River campaign under Banks. The regiment was mustered out November 16, 1864. Many of the north Tama soldiers lost their lives in the South.

Soon after the fall of Fort Sumpter in 1861 a military company was formed in north Tama which drilled at Old Buckingham and West Union. At the first call for volunteers several boys enlisted in nearby cities. The first war meeting in the north end of the county was in September, 1861, at the Buckingham schoolhouse. Nearly every man in the settlement was there. Speeches were made by Captain Stivers, Mr. Connell, J. T. Ames and others. There was no wild cheering or applause, but rather a serious deliberation upon the momentous war question. John Gaston, Peter Wilson and B. F. Thomas signed the muster roll that night. Next day they were joined by John McKune, John R. Felter and others. A week later the company was called together to Toledo, and the trip to the county seat was made in farm wagons. After a dinner served by the church ladies and after the final parting with friends, the journey by wagon was continued to Marengo, the nearest railroad station. The company entrained there for Davenport, where the Fourteenth Iowa regiment was mobilized.

Tama County with less than 800 men fit for war service, sent nearly 400 to fight for the Union, and north Tama, with scarcely 150 men of military age, sent 80. And while the boys were with the colors the women of the settlement helped with the work at the plow, reaper and threshing machine.

ORIGIN OF THE NAME "CHARITON"

Inquiry is frequently made concerning the origin of the name "Chariton." In 1804 when the Lewis and Clark expedition went up the Missouri River and passed the mouths of the Chariton rivers they noted the name in the diary they kept descriptive of their trip. In the "History of the Expedition of Lewis and Clark" by Elliott Coues, the original diary is published and

copious notes are made by the editor. On the origin of this name we quote from Vol. I, pages 19 and 31 as follows:

June 10th. [1804] We passed Deer creek; and, at the distance of five miles, the two rivers called by the French the two Charatons,⁴² a corruption of Thieraton [read Charretin], the first of which is 30, the second 70 yards wide.

June 24th. [1804.] We passed, at eight miles' distance, Hay cabin creek, coming in from the south, about 20 yards wide, and so called from camps of straw built on it. To the north are some rocks projecting into the river, and a little beyond them is a creek on the same side, called Charaton Scarty⁶⁶—that is, Charaton like the Otter.

⁴²This word has never been satisfactorily explained; certainly the explanation attempted in the text is itself a misprint or other blunder. It might be either Charleton or Charlatan; the former is given on p. 347 of the orig. ed.; the latter would match Gasconade, as applied to another river. The various forms in which we find it add to our perplexity. Thus, it is the Chératon of Collet in 1796; Charleton is Perrin du Lac's style, 1805; Lewis' map of 1806 has Charleton; Clark's 1814, prints the two Charatons; Brackenridge, 1814, gives Chareton or Chariton, p. 211 and p. 265; Long, 1823, Charaton; Nicollet's map, 1843, Chariton; some of the spurious Lewis and Clark books make it Chareturn; Gass strikes out for himself with the two Charlottes, p. 16; Pike, 1810, is satisfied with two Charlatans; Lapie, 1821, has but one river, which he calls R. des deux Charlatans. I only discovered what it ought to be on consulting L. and C.'s MSS. (See note under date of June 24th.) The name has now settled into the form Chariton for both rivers, for the county, and for a town. The two rivers were formerly distinguished in French as Grand and Petit Charletons (so Perrin du Lac); they have also been called les rivieres aux Racines by D'Anville, 1752, though his map runs them separately into the Missouri. These rivers reach the Missouri through Chariton Co., with Howard Co. adjoining at the confluence. The Chicago and Alton R. R. crosses the Missouri a little below this point, and both Charitons are crossed above by the Wabash, St. Louis and Pacific R. R. The streams are straightish, north-south, parallel with many branches of the Grand River, which comes into the Missouri a little higher up. This is the main drainage into the Missouri of the rise to 1,000 feet to the west and north. East of the Charitons the drainage is into the Mississippi.

⁶⁶See note at date of June 10th. Since that was penned, I have come into possession of all the original manuscripts of Lewis and Clark which Nicholas Biddle had when he wrote this book, and several other field note-books which were at that time in the hands of President Jefferson. These throw new light on the puzzling word "Charaton." On June 10th, Clark wrote: "passed the two Rivers of Charletons which mouth together"; on June 24th, he wrote: "Charretton Carta," as the name of the creek now in question. Lewis' MSS. yield us "Charetton" in one place and "Shariton" in another. Now when Biddle struck these snags he upset, and wrote a letter to Clark (now before me) dated July 7th, 1810, asking: "What is the real name & spelling of the stream called Sharriton Carta, and also the Two Charletons? Get some of the Frenchmen at St. Louis to put them down exactly as they should be printed." Clark's reply I never saw; the upshot as above printed has hitherto defied conjecture. But the meaning is now clear. For "Charaton Scarty" read Charretins écartés, i. e., two creeks, each named Charretin, which are separated or divergent in their courses, though emptying together into the Missouri. There are a pair of creeks in Clay Co. Mo., which exactly answer this description, and are in just the right place. Then for the attempted explanation, "like the Otter," read simply, "like the other," i. e., like the two other rivers called by the same name, having one mouth, though they are separated (écartés) in their courses. The word Charretin (also Chartin) will be found in any good French dictionary. It is a derivative of Charrette, which we have seen before as a place-name on the Missouri.

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