

Jones County

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Millwright played prominent role in Canton history before heading West

History has been known to slight many people who have undeniably left their mark. One of the most remarkable men to come to the Jones county area in 1844 was John J. Tomlinson, surveyor and millwright.

For a man responsible in the surveying of portions of eastern Iowa, and constructing the latest in saw and grist mills in the newly founded territory, he has been given little recognition, especially in Jones county.

Lest the reader later in this story gets the idea, that it is more a history of that section of Montana to which the story subject relates, I would remind them that early Jones county was a stopping off place for many men and women who, after

a time in this area, would pick up and move on westward. Many of Jones county's early pioneers, after carving their names in local history, moved on to become king pins in the drawbar of early western states civilization.

Canton is only partially in Jones county, and that portion lies within Clay township. To ever curry early Jones county without mentioning Canton, would be like uttering champagne without whispering caviar in the same breath. Canton was early Jones county. It was the most thriving business center in the county, and was one of the earliest settlements in eastern Iowa.

FOUNDED IN 1842

J. E. Hildreth first determined in 1842

that here at the wide bend in the Maquoketa river lay the most natural spot for water power to drive a mill that he had seen. The bottoms upriver were a perfect impoundment area, and the limestone banks on both sides were ideal for anchoring a dam structure.

So it was that Mr. Hildreth constructed a small sawmill on the east side and operated it until 1844 when it burned to the ground. He then sold the site, removed himself four miles north to what became Ozark (now a Jackson county ghost town) and built himself another mill on the North Fork of the Maquoketa river. The sale of the millsite and about 800 acres of land was made by Mr. Hildreth to John J. Tomlinson.

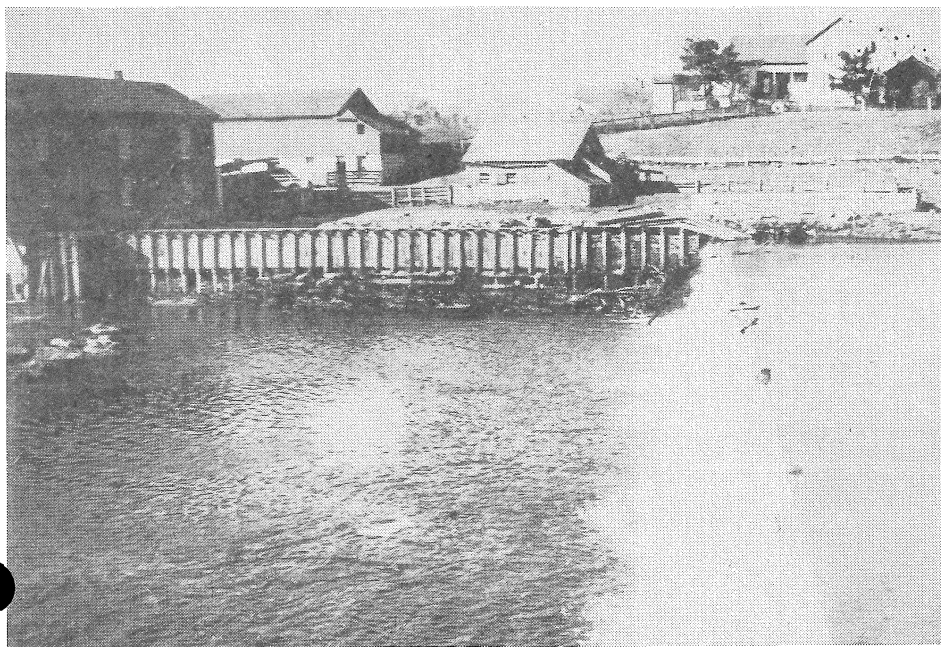
Here our story begins.

Tomlinson was born near Fort Cumberland in the state of Maryland on March 1, 1812. He worked with his father at farming and mill operating and studied surveying and civil engineering until he was 20. At that age, he built a complete mill for himself.

After a year of operation, he sold out and started his westward trek, settling for short periods in Ohio, Indiana and Michigan. Finally in 1838 he reached Iowa, and was elected county surveyor of Cedar county the week following his arrival. He laid out the county seat of Tipton and the town of Rochester, built two mills, and repaired several others in the area.

MOVES TO JACKSON

In 1844 Tomlinson moved to what is now Jackson county on the Maquoketa river and purchased the property from J. E. Hildreth. Although a settlement was in evidence, it was unnamed or surveyed for legal or political purposes. Tomlinson rebuilt Hildreth's mill, constructed a flour mill with two runs of burrs, a lumber mill, a wool carding mill, and a manufacturing business.



PLAYING A large role in the early development of Canton was John J. Tomlinson, who later left Iowa and settled in Montana. He built a mill at Canton, shown in this photo along with the dam. The photo was taken a few years after Tomlinson left Canton. (Photo courtesy of Darrell Houston, Canton.)

Canton mill once employed more than 60 men--

At one time the lumber mill and manufacturing business employed over 60 men. The manufacturing was in the line of furniture, wagons, sashes, sills, and lath. In addition to these enterprises, Tomlinson laid in a large stock of dry goods and groceries.

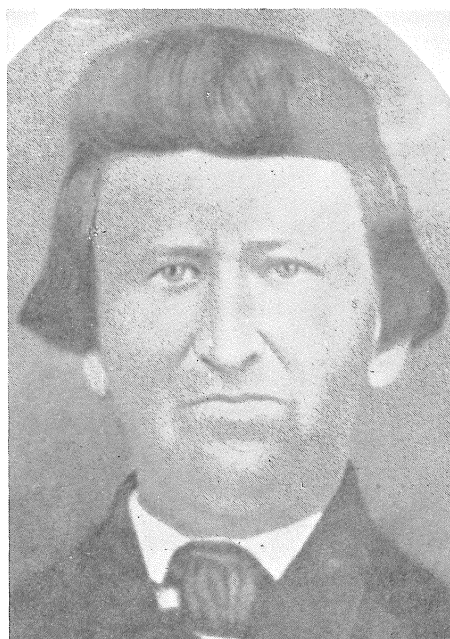
He made a survey and platted the area, but did not record the plat. It was resurveyed and platted in 1851 by Thomas Gracy.

Bad luck came. In 1860 both the woolen and flour mills were burned. Some say it was the work of jealous competitors. Others blamed an individual, who was in the masonry business and short on work, and whom figured that should the wood frame buildings go up in smoke, he might convince J. J. to reconstruct in stone, and thereby land the masonry contract.

REBUILDS MILLS

Tomlinson himself rebuilt the mills, but later lost money to the amount of \$20,000.00 by his kindness in dealing on credit.

Though by now he had lived in the area for 20 years, had surveyed the site, laid out



John J. Tomlinson

streets, lovingly nursed it to prosperity, and made it a trade center to be proud of, and acquired over 1,700 acres surrounding it, he succumbed again to the fever of westward movement. In April 1864, he joined Captain J. V. Stafford's train to Montana territory.

Margaret House Tomlinson, his wife of less than a year, was not yet 30 years of age when the latest westward trek began. Tomlinson himself was past 50.

HEADS WESTWARD

Of household necessities they took but

little upon leaving Canton. One thing Tomlinson insisted upon taking over anything, however, were the blocks, bearings, head frames, and arbors from one of the lumber mills. These he knew it would be necessary to have to immediately set up a mill at whatever spot their westward journey should end. To arrive at their new destination and then find it necessary to send back east for mill machinery would take the best part of a year.

These mill parts were undoubtedly the greater part of the load pulled by Tomlinson's oxen. Three wagons pulled out of the Maquoketa valley and headed west. Slowly they moved up the hillside out of Canton, glancing back occasionally to wave to their friends and fellow townspeople who had gathered to see them off.

Years later, a man by the name of Smith, who was a fellow merchant at the time of Tomlinson's leaving, remarked while reminiscing, "Many of us stood waving with tears in our eyes. We knew that Canton would never be the same, for we were watching her life blood drain slowly with every westward step that J. J. took".

Whether it was the attitude of those remaining or circumstance, Smith's conjecture was right. From that day onward Canton failed to grow, and we note from the 1879 history of Jones county the remark, "Canton is but a ghost of what it was a very few years ago!".

STOP AT JOHNSTON

Once clear of the river valley, Tomlinson's oxen eased up on the tugs, but without quickening their pace, plodded west-southwest toward another little hamlet at which place Tomlinson wished to stop and bid his brothers, Joseph and Jessie, (who had come to the area at J. J.'s urging) and friends goodbye. This place was called Johnston, or sometimes Johnstown, and was located a few miles north and west of the present town of Onslow, at the intersections of sections 23-24-25 and 26 of Scotch Grove township.

The name Tomlinson became prominent in that area, and is well remembered to this date, for J. J.'s two brothers elected not to join him going west, but remained satisfied with their lives in Jones county. After a couple of days stay at Johnston, during which time Tomlinson tightened the rims on his ox-drawn wagons and caught up other loose repair ends, his train started west again, moving slowly.

It took the best part of two days to reach Monticello, via Scotch Grove, and here Tomlinson traded one of his ox teams. Even though while living at Canton, Tomlinson was known to be an expert on oxen, never possessing less than 20 teams, he found that one team chosen to make the rugged 1,500 mile journey were in danger

of faltering. The place to rid his train of them was at Monticello, for he was still in familiar territory and no chance to trade was positive the further west he went.

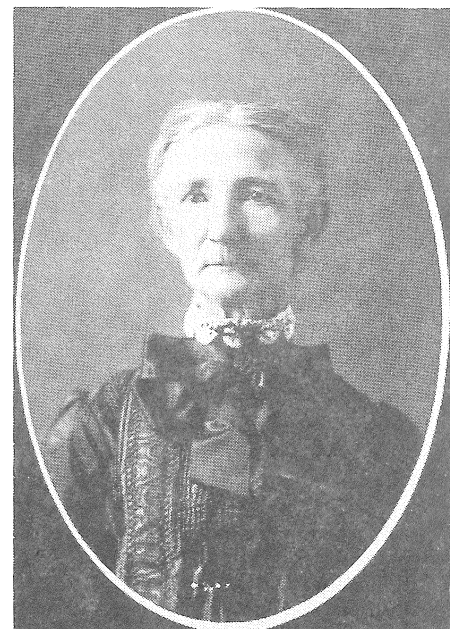
MONTICELLO VISIT

The Tomlinsons spent a short time at Monticello, bidding friends goodbye, among them we can imagine the George Stuhlers, who had been business associates in Canton. Tomlinson forbid his wife to purchase a few yards of cloth in Monticello, maintaining it would increase the weight of the load, and they dare not add a pound.

Two stories, conflicting with one another, find Tomlinson's train leaving Monticello. One story says they headed straight west, fording most streams without diviation except the Cedar, at which point they turned and followed the Cedar northwest and crossed it at an unknown point. The other story has it that he joined a wagon train headed toward the west.

The latter story seems to be the more realistic, for while researching the material on this story, the writer found that Captain J. V. Stafford made up his wagon train in Dubuque. This train left Dubuque in early May, proceeded west along the old Military trail to Cascade, then turned due west arriving at Sand Springs, and proceeding to Manchester by way of Hopkinton.

It stands to reason that Tomlinson would have joined Captain Stafford at Sand Springs rather than go it alone and pick up Stafford's train further west.



Margaret H. Tomlinson

The writer must say at this point that the Tomlinsons have now left Iowa, for no trace of them can be found until four

Settles on Yellowstone in gold territory--

months after beginning their journey.

YELLOWSTONE TERRITORY

After the 1863 discovery of gold on the Yellowstone river in Montana by Thomas Curry, and his further investigation the following year of the site's possibilities in gold production, he sought safety in numbers from Indian attack. He appealed to travelers bound for the gold fields of Alder Gulch in Montana, by making contact with those traveling the new plains route at the great bend in the river near the present town of Livingston, Mont.

Here we again find Tomlinson, who abandoned his original plan of going to Alder Gulch and turned his ox teams up the Yellowstone to the new diggings. He cut northward to follow Bozeman's route east of Wyoming's Big Horn Mountains to the Yellowstone river in Montana.

Near Hunter's Hot Springs there was a division in the trail, some following Bozeman's trail; the others awaiting the report of scouts who cut across to the Yellowstone.

Tomlinson's train arrived at Emigrant Gulch late in August, 1864 and on the 30th of that month, a David R. Shorthill found a nugget worth \$28.00 at a point six miles up the gulch. With that find, the Shorthill mining district was formed. Tomlinson's hopes ran high, for although a millwright at heart, perhaps this was his end of the rainbow.

BUILDS CABIN

At a site where the land was flat, about three quarters of a mile below the mouth of the deep gulch, he built a temporary cabin, very near the location of an ancient Indian village. It was at this spot they found the lone pine tree surrounded by a huge pile of buffalo horns and elk antlers. Jim Bridger, noted mountainman whom Tomlinson had met on the trail earlier, had told him about it.

In 1883 while reminiscing, Tomlinson told the following story: "Our train of emigrants coming west had just camped for the night at Gray Cliff, when an unusual spectacle of a stranger coming down the river attracted our attention. The traveler was James Bridger, the noted pioneer, hunter and explorer. This was in July of '64.

Bridger was a tall man, gray haired, skinny, and quiet. Some would say he was real odd. Just as the sun was going down that night, Bridger saw a speck on the peak of a hill quite a ways off. He took out his spy glass, leveled it for a look and muttered "Crows!!", meaning Indians of the Crow Tribe. He then headed for the timber and brush where he bedded down for the night. He would never sleep in the wagon train".

GOLD PROSPECTS

"After learning that we were hunting placer diggings, Bridger told us that he had spent the winter of 1844 with a number of Crow Indians in a canyon of the Yellowstone. He described the place so accurately that we had no difficulty in finding it. In order that we might be sure we were right, he told us that in '44 they drove a herd of buffalo up into this canyon and killed them all. Using their heads, with those of the elk and deer that fell into their hands, the squaws had made a pile at a point one and a half miles up the canyon, where a bar had been formed by the river. "This is what we found, along with good prospects of gold".

Such a find was all that was required for the emigrants to set down roots. Tomlinson built a house here, and almost immediately set out surveying the site of Yellowstone City. We note that everyone living in a little community up-gulch from the new site, packed all belongings, deserted their cabins and became part of Yellowstone City.

Shortly Tomlinson's town had 45 dwellings, and several hundred inhabitants, of whom 15 were women. Under Tomlinson's surveying "the streets were straight and in proper direction".

From the diary of John S. Hackney, a Yellowstone City pioneer, we note that Will Hackney, his brother, served as secretary of the Shorthill mining district, and we learn that Tomlinson's house was a gathering place.

CITY FLOURISHES

An entry in the diary on the 18th of January, 1865 notes that he attended the recording of the discovery of the President Meagher's lode at J. J. Tomlinson's house. Then too it seemed that Tomlinson possessed more ready cash than most, for another entry tells of a group returning from a hunting trip on Six Mile creek, and selling Tomlinson \$50.00 worth of meat. Another time he made a purchase of dried peaches and whiskey, which he sold through his store.

Tomlinson built the sawmill in the spring of '65. The creek next below Emigrant on the Yellowstone flows quite a volume of water. Along its banks farther upstream stand tall pines and spruce. For his early work there, that stream still carries the name of Mill creek. Canton has a street named mill street, given by reason that it passed next to Tomlinson's mills while he was living there.

Tomlinson's foresight in bringing the mill equipment with him from Canton, enabled the mill to begin operation early, but we note that in building boats from the lumber produced at this mill, it was necessary to purchase nails at \$60.00 per keg and have them transported from Virginia City, 120 miles distant.

The banks of the millpond were thrown up by hand, and by slip, using the oxen brought from Iowa. Even to this day, although the mill pond has been abandoned over 70 years, the bank still stands eight feet above the floor of the pond.

Ten years after Tomlinson built his sawmill on the Yellowstone, there were others cutting timber up Mill creek to be used as ties for the building of the railroad as far away as the Dakotas.

EARLY TRANSPORTATION

Much has been made in Montana history of the first attempts at navigating the Yellowstone. The steamer JOSEPHINE reached a point near the present site of Billings on June 17, 1875. History mentions the F. D. Pease expedition which met with disaster on the Yellowstone that same year.

In 1873 the Yellowstone Transportation Company was organized in Bozeman with Nelson Story as president. He contracted for ten 30-foot boats from Tomlinson with a capacity of 15 tons each to transport goods down the Yellowstone from Benson's landing to the Missouri. They are mentioned in early Montana history.

Tomlinson beat this transportation company by a good 10 years, however. In 1865, the year of his mill, the same machinery that had turned out hundreds of thousands of board feet of lumber at Canton on the Maquoketa river, was turning out lumber, from which were built boats for the trip down the Yellowstone, and history records these as the FIRST boats of white men to descend the river.

Though Indians had not been too much of a problem to the miners of Emigrant Gulch, in 1865 a miner named Hughes, originally from Keokuk, Ia. was brought in badly wounded. He and two other companions had purchased a large boat from Tomlinson, piled it high with furs and started the long float to Kansas City, which was the fur buying center at that time.

INDIAN ATTACK

Less than one day out of Yellowstone City, they were attacked by Indians. Hughes two companions were killed. Although seriously wounded Hughes managed to hold out until nightfall at which time he slipped from the boat and let the current carry him ashore where he hid out. He was found by a white party out hunting, who brought him back to Yellowstone City. Having lost everything including his two companions, a purse was taken up, the larger portion given by Tomlinson, and Hughes returned to Keokuk.

Tomlinson continued making these large barge type boats. They could be either rented or purchased outright. If rented, they were turned in to a firm in Kansas City, who purchased them from Tomlin-

Indian harrassment affects growth of settlement--

son; then they in turn re-sold them for transportation of goods the remainder of the way to the Gulf.

After this incident, Indian troubles began mounting, and at each report of Indian attack, those in Yellowstone City would hastily pack and head for Bozeman. When hostilities died down, many would return to their diggings, only to pack up and leave again with the next report.

A Frenchman by the name of Archambeau, who with the Indian Sin-Sin had become storekeepers at Yellowstone City, usually raised the alarm. Archambeau's association with the Indians gave him advance warning, and in turn he would alert Tomlinson, who quickly made sure the town was evacuated.

AFFECTS GROWTH

This continual harrassment by the Bannocks, Crows, Shoshone, and Sioux Indians, usually under leadership of Chief Washakie, had an adverse effect upon the growth of Yellowstone City, and the choice of the site for his labors in the new territory and his devotion to the cause of Yellowstone City were for Tomlinson, unfortunate. Emigrant Gulch failed in the production expected of it, and never after the first couple of years was it ever as populous.

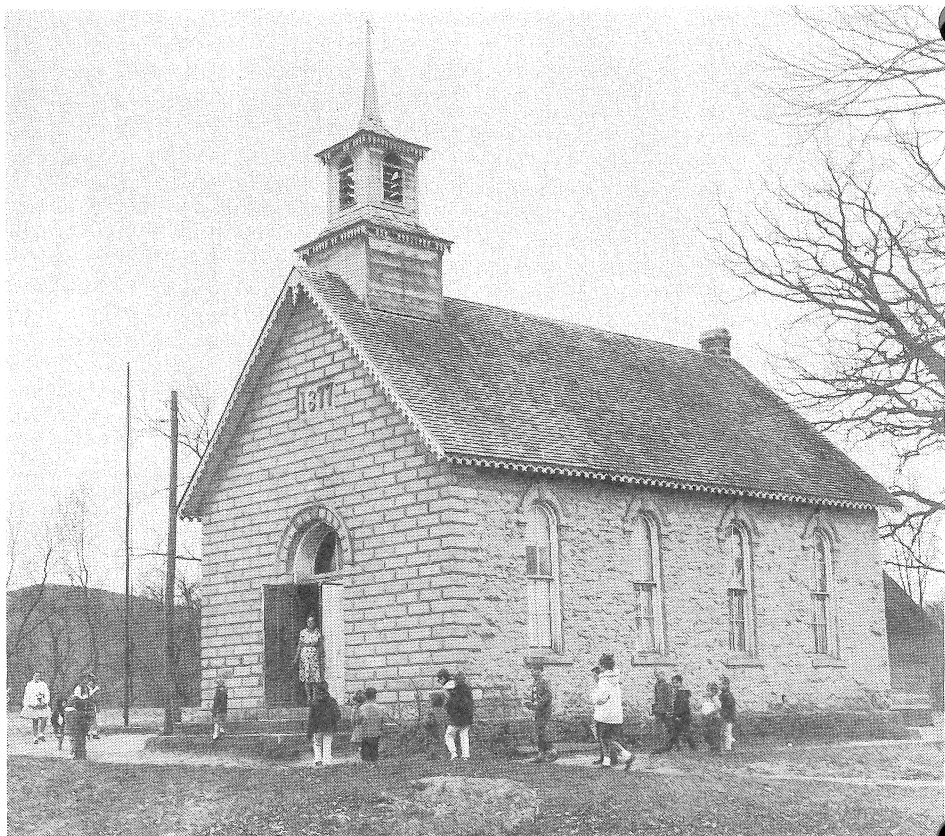
Finally, by the treaty of Ft. Laramie in 1868, the whole area east of the Yellowstone river was declared to be the exclusive property of the Crows, and on that reservation the white men were without rights. Even the trails across the Plains pioneered by Bridger and Bozeman were closed to emigrant travel. After this, few lingered on at Yellowstone City or in Emigrant Gulch, for if a white man lost his scalp after this treaty, you might say he were asking for it.

FORCED TO MOVE

At last John Tomlinson was forced to seek a better way of life than Yellowstone City and the sawmill on Mill creek. His first child, Philo, had been born there April 6, 1865, and the Tomlinsons left the mining camp for Bozeman in the fall of 1867.

It is of interest to note that J. J. Tomlinson's first son was named Philo. It was a Tomlinson tradition that the first names of all males born Tomlinson were with the beginning initial of "J". Tomlinson's first name John. The two brothers who remained in Jones county were Jessie, and Joseph. Another brother was James. Most of their forefathers also carried names beginning with J.

Tomlinson sold part of his machinery to P. W. McAdow and Thomas Coover of Bozeman and went to work for them, setting up the old mill and repairing others they owned in the area. They, too, had their experiences with the Indians, for it was Coover who was with John M.



THE CANTON school built in 1877 closed its doors in 1966. Canton, located on the Jones-Jackson county line, flourished for a short time in the mid to late 1800's. (Photo courtesy of Darrell Houston, Canton).

Bozeman on the Yellowstone east of Livingston when the latter was killed by the Indians.

In March of 1868, John J. Tomlinson moved to the area which was to be his home for the rest of his life and the home of his children and their families for nearly 50 years to follow. At the time, his new place was simply known as the upper West Gallatin.

He bought the right of occupation from J. W. Sales for \$500.00 and built a lath and shingle mill, still using machinery brought from Canton, Ia. This he operated until July 1871, when he sold it to a McKenzie for 250,000 feet of lumber.

STARTS FLOUR MILL

As always, interested in milling, he used his lumber to construct a flour mill in the valley. For his new operation, Tomlinson purchased the machinery in Chicago and paid for it in advance. Unfortunately, the boat in which it was shipped was wrecked on the Missouri river. In those days there was no insurance, so Tomlinson borrowed \$2,000.00 and bought more machinery.

With the lumber mill run by Sales and the flour mill by Tomlinson attracting attention, the editor of the Bozeman Avant Courier made a trip up the West Gallatin and reported in his paper, September 1877.

"While out riding last Friday we called

at Tomlinson's, expecting to see his grist mill in running order, but learned that a bran duster, some bolt cloth, and other necessary machinery had not yet been received. The wood work is ready and when the machinery is received, Mr. Tomlinson will soon have his mill going, and will make as good flour as any mill in the territory. He is in need of a few good mechanics, and parties wanting a job will do well to give him a call".

Tomlinson's health broke as his new venture got underway and he was forced to take it easier. His debt was not repaid, and his mill passed into the hands of Nelson Story on the loan he had taken.

Still adept at surveying, he laid out the town of Salesville, and recorded same on July 13, 1883. Almost at once Salesville grew into an active little town. By this time Tomlinson's family consisted of his wife and four children, the youngest little more than two years old, the oldest a scant 17 years of age.

END OF LINE

John J. Tomlinson passed away at his home in Salesville March 26, 1888. Margaret, his wife, remained in their Salesville home for many years after. An item in the Salesville news in 1903 said that "Grandma Tomlinson is improving from

(Cont. on page 5)

Fondly recalls early day winters at Junction Switch

WINTER AT JUNCTION SWITCH

Let me tell you about the winters at Junction Switch 60 years ago as I remember them. I was born one December day at this place called Junction Switch.

No town has ever existed there, only a little gray switch house containing a shelf on which lay a book and a pencil with a string attached. It was here that the Milwaukee trains stopped momentarily to be switched to the track that would take them to Sand Spring, Worthington and points up north.

In those days no such thing as an incubator was available for "preemies" so all

three pounds of me was placed in a shoe box on the oven door of the kitchen cook stove. It has long been a family joke that someone should have accidentally closed the oven door. This was my first cold reception by an Iowa winter.

COLD BEDROOMS

Our house was old even when my parents came there in 1898, the land having but one owner between us and the Indians. Stoves inadequately heated the rooms downstairs, but the upstairs rooms were actually frigid.

We dressed and undressed by the sitting room stove and then made a dash for the

upper regions. On extremely cold nights we pre-heated our beds with soap stones or hot flat irons and often my father would cover my sister and me with his fur coat.

Before the last leaf fell, my father would bank the house, a custom brought over from his home land. It consisted of wrapping the lower part of the house with tar paper and piling dirt against it.

At an early age we children noticed that our neighbors got through the winter without all this foolishness. When we protested to our father that it looked backwoods and the house smelled of tar paper he would reply, "Be glad you don't live in Norway -- there they use manure."

Millwright--

(Cont. from page 4)

her recent illness, and we hope permanently". Grandma did improve, lived to be 82 and passed away at the home of a son in Washington state Jan. 4, 1917.

With the coming of the Milwaukee railroad and the building of a huge inn nearby, Tomlinson's City of Salesville became Gallatin Gateway. Today it is referred to only as Gateway, having reference to its being the entrance to Yellowstone National park through

Gallatin Canyon.

On both the tiny Maquoketa river in Iowa and the mighty Yellowstone river in Montana, there is little to note John J. Tomlinson's past existence. At Canton only a faint trace of the dam base across the river remains, and on the Yellowstone there is only a hole in the high bank which was home for the Tomlinsons well over 100 years ago.

Fate destined Tomlinson to deal in millponds -- although his hopes were as big as the ocean. So pass the little people into oblivion, but by their hands has the destiny of an area been fashioned.

EDITOR'S NOTE

I began researching the life of John J. Tomlinson about 1965. Really, my interest was in Canton and the vicinity.

When my wife and I first came to this part of Iowa (Monticello) in 1947, we had occasion to go for a Sunday drive during the month of August. The beautiful hills of the Maquoketa, lying to the east of Monticello, beckoned us, and following our noses, we suddenly topped a rise when, lo and behold, below us was what appeared to be hundreds of people milling about. Closer inspection and inquiry gave us to learn that we had stumbled upon Canton during its "Harvest Festival".

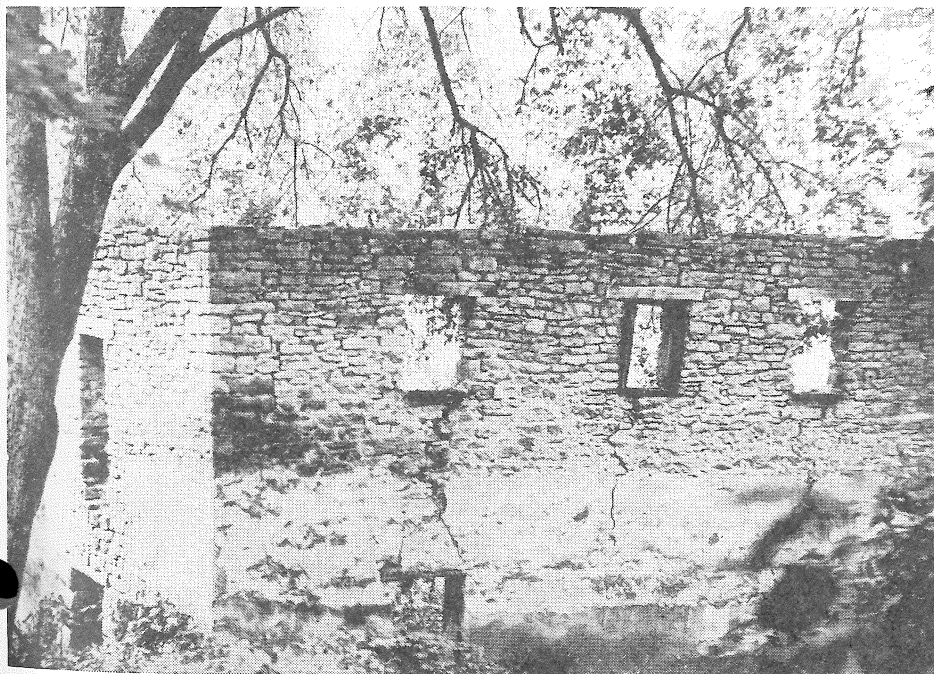
Inquiry about Canton led to inquiry about its beginning. Who were its early settlers? What brought them to this part of Iowa? How important a part did this early settlement play in Jones county?

The answers to all of these questions are evident in the first part of the story you have just read. While Canton is now all but a ghost town, its people are of the same hardy stock and determination as they were 135 years ago.

My thanks go to Doris and Bill Whithorn, writers and historians of Pray, Mont. for the information they contributed. A great deal of the information relating to Tomlinson's life came from Mrs. Hazel Conners (now deceased) of North Bend, Ore. who was the youngest of Tomlinson's granddaughters.

I learned from her that she had spent about eight years with "Grandma and Grandpa Tomlinson" when a young girl, and she told me that J. J. Tomlinson often mentioned the love he had for his town of Canton, its people, and the beautiful Maquoketa valley.

Research and story by
C. L. "Gus" Norlin
Monticello, Iowa



THIS IS the old mill Ozark Springs. John J. Tomlinson, who played a prominent role in Canton history, was associated with mills his entire life. (Photo courtesy of John Clark, Sigourney.)

Wore many layers of clothes to keep warm--

WALK TO SCHOOL

Our school was about three quarters of a mile away, but to me, a six year old, trying to follow the older children through snow drifts as high as fences, the trip seemed endless. We were bundled up like astronauts.

First the long underwear, then two outing-flannel petticoats, a guimpe, a dress, two sweaters, a coat, mittens, a toboggan (cap), high button shoes accompanied by long black stockings, of course, leggings, overshoes, and last of all a thin scarf to protect the mouth and nose.

Make no mistake, we needed it all, but if we ever fell down it was next to impossible to ever get back on our feet again.

When we reached the school the room was only slightly warmer than it was outdoors. The water pail was frozen solid and the corners of the room uninhabitable. We often dragged the recitation benches into a circle around the stove and had our lessons there until recess time.

On bitterly cold days it was unthinkable for two children to walk to the nearest farm house to fetch a pail of fresh water. Our teacher did the next best thing and thawed out yesterday's water on top of the stove. By noon enough had melted so we could have a little drink.

In those days no one took kids to school or went after them. We would arrive home thoroughly frozen and hungry as bears. My mother kept a black three-legged iron pot of soup on the back of the stove and nothing has ever tasted as good to me since.

BUTCHERING TIME

Winter was butchering time. The neighbors would come bringing their sharp knives with them. They would work most of the day with much running to and fro and using many gallons of boiling water. When the job was finished they were paid in meat to tide them over until they could butcher.

Many a day, a half hog hung in our kitchen, gradually thawing out so that slices could be cut from it. When the head was left on we children found it a bit

Next Issue Watch For:

Blackhawks flight from the battle of Bad Axe: Did Abe Lincoln and his forces push them across the Maquoketa?

"Escape thru the Jordan!" The story of Blackhawk's flight from the battle of "THE BAD AXE".

More on some of Jones County's ghost towns.

disconcerting to be "eyed" by the hog we were eating.

My mother would "set" buckwheat pancakes on a winter night, covering the big bowl with a blanket and moving it near the fire. Occasionally, when it turned warm during the night or the fresh yeast became over ambitious, the buckwheat batter would run all over the place.

But this I can tell you, buckwheat cakes and home-made syrup, along with a slice of fresh pork, is pure joy and ecstasy on a cold winter morning.

HOLIDAY MEMORIES

Christmas was the most exciting time of all. We three kids often went on foot down the railroad track the three miles to Monticello to purchase our ten cent gifts at Skelley's variety store, wrapping them meticulously in the same paper and scrap of ribbon we hoarded year after year.

On Christmas eve my father would get out the silver sleigh bells from Norway and hitch the team to the bobsled. Off we would go with sleigh bells ringing to the church in Monticello.

There would be songs and dialogues and a tree that reached nearly to the ceiling. At last Santa would come rushing in carrying a gunny sack full of candy and all would be chaos.

After the long ride home we would light real candles on our own tree, open our presents, and at midnight sit down to oyster stew. There were other goodies like fruit cake and jello, but the main dish would always be that steaming oyster stew.

SCHOOL IN MONTICELLO

At the age of 12, I left home to attend high school at Monticello. By then I considered myself a young lady of education and refinement and my old-fashioned little girl clothes no longer suited me. I hated them all, especially my long underwear.

The dear little old lady with whom I boarded was always in league with me. She would cut off the sleeves and legs of my long underwear and hem them up painstakingly so they would not ravel.

These I wore during the week, but when I rode home on the train to Junction Switch on Friday night I would always change to my longies - more acceptable to my mother.

The Maquoketa river as it loops and bends touches briefly the eastern edge of Monticello. It was there that the high school crowd gathered on winter nights for bonfires and skating parties, and there never was a more perfect place for tobogganing than the long, sloping hill on which the town was built.

As many as 22 of us climbed on one sled (the more weight the faster we went) and raced down through the center of town, yelling like crazy. The only disadvantage

was the long long haul from Proctor Store back to the top of Main Hill.

FANTASTIC SUNDOGS

I have lived in many places during my life but I have never again seen anything like the sundogs we would see in the winter sky at the old farm at Junction Switch.

They were as brilliant and as colorful as rainbows, often almost completely encircling the sun. The whole sky took on an indescribable color like looking through frost. My father always said that whatever kind of weather was in store for us it was bound to be bad!

My children who are accustomed to automatic heat and electric blankets say, "Mother, how did you ever manage to live back in those days?" The truth of the matter is that we were having a wonderful time. The term "underprivileged children" was not in use then. Life was full and rich and we would not have changed places with anyone.

-- by Alice Petersen Peak, daughter of Paul Petersen who farmed at Junction Switch from 1898-1943

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We would appreciate your comments on the publication, and remind you we need material for publication. We are especially lacking in material from the Oxford Jct., Olin, Morley, Martelle areas. Pictures and accounts.

Bear hunt was exciting time for Scotch Grove settlers

**"POWDER, DAVEY, Quick,
THERE'S A BEAR"**

My "Scotch Grove Bear Hunt" story starts with a visit I had in 1931 with my Aunt Arvilla Clark Price, my father's sister. In 1859 she was 5 years old and well remembered the "bear hunt" occasion. It started with her Uncle Billy Clark dashing into the house yard on horse back and yelling "Powder, Davey, quick, - there's a bear".

David Clark was Billy's brother, and at the time, they lived together in Billy's log house a few miles east of Scotch Grove. David Clark's log house was in process of construction over near the present site of Center Junction. They had come in covered wagons from western Pennsylvania just a short time before.

Uncle Billy's place was in the edge of the hill-valley section of Scotch Grove township. Off to the south was the low bottom land along Mineral creek - several miles of it - extending to where Center Junction and Onslow are now located.

No pioneer wanted any of that land although it was level, and today is some of the best farm land in Jones county. Then it was swampy and wet and the only

vegetation was slough grass which reached heights of several feet, excellent hiding place for the bears which came over the hills from the Maquoketa river valley to steal young pigs from the settler's pens.

No home hunter desired to lay claim to any of that area because it called for tile, and tile cost money and hard labor by hand. Besides it took a stout breaking-plow with 10 head of oxen attached to break the sod in it; whereas, in the timbered hills to the north or south of Mineral valley, a single pair of oxen on the common stubble plow could easily prepare timber land for crops, once the trees and stumps were removed. So, for many years the slough-grass area was a safe hiding place for the thieving bears from the river region to the north.

When a bear was sighted, someone on horseback quickly spread the news to his neighbors, and soon a dozen or more hunters on horseback were on the move. It was unsafe for anyone to venture into the slough grass on foot, and even on a good horse it was an adventure.

The general plan in the bear hunt was to surround the bear, close in slowly, and no one was to shoot unless close enough to

make the shot effective. There was danger of a ricochet bullet to man or horse on opposite sides of the circle. Hence there was room for argument from time to time as to who was careless with his shooting and the careless shot could easily be blamed on a skittish horse, so it was seldom that the hunters returned home without pointing to some individual as a poor hunting companion. The old case of "Too many Generals" could cause friction.

On this day in 1859, a bear was sighted and surrounded, and it moved in a northerly direction to head for home, no doubt. Uncle Billy dashed around the circle and stood waiting in the path the bear was taking. His strategy paid off as he had only to calm his horse and wait as still as possible for the bear to come close enough for a good shot.

Some of the other men saw his plan and objected then, and for some time after the bear was killed. (Big bear hunters are apt to be jealous of their own prowess). At any rate, as the bear approached, Uncle Billy was ready, and as the bear turned at the last moment on seeing the horse and rider, Uncle Billy's bullet got him in the side of the neck and he went down and stayed down. Others had fired at about the same time, so there was the "big question", "Who killed the bear?"

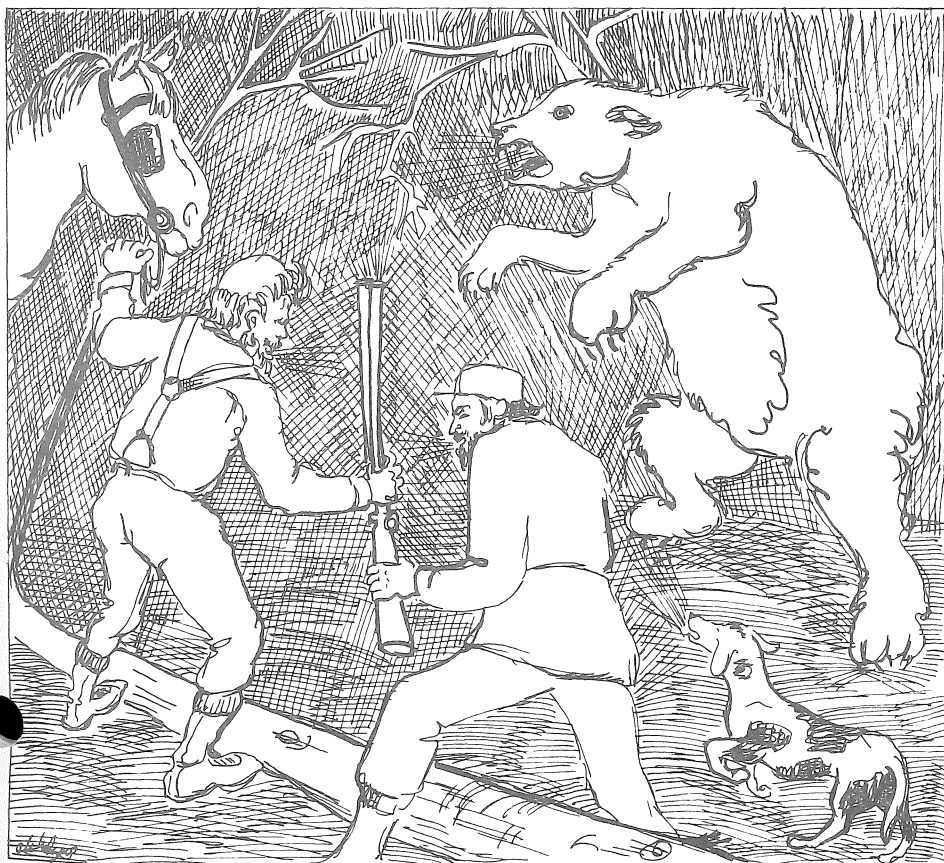
Uncle Billy was not slow in telling them that he killed the bear, and that they would find his bullet in the neck when the bear was butchered. He told them that the bullet was an iron ball that he had fashioned himself, and that they would find his hammer marks on it.

They let out a great roar of derision at this, but it was indeed so, as they discovered on butchering the bear and dividing up the meat as was the customary thing to do. The ball was indeed iron and showed the file marks and the pounding that had shaped it to fit his 10 gauge, muzzle loading gun.

The projectile was big enough to "kill a bear". He really turned his old 10 gauge muzzle loader into a cannon with a projectile this size, and a heavy charge of powder behind it. The ball had the diameter of a nickel and was very effective at close range. Ordinarily the muzzle loader contained nothing larger than buckshot which was effective enough for ordinary game.

At any rate the hunt was over except for the various versions that have continued even to this day. One narrator of this event states that Uncle Billy's eccentricities on this occasion, furnished them and all their

(Cont. on page 8)



Bear hunt--

(Cont. from page 7)

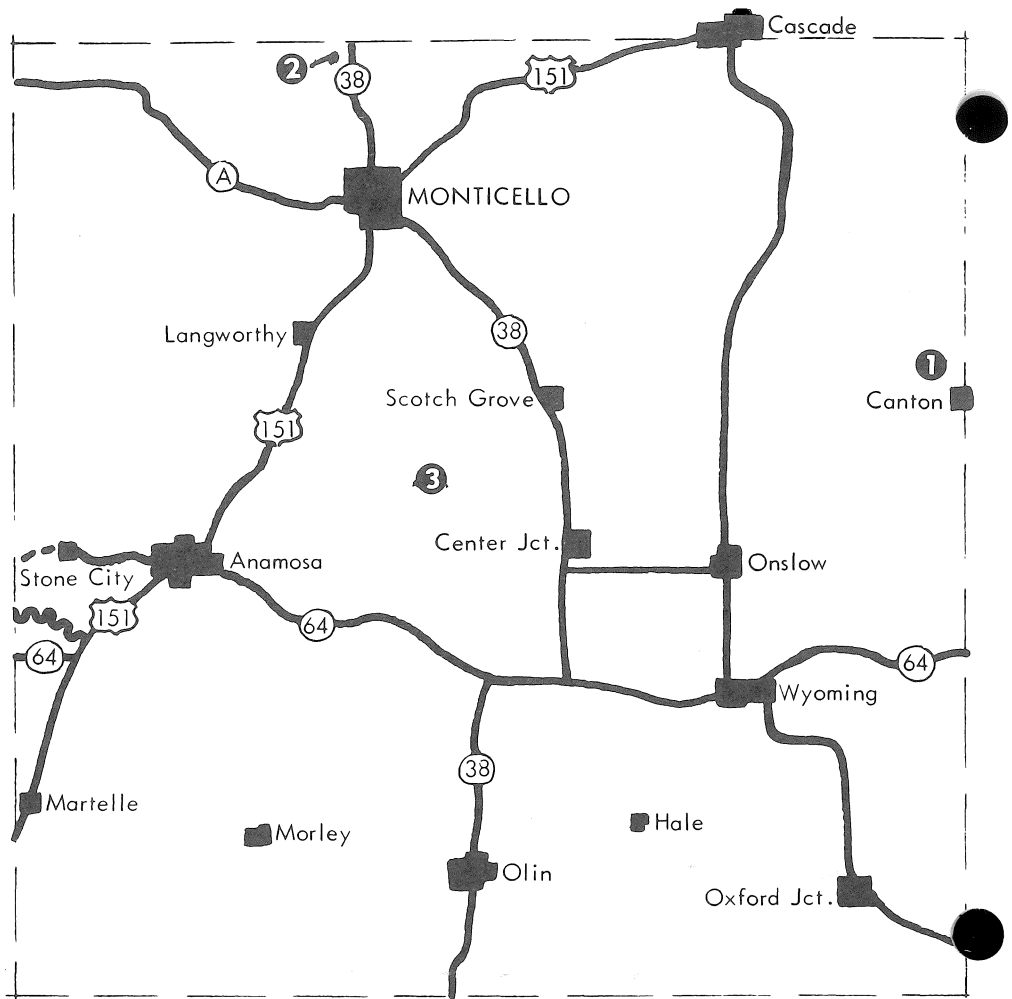
offspring for several generations, a pithy story to tell with many versions and interpretations - each told with the greatest honor to the narrator's ancestor who had some connection with this "Big Bear Hunt". Today, the present reader must decide the amount of credibility he will give to the various versions. It is possible that there was more than one "Big Bear Hunt" and time has confused some of the facts.

This account is based on my Aunt Arvilla's story. She watched with her father, David Clark, from the slope above the "Bear Hunt Circle" in 1859, and has been corroborated by my father, J. Calhoun Clark, and by my grandfather, David Clark, whose farm was established one mile southeast of the present site of Center Junction in the spring of 1859. This is where I was born in 1892.

--- John C. Clark

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THIS MAP locates the three areas referred to in the main stories contained in this issue of the Jones County Historical Times. No. 1 is the site of Canton, No. 2 is the site of Junction Switch and No. 3 is the site of the Scotch Grove Bear Hunt.

- Monticello American Legion Post No. 209, Monticello
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