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Jones County

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Old time medicine show sent this young boy scurrying for home

(Ed. note: With the impending abandonment of all railroad trackage in Jones county, we are witnessing the passing of another era. This passing, although not as complete in the United States as the passing of other eras having an impact on our western mode of living, nevertheless is a passing, even if it is locally.

Many people living in our present "fast pace" society still remember the old "drummer", the wagon peddler, and a dozen other types of "hawkers", without whose visits to the rural and small settlements in years past would have left the early settlers (and not so early, in fact into the 1930s) sorely wanting. Many a very early pioneer wife, homesteading, and seemingly a million miles from the nearest civilization, stuck it out simply because she knew that every three to four months the old Calico, pots, pans, and notions peddler would be around, and having saved her butter and egg money, she could spend a dollar or two and brighten up the drab existence she and her family were faced with.

Not the least of these "hawkers" was the MEDICINE MAN, who brought his show to town, at least once a year, and if the town was known to be guillible, a medicine show passed through at least once every two months during spring, summer and early fall.

There are those still alive who will swear to the Almighty, if it had not been for "Doctor Sam" and his Elixir, coming just at the right time, Aunt Maude surely would have been done in, for she had suffered terribly from every ailment known to modern medicine, and had been told her days were numbered. She lived to be 97 and only because she had consumed large quantities of Doctor Sam's potion. The following story is by F. J. Clifford. He referred to the year 1904.)

PART OF EARLY AMUSEMENTS

It was generally supposed, at least by the people of this "neck o' the woods," that

the medicine show, that old-time creation so closely associated with our childhood days, was completely extinct -- gone the way of the old square dance, the husking and quilting bees, the "barn-raisin's" and other interestingly helpful amusements of our early national life.

I speak of the medicine show being closely associated with our youthful days, as all children seem to gravitate to it just as naturally as steel filings to a magnet. Even the doctor's long and tedious harangue over the health-giving properties of his wonderful remedies is endured as with sleep-heavy eyes awake so as not to miss the thrilling ghost scene that is promised to close the program. Anybody knows who has ever attended one, that a medicine show is no show at all without at least one ghost scene in its list of nightly attractions. It may be that the word FREE, in large letters over the entrance, is the source of much of its drawing power, even for persons of mature years.

Well, this last show through town was set up just that way. A great big banner announcing the SHOW was FREE, put me and most of my friends to a running gait for home, yellin as soon as the house came in sight, "Maw -- O maw -- kin I go to the medicine show tonite -- It's FREE!!" It went without saying, the first answer was "no," and for any variety of reasons, but after an almost continual bombardment of "But Maw it's free" lasting upward of two hours or more, Maw would break down, after being told over and over that the other kids' Maws were lettin' them go. I always made sure of sitting up just as close to the wagon box stage as "Doc" would let me.

LAST SHOW IN TOWN

So it went with the LAST medicine show in town. I got there long before the scheduled opening, "so's not to miss none if it" -- and sat goggle-eyed staring at the curtain, back of which I imagined were a

thousand wonderful things, all the time uttering to my friends about what was hidden, "betcha this and betcha that".

This particular show had a black-faced comedian who beat on an old drum, did some acrobatic feats on the ground, and played a very old and beat up banjo.

Old Doc finally came out on stage, said a few words, cracked a few jokes, made mention of some of the new immigrant arrivals in Wayne, Castle Grove, Richland and other bordering townships, even using their names as though he knew them personally, and remarking what good people they were, and how the new arrivals would really make this part of Jones county sit up and take notice. He undoubtedly had inquired around shortly after his arrival in town, to learn the names of the folks he mentioned.

I remember the first thing he came out to sell was a shaving soap, a most wonderful preparation the way he described it.

"This soap is guaranteed to grow hair on the lip of any love-lorn youth" he shouted. (Mustaches were in style then also). "It will make the wiriest beard so soft you can shave with a butterknife, and make the skin as smooth as a baby's. If you get some in your mouth, you can eat it". And he proved his assertion by consuming handfuls from a huge foamy mass he had beaten up in a big bowl. The Negro balanced a great chunk of it in his two hands as he ate holes into it; the gobs of it sticking to his black face, which caused us kids to howl with laughter.

"It's good for the vision", he shouted as he rubbed handfuls of it in his eyes. "It's a cream, contains no alkali or acids. It makes old eyes like new. Throw away your glasses and buy this wonderful preparation, no matter if it's the last ten cents you have. In the years to come you will thank me for selling it".

OFFERS GOLD CHAIN

The people bought it right and left. When sales lagged, he made an announcement:

It was the last show as Doc failed to keep promise to return

"All those who have numbers on your packages, raise your hand and I will make you a present of this massive gold watch-chain", and he held a glittering chain up for all of us to see.

It was massive, all right -- one of those log-chain affairs that stretch across the vest from pocket to pocket. To make it more effective, he spread it across his own ample belly.

Men fought their way forward to get one of the baubles. So determined to be first up, I and my friends would have been trampled underfoot had we not made a lunge forward and rolled under the canvas skirt around the wagon bottom.

In memory I can see my Uncle Rufus, a tight-fisted old Scotsman from near Scotch Grove, his great frame allowing him to lean far over the heads of the rest, as with outstretched hand, he clutched for the shining chain, his lower jaw rising and falling in nervous eagerness.

Then came the BIG SELL. The Doctor now brought out his wonderful health giving "Kickapoo Indian remedies". "Guaranteed to break up a cold, cure the fever, heal cuts, bruises, and sprains; rejuvenate the stomach, and bring back vigor of youthful days".

I remember he sold scads of the stuff. When sales slowed up, he would display his gold chains and finger rings, and that brought a few more customers. He kept this up until I suppose he knew the cream had been skimmed and maybe most of the top milk.

GHOSTLY CLOSING

Now came the show, the closing scene I and my friends had been so patiently waiting for. Those who had dozed suddenly sat upright when old Doc bellowed, "Look-it'Look-it' Y'er gonna see the ghost in about a minit".

With the pulling of a dusty curtain, there sat the darky on a bench close by a crudely constructed gravestone, telling how he was hired one night to sleep in the old graveyard, cause he warn't no feered of ghosts and han'ts. "No Suh". Then out of the shadows from back of the stage came a white-draped thing, gliding silently along. Right behind the gravestone the thing reached out and plucked at the darky's sleeve, causing the black man to gasp and look about in amazement.

Let me tell you, I might have been 9 years old and "house trained" but not at that moment. I still remember how uncomfortable I was even though, had a shot rung out, I'd have beat a moon beam racing, but in anticipation of what was yet to come, a team of mules couldn't have drug me away.

About this time the darky announced that a magical power he had discovered in a song would render the ghost senseless and drive him away. The exact mumbling of a song I don't remember, but it had

something to do with loose bones fallin apart, and a big old ghost aint' so very smart.

SONG HAS NO EFFECT

I remember the song had no effect on the ghost; in fact, the ghost came forward and sat down alongside the darky. With this the old darky's eyes literally popped out of his head. We didn't breathe, didn't dare to. Sitting within five feet of this horror, we in no way wished to detract him, or cause him to leave the darky for us.

Finally the black man could stand it no longer, for by now the ghost was running his bony fingers through the man's hair, feeling of his ribs, and caressing his adam's apple. The darky bolted, running through the back curtain with the ghost in hot pursuit.

"Now you can believe this or not, but my hair stood right straight up, and my already miserable condition was at that instance given a boost, for the worse.

It was time to go home -- but I just couldn't. Where had the darky and the ghost gone? Lurking behind a tree just waiting for a nine year old to be caught alone along a dark street?

At that point the darky and the ghost again came from behind the curtain, and with this the very young began to whimper and some to yell.

I don't remember how it ended. Caught between a terrible fright and a miserable condition, I only remember leaving my spot in front of the wagon at a dead run, and never slowing up until I was safely inside the back porch.

The show stayed on for a few days. Yet today I will occasionally see one of the old medicine show baubles being sold at closing out household auctions. Most of these handed down the past two or three generations.

The show left town on a Monday morning, Doc and Darky sitting up front, chatting and waving at us kids, and as they passed by old Doc reached in his watch pocket, pulled out a solid gold ring (so he said) tossed it to me and hollered back. "Your a good young man, I'll see you next trip".

I never saw him again. In fact I don't remember of another medicine show ever coming back to town, or Jones county.

-- F. Clifford

The Trail Grows Dim

Dear Society:

I am interested in the Jones County History, especially the Rome township history. Specifically I need information from anyone on the families ROONEY, NORTON AND FOREMAN. Will trade information with any descendants of these families.

Sincerely,
Joanne Wilken
2005 Hillview Dr.
Marion, Iowa 52302



IN THIS EARLY day scene, Henry Winters is shown in his harness and buggy shop. The shop is believed to be in either Wyoming or Monmouth about 1902. If any reader knows for sure, the Historical Society will like to find out; please contact the editor of "The Review".

Farwell family moves to Illinois and back to Ohio before going west to new state of Ia

GROWTH OF THE COUNTRY

The country now took on a great growth and development. These hilly, wooded lands of New Hampshire made good pasturage for stock, and the cleared lands raised crops of grain. After the war there were markets for their stock and crops. Substantial colonial homes, some still standing, were built, and good barns. As the children grew up, and there were many, for there was no alarm over race suicide in those days, the girls married young, and settled on neighboring farms, or moved on to the frontier. The boys served their fathers until they were twenty one, then with no other capital than their training in frugality, honesty, and industry, their youth, and the education the common school had afforded them, they left home to make a way for themselves.

Absalom Farwell cast his first vote for president for Thomas Jefferson, who took his oath of office in the new capital of Washington. Thomas Jefferson had been president a year, when Zophar was born. George Washington had died three years before. During the year of his birth, Ohio became a state, and what is now Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, and part of the state of Michigan, was known as Indian Territory.

When Zophar was a year old, Napoleon sold to Jefferson Louisiana, over a million square miles of territory, lying west of the Mississippi River. On this land as far west as the Rocky Mountains there were only bands of roving Indians, and a few traders, and buffalo hunters. The United States paid France fifteen million dollars for this land, and the purchase was condemned by many, for not even the wisest men could realize the great growth that was coming to this country.

Zophar was only three years old when Lewis and Clark, sent by President Jefferson, explored the unknown north-western part of the country. They started from St. Louis, then a village of log cabins, and made their way in small boats to the head waters of the Missouri River, twelve hundred miles. Here they carried their boats through a cleft in the mountains, and finally came to a beautiful river, which proved to be the Columbia.

Captain Gray, of Boston, in 1717, while coasting along the shores of the Pacific Ocean, had discovered the mouth of this river, but Lewis and Clark did not know of this; it was an unknown river to them. They floated down the stream through forests of great trees for a month before they came to its mouth. On that morning a thick fog covered everything, and when it lifted, they saw before them the great Pacific Ocean . . . So it was, that the

United States came into possession of the great Oregon territory.

But the little boy, Zophar Farwell, knew nothing of these stirring events, and it is doubtful if his mother, Rebecca, his father, Absalom, or his grandfather, Richard, knew much about them. News still traveled slowly. As we all know there were no railroads, no daily papers, no telegraph messages. The post was brought by a man on horseback once or twice a week, in winter at longer intervals. The few papers that came to the settlement were passed from neighbor to neighbor and public affairs were discussed when the men met at the town meetings, between the Sunday church services, or at the country store. There were a few new settlers coming from the east and south, but the people traveled but little, and when one received a letter, it was an event. The postage on a letter was no small item, and it was usually collected at the end of the line, money was scarce so one had to pay rather dearly to hear from a relative or friend.

Zophar was five years old when Robert Fulton's steamboat was launched on the Hudson River, and he was nine when a steamer was on the Ohio, at Pittsburgh, the so called gateway of the west. It was not long until many little steamers were carrying traders, speculators, and settlers westward.

He was old enough at the time of the second war with England to remember something about it, especially if it was true that his father served sometime in that war, as there is some reason to believe. At this time he was leading a boy's life on the farm, doing his full share of the work, as all children of those days were expected to do. He picked up the stones in the fields, piled them up for fences, hoed potatoes, weeded garden vegetables, and early learned to swing an ax, doing his share towards clearing new land every year.

His mother made his clothes, and wove the cloth from which they were made. He went to school and learned to read, write, and cipher. His home was warm in winter, for there was an abundance of logs for the big fireplace, and it was always well stored with provisions . . . They had apples, honey, and cider. They killed their own hogs, smoked hams, and bacon; rendered lard, and made candles from tallow. They made their own soap, tanned leather, carded wool, and dyed it; every home was a manufacturing plant, and there were no idle hands.

When Zophar became strong enough he learned to drive a yoke of oxen, and with them helped in clearing the roads of deep snows in the winters. He could swing a

scythe, and cut the wild hay down by Breed's Pond in summer. He could shoot, and fish, and as he grew to manhood the New Hampshire hills, rocks, and woods became a part of his being. He would never feel perfectly at home on a level prairie, away from such surroundings.

He came of age during the second term of James Monroe's administration. That year the famous Monroe Doctrine came into being. President Monroe politely, but firmly, had notified the European nations that any attempt on their part to interfere with any independent American government would be taken by the United States as an unfriendly act. This led, among some other important things, to Russia abandoning her claims to the Pacific coast, as far up as Alaska, which she owned.

During Zophar Farwell's life of twenty-one years our population had increased from four to nearly ten millions of people. The Louisiana Territory, the Oregon Territory, and Florida had been acquired by the United States. It was now an immense country. From war taxed Europe emigrants had been coming by thousands to this new land of hope. More and more ships were coming from Europe loaded with merchandise, and some from Africa with negroes to sell in our markets for slaves. Both Europeans and Americans were engaged in this traffic. The people now from different parts of New England, in great numbers, were moving through the passes of the Allegheny Mountains, moving west, to the frontier lands. The neighbors in Nelson now talked of Ohio. Some families had gone there, and lived in a place they had named Keene, after their own town of that name in New Hampshire. A young man might have a good chance to get on there.

Zophar Farwell, now of age, and ready to do for himself, decided to go to this new state. A young man of his own age went with him. They carried the little clothing they had in a bundle on their backs, and with only the help of a few rides, they walked the entire distance.

Coschocton County, where the New England families had settled, was rough and hilly, and covered with a heavy growth of timber. In this it was not unlike Nelson, for the country was mountainous, and picturesque, and after the land was cleared, the soil was of poor quality. It was the kind of land usually selected by the New England pioneer.

The two young men received a hearty welcome, and were employed at once to help clear the land. They well knew how to chop down trees, for they had become experts in that line in New Hampshire.

Zophar moves to Ohio, marries Betsy Knight

They received for this work twenty five cents a day, and their board. It is not a surprising thing, that two years from this time, Zophar Farwell had saved enough money to buy a small piece of land of his own, for he had learned that money was the hardest thing to acquire, and the last thing to spend. In 1826, when he was twenty four years old, he married a neighbor girl, Betsy Knight, whose family had come from New York State a short time before. Betsy was twenty two years old.

In appearance they presented quite a contrast . . . Zophar Farwell was not a tall man. He was of a muscular build, strong, and wiry. He had black eyes, overshadowed with heavy black eyebrows, and he had a wonderful head of heavy black hair, which never really turned gray, although he lived to be over eighty years old . . . Although life to him the most of the time was a serious business, once in awhile he could see a joke, and laugh heartily.

Betsy Knight Farwell was a slender young woman, five feet six inches in height. She had light brown hair, blue eyes, and a fair complexion. She was kind and affectionate in disposition, and was always a fine looking woman, and must have been a pretty and attractive girl.

EARLY DAYS IN OHIO

In the second year of their marriage, after Marcus, their first child was born, they went to Nelson for a visit to Zophar's parents. His grandfather, Richard, had died in 1817. They were in Nelson until after their second child, Evaline, was born, and it is possible that the father, Absalom, and his wife, sold their home in Nelson and returned with them to Ohio at that time. Anyway, if they did not, they came later, for Absalom owned a farm just on the edge of Keene, and the old house is still standing.

Three more children were born in the Zophar Farwell family: Julia, in 1831, Sewall, in 1834, and Lalon, 1836 . . . Zophar and Betsy had been married ten years, and they had five children. Zophar was thirty-four years old, and Betsy thirty-two. Zophar was at the very height of rugged, manly strength. He had built a saw mill in a ravine on his farm, getting water power by damming a small creek. He had a fine orchard of young trees: apples, peaches, pears, and plums, besides smaller fruits. There were chestnut trees, and walnuts, and butternuts. Zophar had some cattle and hogs, and he raised sheep enough for meat, and the wool to make yarn, and homespun clothing. Marcus and Evaline walked two miles up and down the steep wooded hills to school at Keene. The next summer they would take their small black-eyed sister, Julia, with them. Evaline was soon old enough to help her mother with the cheese, and butter. She played with two-year-old Sewall, and helped with the

care of Lalon.

Marcus could go after the cows, and help milk. He could chop wood, and help his father in the little patches of clearings, although he rebelled at weeding . . . "What's the use," he said in his sharp, piping voice. "The weeds grow right up again!" But in spite of this, he realized that he was the oldest of the family, and had that sense of responsibility, that is sometimes found in small children.

The neighborhood of Keene was now a transplanted New England community. Zophar's sister, Rebecca, had married a man by the name of Adams, and lived on a farm there. The farm of the grandparents, Absalom, and Rebecca, was on the high road, overlooking Keene. There was a Henry Farwell living there, and others of the name. Betsy Knight Farwell had relatives living near by. Her sister, Miranda, was married to a man by the name of Love, another sister had married a Sewall Morgan, whose name probably had been inherited from the old Puritan, Judge Sewall of Salem, Massachusetts. Betsy named her second son after this brother-in-law . . . There were many cousins in school together, and the families attended the same church.

They had family dinners on special holidays. The women helped with the dishes, and the cooking, tended babies, and talked about neighborhood, church, and family affairs, always with knitting, and sewing to pick up at odd moments. They exchanged patterns, and talked about the prevailing styles of dress. The society women in the east were wearing their skirts just above their ankles, showing silk stockings embroidered in clocks. They wore satin slippers, with ribbon rosettes, or silver buckles . . . Men wore frock coats of bright colors, they had frilled white shirts, their pantaloons were full, tucked into fancy boots, with colored tassels.

Although in the homes still a great deal of weaving was done, the mills of New England were bringing about changes in this. There were hundreds of these mills, and one girl operating a single spindle, could spin as much cloth as a thousand women could in the same time. Cotton goods now were selling for eight and a half cents a yard. This was being shipped west by means of the Erie Canal, and the Ohio River. The day was passing when spinning would be done in the home. The women of Keene, at these family gatherings, had made some of their clothes from the cloth manufactured in these mills.

While the women worked and visited, the children were turned out to play, and the men walked about the place, talking of the things that were of special interest at that time. They were all old line Whigs. They had voted against Andrew Jackson, and for John Quincy Adams, the scholar, and

statesman. They wondered what the country was coming to, when Jackson was elected by an overwhelming majority . . . He was a southerner, and would no doubt favor the slave holding states. He had opposed Webster's ideas of a strong central government. He might even favor nullification. His financial views were unsound. Then he was uneducated, and his morals were questionable. He had married a divorced woman.

As time went on they admitted that his administration was turning out better than they had feared. He was true to the Union, at least. His courage in opposing his southern friends called forth their admiration . . . But the way he had turned out old faithful clerks of the Government, to give place to party hangerson, was a scandal. Two thousand men in one year. Some one said, "To the victors belong the spoils." It was an evil that would long outlive him.

There were other things to talk about besides politics: inventions that were changing habits of living. There was that wonder, the friction match. They would soon be so cheap that everyone could afford them, and no one need run to a neighbor for a shovel of coals, when the house-fire went out . . . There were new methods of fruit grafting, and improved farm machinery. A man, by the name of McCormick, had invented a reaper, that could be drawn by horses, and would do away with cutting the grain and hay with a scythe . . . They also talked of railroads.

In 1830 there were only twenty-three miles of railroad track in the United States, and for years after there were few roads east of the Allegheny Mountains. It was doubtful if any of these men had seen a train of cars at this time. But they knew that the first train had been run from Boston to Westboro, making the terrific speed of fifteen miles an hour, and they thought it a very unsafe means of transportation. They favored the government improving the post roads, and establishing more direct lines for the stages.

A few years later these men were interested in the new lands, that were being opened for settlement in the west. Some had already gone from Keene and Coshocton to Illinois, and had sent back glowing accounts of the country. It was said that the soil was deep, and rich, and land could be bought for two dollars an acre. It made Zophar Farwell wonder if he should keep his growing family on this small wooded farm in Ohio, when he could sell it, and buy so much more, and richer land in the west. He talked it over with his wife, and they decided to make the change.

In the spring of 1837 they moved to Schuyler County, Illinois. This was the year in which a young girl of eighteen, across the sea, had signed the name, Victoria, to the state papers placed before

Ill-fated move to Illinois results in return to home in Ohio

er. That year, Charles Dickens, then a little known writer in London, was bringing out "The Pickwick Papers," in pamphlet form . . . It was at this time that the black petroleum oil, that some brine wells in Ohio and Kentucky were yielding, was being bottled, and sold as linament, for rheumatism. It was during this spring that Abraham Lincoln went to Springville, to practice law . . . Van Buren was the President of the United States. He was reaping the reward of Jackson's financial policy, and the country was going through the worst panic in its history.

THE MOVE TO ILLINOIS

How long it took them to cross Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois is not known. They traveled with a party of movers, in big covered wagons, drawn by oxen, some men riding on horses, driving before them the stock they were taking with them. They must have been delayed by storms, swollen streams, swamps, and almost impassable roads on the way, before they came to the level prairies of Illinois.

They crossed this state, for their land was in its western part, and they had never seen such a country before. Here was a level sea of grass, stretching away on all sides to the horizon. There were masses of bright spring flowers, and the wild strawberries were in bloom, they passed through immense beds of them . . . They saw buffalo paths, some herds feeding, and some tracks of deer. They shot some game along the way, but mostly turkeys, and prairie chickens, as they did not want to spend much time in hunting.

It was said that wild horses and hogs were plentiful. They were told that when this tough prairie sod was broken up and subdued with a planting of flax, that it would bear immense crops of wheat, oats, corn and Irish potatoes, also timothy hay. Horses and cattle fattened on its wild grasses. It certainly promised well, and Zophar Farwell bought a farm, as near timber and water as he could locate, but containing level tillable land.

But although all seemed so favorable, the family did not thrive. The first year they were all sick with fever and ague. There was a malarial condition existing in these new lands, that finally disappeared, in some mysterious way, with the cultivation of the soil. Betsy Farwell was not of a robust constitution. She had borne five children in the ten years of her married life, and the long overland trip, with the care of small children, and a young baby, had further sapped her vitality. She became very ill, and although she rallied, after a time, she was so weak and emaciated, that it soon became evident she would die, if she remained where she was. Settlers were coming into this part of the state now, and Zophar could sell all he owned at a profit. He

decided it was the best thing to do, so two years after they had left Ohio, they went back and bought their old farm, with some additional land.

Here they lived until the year 1851. Zophar Farwell was always known as a good stock man, and made money on his cattle. He still ran his little saw mill, and also made cider for sale. It was impossible at that time to grow rich on such a business, but he was thrifty, and the family was well to do, much respected, and lived in comfort. The children had a liking for books, and they had a good school at Keene. When Evaline and Julia were old enough, they attended an academy at Coschocton.

Evaline was married to a Doctor Bidwell from Massachusetts, in 1850. Julia was teaching school that summer, while Sewall, a boy of seventeen, who was ambitious for more of an education than he could get at home, had gone to Cleveland, where he boarded himself, cooking his own meals, while he attended a small denominational school there.

About this time Marcus, who had left home two years before, came home on a visit. He had first gone to Michigan, and from there with some friends to the new state of Iowa. He had been working in a general store in Cascade, a small town not far from Dubuque, and he had been impressed with the possibilities of the country, and he tried to convince his father that he should sell his farm in Ohio, and move west.

Zophar Farwell had always regretted his having to sell his farm in Illinois. He never had forgotten the richness of that prairie land. He was strong and vigorous, and his wife was now in good health, but he felt that the decision should rest with her, and he felt certain that she would not want to give up her home and old friends . . . But much to his surprise she favored the change. She, too, had always felt that they had given up a great deal in their move back to Ohio. She now could not see much of a future for her boys where they were. Marcus had already left them, and it would not be long until the other two boys would follow. She was now forty eight . . . and she thought of herself as an old woman . . . All she had to live for was her family; they had all better go together.

Julia, who was a young woman, just twenty years old, self-reliant, and attractive, did not look on the change with favor. She had a place in her own community, all her friends were there, she could remember some of the hardships of their move to Illinois, and now to leave home, seemed like turning her back on civilization . . . But there was the element of unknown adventure, and change, that always appeals to the young, and when Dr. Bidwell and Evaline declared they would follow, if Iowa should be a good place for a

doctor, she consented to go.

It took time to sell their farm, and clear up all business matters, but finally, in the spring of 1851, they were ready to say good-bye to all the old friends and relatives, and start on their long journey.

Betsy Farwell never saw the place again. Zophar Farwell went back once, after the Civil War. One of his neighbors in Keene saw a man standing in the middle of the street in front of his house one night, looking about him, in a bewildered way, and on going out to see what he wanted, found his old friend.

Shortly after this Marcus and Lalon went back together. They had prospered greatly during the Civil War, and had become successful business men. They had an affection for the old home, and they went back to Ohio, with some thought of buying it, to keep in the Farwell name, possibly for a summer home, or just for old associations. But after going through the old house, which they found sadly out of repair, and visiting their old haunts, they found that the changes had been too great. The old mill had been pulled down, only the cellar remaining, with its living spring of water; the well by the house had lost its shading apple tree; the hills had been stripped of most of their timber. There were still apple, peach, and cherry trees in the orchard, and they found a few chestnut trees, and some grand old beaches, but the soul of the place had passed away, and they could never think of it as home again.

FROM OHIO TO IOWA

The family went from Keene to the Ohio River by way of a canal. It was a hard journey, but filled with adventure for the boys, Sewall, and Lalon . . . The canal boat was a large barge, with a small house built in the middle of it. The one big room served as cabin, smoking room, dining room, and sleeping quarters, all in one. The room was heated by a rusty stove. When it was a cabin there were small tables scattered about, where men could write, or play cards, but at mealtime these tables were put together in a line down the center of the room, for one dining table. Here three times a day, without variation for different meals, were served hot biscuit, fish, steaks, chops, ham, liver, sausage, potatoes, puddings, pies, tea, and coffee. (Dicken's American Notes)

At night, in this cabin, there were three tiers of hanging shelves, suspended by cords from above . . . These shelves were rather unstable, but they were made up as beds for the passengers, who drew lots for their berths, these shelves being numbered. The ladies quarters were at one end of the cabin, and big curtains were drawn, and pinned in the center.

The washing accommodations were primitive. A tin ladle was chained to the deck, with which the dirty water of the

Travel by steamer on Ohio and Mississippi rivers to Dubuque

canal was dipped up, and poured into a tin basin, that was also chained to a bench. There was a big common towel, and in the bar there was a small looking glass on the wall, and below on a shelf a common comb and brush . . . This for the men. The women had similar accommodations at the other end of the deck.

The canal boat was attached to three horses by ropes, and a boy rode the lead horse on the tow path, while a man on the boat steered by means of a wooden rudder. The deck outside of the cabin was small, and piled with luggage and freight . . . There was barely room to walk about, and one had to watch one's step for fear of falling off into the canal.

When they reached the Ohio river they boarded a river steamer. This boat could accommodate at least fifty passengers, in its first class quarters, besides the emigrants, who lived in rude shelters on the lower deck. This deck was a bargelike affair, much larger than that of the canal boat. From this rose pillars, which supported the furnace room, and above this was a long narrow cabin, running the whole length of the boat. At one end of this was partitioned off a small women's cabin, and at the other end a bar. The washing accommodations were on the deck, a little better than those on the canal boat, but not a great deal.

Opening out of this cabin were little narrow staterooms, and they also had an outer door, which opened onto a narrow corridor of a deck. The whole was roofed over, and from the top of this roof rose two iron smokestacks, and the glass steering house of the ship.

The steamer was fired with wood. These furnace fires were not enclosed, but roared and raged in their firepots, exposed to wind and rain, beneath the cabin of painted wood. The machinery on the lower deck was almost entirely unguarded, amidst the emigrants, whose children ran, often unwatched about the place . . . This steamer was propelled by two big paddle wheels, one on each side, and at every revolution of these wheels they gave off an explosive sound, like the discharge of a gun. On the boat, on the lower deck, besides passengers, were household goods, produce, cattle, and horses in box stalls . . . crated poultry, dogs, and farm machinery.

The people the Farwell family met on the boat were like themselves, moving to the west. Some were going to Illinois, some to Iowa, and some even farther, either to Oregon, or California, attracted to these far western places by the gold mines . . . The greatest friendliness prevailed. The first question asked was, "Where are you going?" then, "Where did you come from?"

Men gathered in the cabin, or about the bar, discussing the merits of these new

lands, and the men, who at this time were prominent in politics. There was one talked of a great deal. He had come to Illinois from New York, sixteen years before. Since then he had been States Attorney, a member of the legislature, Registrar of the Land Office, Secretary of State, in Illinois, and afterwards Judge of the State Supreme Court. He had been a member of congress, and was now United States Senator, and yet he was only thirty-six years old. This was Stephen A. Douglas.

These people from Ohio distrusted him. He did not take the right stand on the slavery question. He was a compromiser, trying to carry water on both shoulders, they said . . . Besides politics, they talked of the extension of the railroads, of the great movement of the people west, and the rapid development of the new states.

Sewall Farwell, who was now eighteen years old, listened to all this, and thought about it. He was not like his father. He did not care for horses or cattle, and he was not naturally a tiller of the soil. He possessed an analytical mind, and a great hunger for knowledge. Had it not been for this move, where they lived, this desire might have made a college education possible, and he might have become an able lawyer; no one can speculate with any certainty on such a possible future, but at this time, he was just a human straw, moving with the tide . . . an immature young person of eighteen, going to the unsubdued prairie of Iowa.

When the boat approached the junction of the Ohio and the Mississippi Rivers, the prospect was anything but attractive. The banks of the river were low, with a few scrubby trees growing in the bare sand on either side, and when they reached Cairo, the place that was being promoted at that time by speculators, as the coming metropolis of the West, they found it to be a wretched place indeed. There were a few log houses scattered over a dismal swamp. It was a steaming hotbed of disease, where the inhabitants burned up with fever, or shook with ague chills, the greater part of the year.

The Mississippi River, which they had been taught to regard as "The Father of Waters," and look upon with great respect, at this place was a sight that was anything but inspiring. It was at this time of year over two miles in width, with its current choked with logs, and floating trees. In contrast to the Ohio, which had been a stream of clear, sparkling water, these waters were dark and muddy. Mosquitoes were swarming, penetrating to all parts of the boat. Here they had to change steamers, and they were glad indeed when their boat was loaded, and they could move up the river.

The boat had been loaded by negro roustabouts, who fairly staggered under

the heavy loads they carried up the gang plank, being constantly goaded on by the most blood-curdling oaths of a brutal mate. The boys, and women, regarded these negroes as the most miserable of human beings, and were much surprised, after the boat was well under way, to find them gathered at one end of the lower deck in the evening, apparently in the best of spirits, laughing and singing together. The passengers enjoyed their singing, and they were like children in realizing this, and ready to show off. One of them would break out in a solo, much of which he seemed to improvise, his body going through all sorts of contortions, and then the rest would join him, following his lead in chorus. From the most miserable, they now seemed to be the happiest beings one could imagine.

Up the wide stream the boat pushed its way against the current, a striking spectacle at night, with its exposed wood fires, and its smokestacks belching out fountains of sparks, and luminous smoke, whenever the furnaces were fired. Above stood the lookout, and he rang a bell to warn the men below when an obstacle of unusual size appeared in front of them. When the passengers heard it they clung to their berths, for they knew that the sudden stopping of the engines would be followed by a staggering blow, from some floating tree, or mass of tangled timber.

The boys had good appetites, but the food on this boat, although there was plenty of it, was not well cooked, and so not very inviting. The only water they had to drink was drawn up from the muddy river.

At St. Louis a great deal of freight was taken off, and put on the boat, and Zophar Farwell took Julie, and the boys, for a walk about the place. They found the old French quarter, where there were narrow crooked streets. The quaint houses were falling to decay. They were built up directly from the street, with ladderlike stairways leading to the upper balconies. Some of them had high garret-gable windows, running up into the roofs, and the old tenement houses, with their casement windows, were exact replicas of the old houses in Flanders.

In the modern part of the town there were some fine buildings, for those days, although not as good as they had seen in Cincinnati. It impressed them as being an unhealthy place in which to live, for it was at the junction of two rivers . . . A very hot place in summer.

At St. Louis the boat was filled up with emigrants, and shortly after, it became known that the dread disease, cholera, had broken out among them. The sick were confined to the lower deck, but there were several deaths, and when at last the boat docked at Davenport, Iowa, the place where the Farwell family had intended to land, they were not allowed to do so.

Trek ends at Bowen's Prairie in eastern Iowa

There were some people living here who had come from Keene, Ohio: Dr. Stephenson, and wife, who had been neighbors, and close friends of theirs. As they had not made any definite plans, as to where they would locate, they had planned to stop here to see them, and look about for a location. The Stephenson family were at the wharf to meet them, but all they could do was to shout their greetings to the family on the boat . . . They were allowed to land at Dubuque, and having some letters to people in Cascade, in a small settlement called Bowen's Prairie, they went there.

BOWEN'S PRAIRIE

This settlement was made up entirely of New England people, and the new comers received a hearty welcome. Zophar Farwell was much pleased with the country, and with his son, Sewall, rode for many miles over the prairies, looking for a suitable location for his new farm . . . His son, Marcus, was now in Chicago. He had been offered a position in the wholesale grocery firm of Gilman and Grannis, of that city, and had left the little town of Cascade.

The settlers on Bowen's Prairie were optimistic, and were sure that this new land would rise rapidly in value, so Zophar Farwell decided to buy all that he could possibly afford. He selected a tract containing some timber acreage, not far from water, some five hundred acres of tillable land, six hundreds acres in all. For some of this land he paid a dollar and a half an acre, and for the rest two dollars . . . He was a cattle man, and he wanted plenty of good grazing land.

The site of the house was to be at the edge of the timber, at the junction of two roads, not yet laid out, (Note -- The site of this house at the jct. of the two roads mentioned is the present home of Mr. and Mrs. Glen Adams north of Monticello on Hiway 38. Zophar and Sewall Farwell built the house still standing and being occupied by the Adams family.), one running east toward Bowen's Prairie, which promised to be the largest settlement in that part of the country, and the other south, which afterwards led to the town of Monticello.

As it was too late in the season to build the house, the family moved into a small cabin about three miles south and west of Bowen's Prairie, near the Maquoketa River. (Note -- For many years this cabin and the ground was known as Elsie Killias's spring. It is the present location of the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Adams, Sr.). The father and boys went to the woods every day and cut down the trees suitable for boards, and heavy timbers, and they were hauled to Dubuque, thirty five miles away, to a mill, and the finished lumber hauled back again.

During that winter Julia was taken sick with what was known then as Lung Fever,

but which we now call pleura-pneumonia. She was very ill, and a part of one of her lungs was destroyed. She never fully recovered her health, and although she lived to be seventy five years old, she was always limited as to the things she could endure, and do.

The long, hard winter gave way at last, and after a long period of changing, and unsettled weather, characteristic of spring in Iowa, when the trees, at last, were in full leaf, and the prairies green, they found themselves living in a beautiful place. Just below the cabin, at the foot of a sharp slope was a big spring of clear water, from which they had to carry their water for drinking, and washing. They were at the edge of the deep woods, and it was fragrant with wild flowering shrubs, and vines. The blossoms of the wild crab apple were as beautiful, and as fragrant, as were the peach tree blooms in Ohio . . . The prairies blossomed until they seemed to be one great garden. There were yellow buttercups, purple violets, masses of wild phlox, and great beds of white strawberry blossoms. Later the pink wild roses covered the ridges, and in the long grass, on slender stems, waved brilliant red lilies, and the purple brushes of thistles.

Along the river banks, that summer, the women gathered quantities of small red raspberries, gooseberries, and blackberries. Refined sugar cost fifteen cents a pound, so they preserved them with brown sugar, which cost eight cents. Betsy Farwell made some blackberry, and some wild cherry cordial, to use in case of sickness, and in the fall they gathered the hard, sour crabapples, and boiled them, using molasses to make a sweet-bitter butter, which in winter they were all glad to eat with thier bread. In the fall there were quantities of hazelnuts, ripening on low bushes, and there were walnuts, hickory nuts, and butternuts to be gathered in the woods.

But in gathering these, the women were in constant fear of snakes. The rattlesnake was about the only poisonous one in this vicinity, but there were other kinds about in the grass, even sometimes crawling up through the loose boards of the cabin. They had to watch for them always . . . At first they turned to run in nervous fright at the sight of one, but they soon learned that safety depended on steady nerve, and good sense, so they fought them heroically, chasing down every one they caught sight of, killing as many as they could.

In the spring the men broke up some of the land. Plowing up this land was a terrific task, for the plows were clumsy affairs, and regular man killers, especially when pulled by a team of oxen, through this tough virgin prairie sod. They put in flax, and a small crop of oats, and wheat. Then they planted potatoes, and as much of a garden as they could, especially

root vegetables to store for winter.

Over on some hills, on the farm, was an out-cropping of limestone. Here they built a kiln, and burned lime to use in the building of the new home.

That summer they built a barn, a wagon shed, they called it, and the family moved into it, so as to be nearer their work. By fall, the house was under cover, and some of the rooms finished, so before winter set in, they moved into it.

The walls of the house were made of a coarse stucco: grout, they called it then. This was covered with a coarse plaster. It was a large two story house, with an attic. When it was completed, an extra back kitchen was added, and a big porch ran around the south, and east sides. They had built this for a permanent home, on New England lines. It was the kind of a home that Zophar Farwell's grandfather, Richard, had built back in New Hampshire, only the big, wide fireplaces were not there. The tight stoves had replaced them, and although they were not so picturesque, they added greatly to the comfort of the family, and lessened the work of the home.

There were trees already about the house, for to the west were deep woods, but an apple orchard was planted, small berry bushes were put out, and in time ornamental shrubs, and flower beds were added, and with such surroundings, it became a most attractive home.

In the summer of 1853, Evaline, and Doctor Bidwell came west. Dr. Bidwell had been a widower, when he married Evaline, with two children, Ward, and Mary. He had come west to look for a good location for his practice, and after looking about, decided to go to Quasqueton, a settlement with good water power, which then promised to grow into a large town, about twenty-five miles northwest of Monticello . . . During that winter, a carpenter, by the name of Hulbert, and his family, lived in the home, Hulbert finishing the interior of the house during the cold weather.

Although Julia was far from well, she went to Quasqueton to teach, living with the Bidwell family. Money was very scarce, having almost disappeared from the country, and she felt she must do what she could to help, for there was Lalon, who must have more of an education. He was but sixteen when they left Ohio, and had had no chance to go to school since then. There was a Methodist academy at Mt. Vernon, about thirty-five miles from Monticello, and Zophar Farwell took Lalon there, and Sewall remained at home, the main helper of the family.

Buying his farm, stocking it, building a house, and farm buildings, had exhausted Zophar Farwell's ready money, and although he had pork, and farm products for sale, there was no market for anything.

President's message

Dear Reader!

Thanks for bearing with us. We refer to your receiving issues two and three of this volume much later than should have been the case. As mentioned previously, we've been very busy this past year.

The first meeting date for the Historical Society in 1980 will be Jan. 13 at 2 p.m., and should the weather interfere, it will be a week later. The meeting will be held at the Community Center (old school building) in Center Junction.

Now that you have had the opportunity to begin reading the Farwell family biography, we would appreciate knowing your response. If you are so inclined, drop us a card or give a call and indicate whether you do or do not like this type reading material.

While it will not make up the entire printed portion of any issue, it will be part of the next five to six issues. Each issue will continue to have other stories and pictures of interest.

Many of you will notice that John Clark of Monmouth is a regular contributor to the "Review", with a short story of his in many of the past few issues. Esther Gray of Anamosa, another of our regular contributors, has also had many fine articles in the past with a promise of more in the future.

There are many of you "Old Timers", and not so "Old Timers" out there who could share experiences with our many readers. As mentioned before, these stories can be personal experiences, or factual happenings, or stories that have been handed down from parents, grandparents, or other ancestors, and which touch on Jones county history. They need not be stories from the 1800s or early 1900s. They can be of any time period.

Which gets me around to something else that could help us find this material. We need from each of the three areas, correspondents so to speak. These people would search out, or have referred to them, the people who do have something to contribute, but do not know exactly how to present it in story form. Usually a pleasant evening or Sunday afternoon with these "Story Tellers" results in a wealth of information that the correspondent can then put into story form and submit to the "Review" for publication.

If you would like to volunteer for this and become part of the team putting out the "Review", give me a call or drop a line to Box 124. Many high school students engage in this activity with Historical Societies. One such group undertaking this activity a few years ago was responsible for the very popular five-volume series of "Fox Fire".

We really could use your help.

Sincerely,

C. L. "Gus" Norlin, President

Betsy Farwell writes letter to daughters

They now had a good home, a large farm, and plenty of provisions for food, but they had not money to meet outside expenses, or to buy clothing . . . At this time Betsy Farwell wrote her daughter, Julia, in Quasqueton, and this is the only letter of hers that has survived her.

"Dear Daughters,

You doubtless think that mother might write you a letter, if she would try, and now I am making an attempt to do so. This feeling that I cannot write I find is a sad misfortune, now my girls are gone, and no one to write for me. Sewall works hard all day, and does not feel like writing at night . . . much rather read, you know.

We received Julia's letter Sunday morning. When Sewall read it, he said that he would go to Quasqueton the next day, if I would go with him. I wanted to be with you on Christmas, more than I can say, but such a long road, and so little courage I have, I fear that I shall never get there.

I do hope that the weather may be favorable, so that you may come home when Marcus comes. Julia will certainly need a few days rest by that time . . . I have not been so lonesome since Mr. and Mrs. Hulbert moved here, but I miss Julia so much and Lalon, too . . . It hardly seems like home. Only think, Marcus is gone, Evaline, and Julia, are gone, and now Lalon. Sewall is here. What we would do without him, I do not know. Such a good, faithful boy that he is. I would like to see him enjoy himself more than he can at the present time. He has not been to meeting, or anywhere, since you went away. I do wish that he had good, comfortable clothes, so that he would not be ashamed to be seen away from home.

I have not bought a new dress yet. Pa had to use the money we received for the cheese, but he says that I shall have the first money he gets to buy some clothes. He will give me money as soon as he sells the pork, but there is no market for pork, so I guess we shall have to keep the hogs, and do without things.

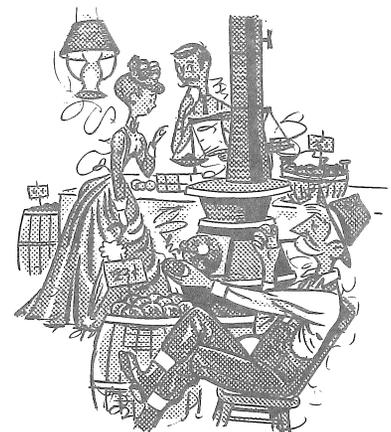
Ellen and I made Mrs. Cline a visit one day, and we have been to church once at Cascade, these are all the places I have been.

I wish that you could see the new cooking stove. The longer I use it the better I like it. We make plenty of butter for our own use. I wish that I could send you a ball every time I churn. I kept one cheese we made, besides the one we are eating, but you shall have part of it, if I have a chance to send it . . . The houseplants look well. They have no blossoms, but they may be in bloom by the time you come home. I am so sorry that I did not keep the cactus.

Evaline, you must dress the baby warmly. Mrs. Hulbert puts a flannel shirt over a cotton one. I think it a good idea. How I would like to see the little fellow! If you could come and stay all day once in awhile, what a satisfaction it would be. I know, Evaline, that you have to work very hard, and Julia, too. I am always so afraid that she will get sick. Mrs. Clark sends love, and says to kiss the baby for her. If Julia will write her a letter she will answer it. Give my love to the doctor, Ward, and Mary. I want to see you all. Tell me about Christmas, and all about it . . . We had a letter from Marcus the first of the week. He did not know when he could come, but we will let you know at once, as soon as we hear . . . No more at present, from your most loving Mother."

This letter was dated, December 27, 1854. That same evening Sewall Farwell wrote a letter to his sisters. He was nineteen years old.

(To be continued.)



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