



Jones County

Historical Review

Vol. 3

Published Quarterly by the Jones County Historical Society

No. 1 - 1977

The christening of a county – or how Jones county got its name

Few people of the total population of any given geographical area are truly aware of just what has taken place in the years past to have created that place they call home; i.e., the city or town, the township, county and state.

While a larger than average percentage of Jones County people are aware of this area's history, because they are stock of the first settlers, and therefore have inherited the pride their forefathers possessed in settling the area, still many haven't the slightest idea of how their town, township, and county came into existence and was given its name.

It seems that in the overall process of learning their history and geography, both subjects which have more or less taken a back seat in the last decade, emphasis has been placed upon old and new world processes and outcomes, with both stopping far short of the most interesting point, "what is here or there, and why?"

While this article may be a bit dry, and old hat to some readers, nevertheless it should be in print in the "Jones County Historical Review".

EARLY TERRITORY

Many of this county's early settlers came into the area in 1836-37. Prior to this time, in fact from the time of the Louisiana purchase, this area had been first part of the Michigan territory, then the Wisconsin territory, and then with the session of the Wisconsin Legislature held at Burlington in the winter of 1837-38, when the seeds of forming a new State would be sown, the County of Jones and its boundaries were designated.

Prior to the meeting of the first Territorial Legislature in 1836-37, there were but two counties west of the Mississippi. These were Dubuque and Des Moines counties. During the meeting of 1837-38, the Territorial Legislature subdivided these counties and Dubuque county was lessened by the creation of Clayton, Fayette, Delaware, Buchanan, Jackson, Jones, Linn, Clinton and Cedar counties. It was at that time General George Wallace Jones of Dubuque had this

county named.

At that time he represented the Territory of Wisconsin in the Congress. Only a part of these counties were organized at that time. Jackson county was hurriedly formed, and organized with a sheriff, and other semblances of early self-governing civilization. Bellevue, the residences of this first sheriff, one William A. Warren, became the seat of government for Linn, Jones and Jackson counties. A voting precinct was designated for each of these three counties, and all reports of votes were sent to Bellevue.

The first Territorial Legislature, after separation of Iowa from the Wisconsin territory, met in Burlington Nov. 12, 1838. At this place and during the session, the County of Jones was organized. All the enactments necessary to this process were committed, and it was decreed that on the first day of June 1839 Jones county should become an entity unto itself, with all the rights and powers necessary for self-governing.

THE MAN JONES

We know now how and when the County of Jones came into existence, but few know the story and life of the man for whom it was named.

General George Wallace Jones was a familiar figure throughout the entire State of Iowa. He made many trips into and through Jones county, and was extremely proud that the area should bear his name. He was a personal friend of Edwin Booth of Anamosa, Robert Dott, Martin Heisey and many others of that city, as well as most community leaders during that era 1836 to the time of Statehood.

He was born in Vincennes, Ind. April 12, 1804, and as a young man received his education in Transylvania University of Kentucky from which he graduated in 1825. While a student at the University he made the acquaintance of Henry Clay, who had been asked by Jones's father to become guardian of the young man.

In November of 1823 he was appointed sergeant of the body guard to General Jackson during his first election to the

United States Senate from Tennessee. Because of this appointment, and the fact that Jackson was taken up by this striking young man, they became good and fast friends.

Because of Jones attention to detail, he was appointed chief of body guards at the reception given the Marquis de La Fayette at Lexington in May 1824. With his preliminary duties behind him, young Jones began the study of law, and subsequently admitted to the bar. He then became clerk of the United States District Court at Ste. Genevieve, Mo., but reasons of health forced him to seek a cooler climate and in 1827 he moved northward to near Galena (Sinsinawa Mounds) in what was then Wisconsin -- Michigan Territory.

In conjunction with a few friends, he organized a small exploration company and discovered the Karrick Mine, two miles from the center of Dubuque. He engaged in farming, mining, smelting, and as general merchant.

IN BLACK HAWK WAR

During the Black Hawk War, Gen. Jones served as aide-de-camp to General Henry Dodge, and was soon appointed Colonel of Militia. References to this campaign indicate General Jones, while struck with the duty he must perform, had no desire to pursue the Chief Black Hawk and his people in the mad manner attributed to the Federal forces.

After the Black Hawk war he was pressured to become a candidate for elective as Colonel of the Militia, Michigan territory. He declined this offer, but against his consent he was run against Captain William S. Hamilton, the son of Alexander Hamilton, then secretary of the United States Treasury, later killed by Aaron Burr in the infamous duel.

Jones was commissioned as Colonel and successor of Gen. Henry Dodge, who's aide-de-camp he had been through the Black Hawk war and was duly commissioned by Governor Porter of Detroit. Many attempts were made to induce him to seek high elective offices in the territory, or to accept one of the many

Serves in territorial posts, has mining interests

appointments offered him by the territorial officials.

He did accept and hold for a short while the office of Chief Justice, vacating this post in October 1835, when immediately afterward he was unanimously recommended by a large meeting of the people as a candidate for Delegate to Congress from Michigan Territory. He accepted this nomination and was elected by a very large majority over three very well known and distinguished men. He served two terms.

MINING INTERESTS

Upon the advice of his life-long friend, Dr. Linn, he was induced to abandon the study of law, luxurious living and office confinement and to follow his interests in the Fever river (Galena area) lead mines.

General Jones' father, the Hon. John Rice Jones, was an extremely well-educated and politically energetic man, having been born at Malwydd, in Merionthshire, Wales, graduated from the university of Oxford. After coming to America and having settled in Philadelphia, he became warm friends of Benjamin Franklin. General Jones' father later became the legal adviser to the army of General George Rogers Clark, and followed this military explorer in his acquisition of the Northwest territory.

Three of General Jones' brothers emigrated to Texas. One served twice as postmaster General of Texas under his

first president, Gen. Samuel Houston. Houston later served in Congress at the same time Gen. Jones was a member of that body. Houston and Gen. Jones also became fast friends.

Among the many notable people who were friends of Gen. Jones, we find every president of the United States from James Monroe down to and including Grover Cleveland. In 1821, while a student at Transylvania University, he was a schoolmate and friend of Jefferson Davis, and this friendship lasted until Davis' death.

After these men left the University and gone their separate ways, Davis was made a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army, and stopped at Sinsinawa, while enroute from Fort Crawford (Prairie du Chien) to Galena.

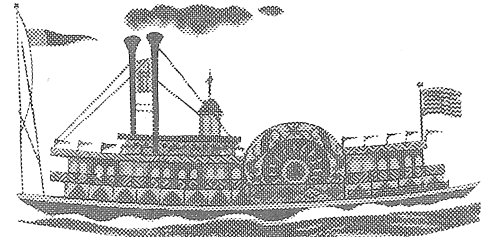
IN LOG CABIN

In a letter to friends later, we find Davis saying he found his learned and honorable friend living in a log cabin in the midst of his mines and smelting establishment and tarried with him several days. Later when David became Secretary of War, he gave one of General Jones' sons a position in the army as Second Lieutenant in the United States Cavalry.

At the time Mr. Davis became president of the Southern Confederacy, Gen. Jones was in South America, having been appointed minister to Bogota by then President Buchanan. He wrote to his

friend expressing his warm friendship and high regard for him personally, but added, "Dear Jeff, do not go to war and attempt to destroy this great Union." The mails were interdicted, and the letter fell into the hands of his old time friend, William H. Seward.

When Gen. Jones returned to the United States after three years in Bogota, the Civil War was at its height. Seward hosted a State dinner in recognition of Jones diplomatic service, but ten days later



when Jones was visiting in New York, Seward had him arrested and sent to Ft. LaFayette Prison. He was confined here for 64 days, and was then released by order of his old friend E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War. Stanton then had the record cleared of any complicity it was alleged Jones had with the Confederate President by his letter.

On July 4, 1838 Gen. Jones organized Iowa Territory, which he named and aided in securing its admission into the Union. He was elected its first United States Senator.

A personal friend of Ulysses S. Grant, he became acquainted with the war hero when Grant was a tanner in Galena. An advisor to Lewis Cass, explorer and military leader, he was personally acquainted with every prominent man of the Nation who was a political leader prior to the Civil War.

It was General Jackson as president who gave Gen. Jones the honor of naming all the men to fill the offices created for the Wisconsin territory, the first such honor ever given a member of Congress. President Van Buren conferred the same honor upon him at the organization of the territory of Iowa. General Jones also gave the name Wisconsin to that State, the only man ever to be privileged to name two states.

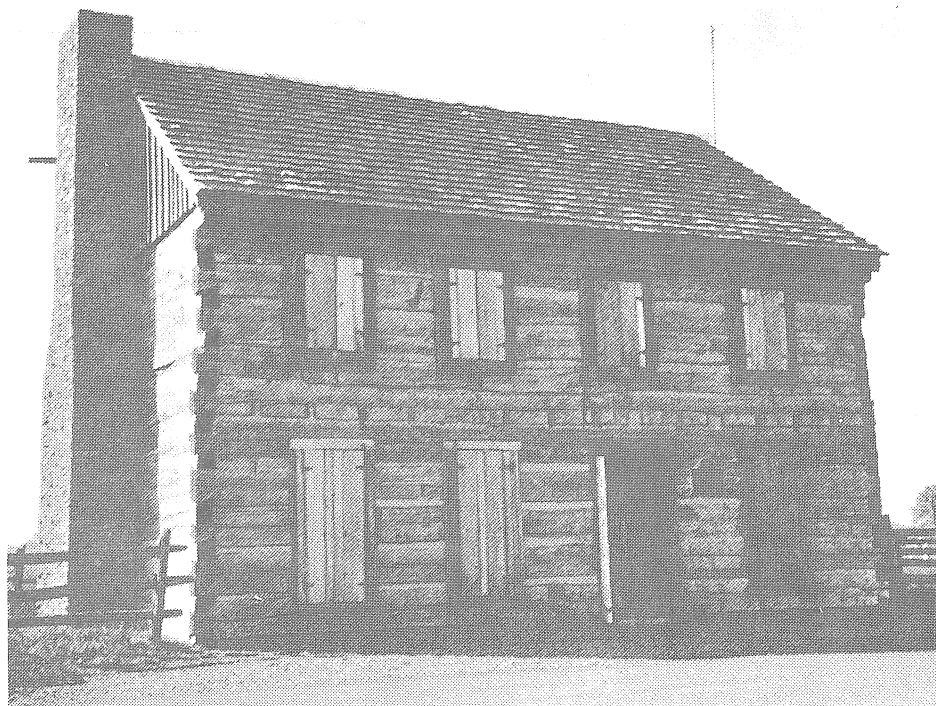
He was not only a friend to those of influence, but endeared himself to every walk of life, and was highly instrumental in starting the settling of pioneers in this area.

A personal friend of Major S. S. Farwell of Monticello and Col. William T. Shaw Anamosa, he visited with these officials in early Jones county on several occasions.

He lived well past the allotted four score and ten, and is buried in Dubuque.

It pleased him to be known as the "Godfather" of Jones County, Iowa.

Research by C. L. "Gus" Norlin



THIS LOG BUILDING is typical of structures in existence in the early days of Jones county.

County's 16 townships changed little since being founded, named over 100 years ago

Jones county is composed of 16 townships. Rather unique in subdivisions of land run out by United States surveyors, they are in boundry and area almost the same today as when first founded and named well over a century ago.

Townships are the largest subdivisions of land run out by the United States surveyors, and in these surveys, township lines were the first to be run, and township corners are established every six miles, then marked. This was called "townshiping", and after the township corners were established the section and quarter sections were established.

Each of Jones county's townships is six miles square and contain 23,040 acres or 36 square miles. This is a "true township", and all townships encompass these figures as near as is possible.

Very often it is impossible to stay exactly to these figures by reason of large bodies of water, rivers, or large streams, or by state boundries not falling exactly on township lines, or by the convergence of meridians or curvature of the earth's surface.

The largest single factor in early Iowa history of surveying was simply the inaccuracies of surveys. Jones county has been fortunate in not suffering from the above mentioned surveying pitfalls, so her townships have remained stable in boundry since establishment.

BOWENS PRAIRIE

The first area in Jones county to see permanent settlers was Bowens Prairie, which is today in Richland township. Richland township was organized as a political township July 5, 1842 and included what is now Wayne, Cass, Castle Grove, Lovell, (Monticello) and was known as the Bowen Prairie precinct.

In June 1847 Monticello township was organized and included all area south of the Maquoketa river of the Bowen Prairie precinct. From this area of Jones county (Richland township) sprang forth the seeds of organizing the area into a county, and establishing the refinements of a rough frontier civilization.

CASTLE GROVE TOWNSHIP

Castle Grove township was organized as a separate township from the Bowens Prairie precinct on the first of January 1855, with the first township election being held on the second day of April the same year.

With the very earliest settlers into this area of Iowa, came those individuals given to the task of creating farmsteads, and they represented the best agriculturists of

the European countries, and those who had farmed from Pennsylvania through the Ohio valley westward.

Such love of the soil had been bred into these pioneers, that it has persisted and we find today, more than 125 years later, that descendants of these people still occupy the old homesteads, and their farms have little rival anywhere in the nation.

MONTICELLO TOWNSHIP

Monticello township as we know it today in its political division is not the Monticello township of its original founding. When first created from Richland township or the Bowens Prairie precinct, it included all the area south of the Maquoketa river, namely that territory now known as Monticello, Castle Grove, Cass, Wayne and Lovell.

Early in the area's history, Monticello became the hub of transportation and commerce, and because of its promising future and rapid growth in population it became co-extensive with the township of Monticello.

It was organized as a township June 10, 1847. Termed the industrial complex of Jones county, this co-existing city-township boasts the same farsightedness today, as is evident its earliest settlers brought with them in October 1836.

LOVELL TOWNSHIP (MONTICELLO CITY)

We begin Lovell township in the year 1898, at which time the township formerly called Monticello township was subdivided, and that portion of Lovell within the corporate limits remained Monticello township, and that portion of Monticello township outside the corporate limits was thereafter called Lovell township.

Through this township, from northwest to southeast runs the Maquoketa river, entering section six at north center and leaving at section 25, east center.

At this date because of the clearing of woodlands running back from each bank of the Maquoketa river the bulk of Lovell township's area is tillable. One hundred years ago the bulk of this area was timberland.

CLAY TOWNSHIP

We find in our research that Clay township found much favor with the very early settlers, and we find many of the early pioneers being of Scottish extraction. The first recorded occupancy of the area called Clay township was in 1838, but it is fairly well certain that individuals, not settlers but scouts were in the area during the summer of 1837.

Clay is even yet at this date a rather heavily wooded area, with the south fork of the Maquoketa river cutting across the northeastern one third of the township. Many acres, however, that 100 years, yes, even 25 years ago, were covered with heavy stands of hardwoods, have been cleared and today are tillable.

The county's earliest lumber and grist mills were founded in this township. Many of today's occupants and landowners still bear the names found in this township's very earliest history.

SCOTCH GROVE TOWNSHIP

To anyone who has ever studied the history of Jones county, Iowa, and its early settlers the name Scotch Grove conjures up, or is synonymous with, grim determination. Of all the hardships ever encountered by early pioneers to settle in their promised lands, no obstacles could have been more formidable than those encountered by the "Red River Scots".

The history of this band of people, and the township of Scotch Grove has been printed and reprinted in many forms, and holds a place of distinction in the historical archives of Winnipeg, Canada, and Edinburg, Scotland.

An entire book of hundreds of pages could be well-filled with the history from 1835, when Alexander McClain first set eyes upon the area of what is today called Scotch Grove, to the present time.

WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP

The northeast township of the county, its topography is almost identical to the sister township of Richland to the west. Its first settlers came in 1836 and were brethren from the auld sod. It remained largely settled by the Irish for over three decades, and many of the early names are still to be found in this area.

It is a very broken and hilly area, but with the management of the same professional know how, as agriculturists of other areas, it too boasts of some highly productive ground.

Largely timbered in its settled infancy, it has seen the clearing of many thousands of acres, and except for its hills, little resembles the Washington township of 1836.

WAYNE TOWNSHIP

It is a toss up as to whether Wayne or Castle Grove townships would be the epitome of agricultural land at its finest. Wayne township, lying directly south of Lovell, has perhaps the most nearly 100 percent tillable ground of all townships in the county. While generally considered

Kitty creek meanders through Wayne township

flat, it has many acres of rolling hills, and in places is quite uneven. At this date it is almost void of timber.

Through this township, from south to north, meanders the stream "Kitty creek", channeling all of the run-off water from not only this township, but from a large portion of Scotch Grove, and Cass townships as well. The township area is slow to drain excess water, and was for this reason one of the very last townships to be heavily settled.

Much of the area until 1875 was simply swamp, and hundreds of acres covered with water year around. Extensive tilling was necessary to make the land dry and workable. Early geological studies show this township to have been the flood plain during severe flood periods, and it is anticipated it takes this role at least once every 100 years. The sluggish flowing Kitty creek drains a watershed of monumental proportions.

Wayne township was so named in memory of both Wayne county, Indiana, and Wayne county, Ohio, from which counties many of its early settlers came. Organized in 1856, it was proposed to name it "Spencer" in memory of James Spencer, its first permanent settler, who was actually the founder of the town today called Langworthy, but emotion from somewhat "homesick" settlers of the two Wayne counties ruled out and Wayne was given its name.

CASS TOWNSHIP

In its early history Cass boasted of some of the finest agricultural ground in the county, but only in the central portion. This was mainly because of some very heavily timbered hardwood areas not only along the Buffalo stream, but extending out into the prairie.

Since that time, this township too has seen many thousands of acres cleared and added to the tillable area. Slow to be settled until 1854, after that date it had a rapid influx of new settlers.

WYOMING TOWNSHIP

Wyoming township's topography is rather broken, but within its boundaries can be found some of the better farm ground of Jones county. The early pioneers of this area passed on to their descendants the same determination that brought them to this portion of the county.

This township has perhaps done more, or had more done for it, in the preservation of its history than any other in the county. Wyoming town, at this point in time, is and has been known for quite a number of years as "Christmas City". With a community spirit not surpassed by any other of the county cities, the townspeople put on such a display of Christmas lighting along the streets and around the homes that visitors come from great distances to view

this spectacle.

MADISON TOWNSHIP

Madison is another township that could be classed as strictly an agricultural township. Little changed since the oceans receded millions of years ago, it was one of the true prairie areas of Jones county. Early settlers found it almost devoid of timber, for either fuel or building.

It was a little slower than some sister townships in being settled, due largely to the aforementioned facts, and the large areas of wetlands that needed tilling before becoming prime farm ground. Its topography is such, however, that excellent drainage is afforded by tiling and ditching the surplus waters into both Bear and Mineral creeks.

Its farmers are some of the most industrious in the county, and its land values almost setting the pace for prices paid for good agricultural ground in this year of 1977.

It is the only township in Jones county, at this time, that can boast having all or parts of three different incorporated towns within its borders. These are Wyoming, Onslow and Center Junction.

JACKSON TOWNSHIP

Jackson's first settlers made their appearance in 1838, and gave such glowing reports to relatives and friends still in the east, that by 1848 it was one of the more populated of the county's areas.

The early settlement of Newport sprang up and lived shortly with the hopes that it would become the seat of government for the county, but these hopes failed, and Newport rapidly vanished.

Like its sister township to the north, Wayne, and Madison to the east, it was an early agricultural mecca, and doubly blessed because of the large tract of hardwood timber along the Wapsipinicon river, the nearness of saw and grist mills, and the many small streams draining the wetlands (what few existed) into the river.

Very early history, and other substantiating evidence shows Jackson township to have had the heartland of the area called "Big Woods" within its boundaries.

FAIRVIEW TOWNSHIP

This township could be listed both first and last in any historical atlas of Jones county. While not blessed with ample prime farm ground, it nevertheless has some of the finest found in the county. Proportionately to its entire area, however, agricultural ground is at a premium.

With the exception of Bowens Prairie, mentioned earlier, which was the first recorded settlement in Jones county, and thusly was a favorite stopping off place for travelers headed west, Buffalo Forks

(today part of Anamosa) and Pamaho (today part of the village of Fairview) were very early favorite stopping off places.

The dense woods, having the finest stands of oak, iron wood, and hickory that surrounded this area of the three aforementioned places, became a favorite of not only those intent on settling here, but especially those heading further west, and needing a place to "rest up" and repair wagons.

The Wapsipinicon river, traversing the width of the township, afforded some of the finest fishing found in the eastern portion of the state, and early history taken from notes made by travelers, tells of the welcome change in diet from wild woodland game to fish, while stopped over at Pamaho (Fairview), for "resting up".

The township, because of the Wapsi and the Buffalo, boasted of the finest in grist and sawmills between the Mississippi and the Rapids on the Cedar, (today Cedar Rapids) and Fairview soon had the finest in coopers and wagon builders to be found anywhere between Dubuque and Council Bluffs.

An early accounting from one member of a wagon train headed west tells of "the over 150 wagons camped just west Fairview" (this writer believes Pamaho) waiting to get started and continue the journey to California and points in between.

Fairview township and the village of Fairview were the convergent point for the wagon trails from Wisconsin (Michigan territory) and the trail from the crossing at the Mississippi due east from whence came those traveling from Ohio, Indian, Illinois and other eastern points.

From this convergent point, some trains headed due west to cross at Council Bluffs, others south to Iowa City on the trail to Kansas City, and others northwest to settle from Webster to Woodbury county in Iowa. Cideon Ford, the Fishers of Fisherville on the Buffalo, and others left this area to settle in Webster and Hamilton counties after leaving their indelible mark in this area.

Stone City of Grant Wood fame, a very early settlement that grew by leaps and bounds until the advent of portland cement, is located in Fairview township.

After the introduction of cement, this town suffered a decline, but later the realization that you cannot substitute the beauty and lasting quality of building limestone with any other product, brought new life back to Stone City, and while but a semblance of its old self, Stone City is again today a focal point of Jones county.

The county seat, Anamosa, is wholly within Fairview township. Home of the Iowa State Men's Reformatory, it is a city of industrious merchants and townspeople.

From wet to dry

OXFORD TOWNSHIP

It took much foresight on the part of the early pioneers that settled in southeast Jones county. Here was an area that was more marshland than dry. Though there were large tracts of heavy timber and many small streams emptying into the Wapsipinicon river, most of this area proportionately was too wet to cultivate.

It took the uncanny foresight and determination of the Bohemians from the eastern states and the Old Country to turn this place into a beauty spot of fine homes and magnificent farms.

Entire families undertook the task of filling out the low ground, and within a decade after its first recorded settler, Mr. Strong, had taken up a homestead south of the river in 1848 hundreds of acres of heretofore worthless ground had been drained and put under the plow.

Within a score of years very little area remained to be claimed easily and the people had carved from the wilderness another show place on the earth.

HALE TOWNSHIP

Daniel Garrison bypassed Oxford township area in his search for a new home, where he might settle and raise a family. So it was that he followed the Wapsipinicon river westward until he had left the heavy marshland. At a place "where a man can step out of his cabin without getting his feet wet", Garrison put down his roots, and settled his family at the spot called Pleasant Hill.

It was Mr. Garrison's suggestion that the name Hale be given this township in honor of J. P. Hale, a man of some note at that time.

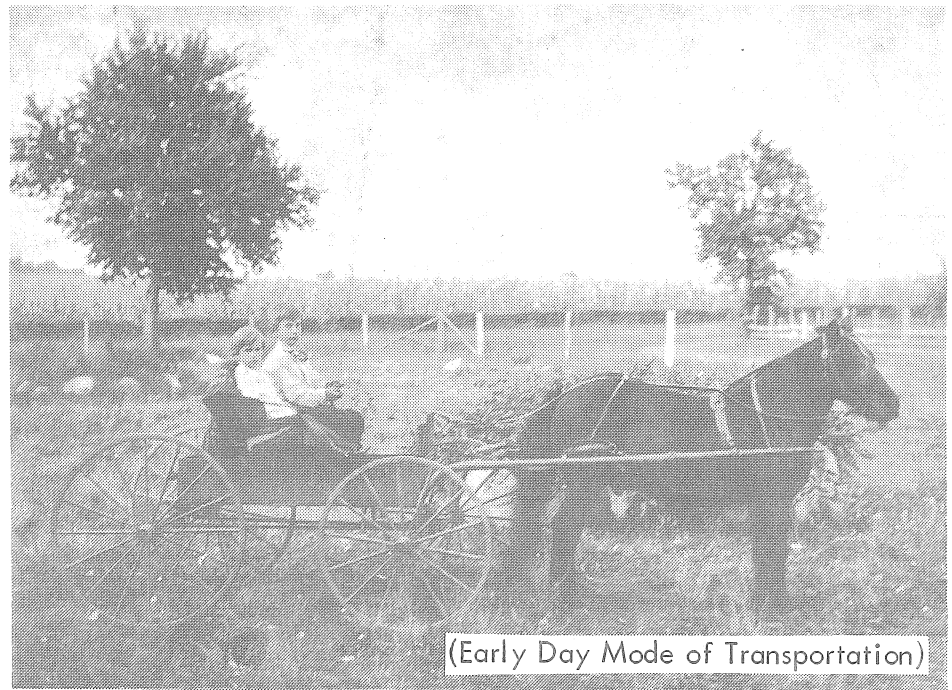
As early as 1837 a black man, who had served in the armed forces of the still young country of the United States, had laid claim to a portion of ground in Hale township. A veteran of the Blackhawk War, and a free man, he had come into this right of claim as his "bonus" for having served.

For many years, this area south of Pleasant Grove was known as "Nigger Point", but at the urging of Martha Miller, and without a dissenter, the area was renamed Pleasant Grove. It was in 1838 that Daniel Garrison first came to the area of Hale township.

As of this writing it can be emphatically stated that the residents of Hale township more appreciate the deeds and undertakings of their earlier ancestors than any other township in Jones county.

ROME TOWNSHIP

Rome was organized as a township July 5, 1842, with the first township election held at the log cabin home of Norman B. Seeley. Because of inconsistencies among the earliest records (before an area had newspapers) or because what we would



today refer to as the only official records available back to that time, a dispute arises as to exactly whom was the first permanent settler of Rome township.

From an extensive research by this writer, it would appear that the Seeleys were first, but descendants of the Merritts might argue that point.

In any event, early records first mention Norman B. Seeley, but almost in the same breath we hear the name of Joseph Merritt. The most extensive compilation of Rome's early history was given by R. J. Cleveland, himself a son-in-law of the Seeleys.

Olin and Rome township's first newspaper, established in 1873, with the first printing in 1874 and living but five months, attested to the fact that the Seeleys were here in 1839. Rome was also the first name of the town now called Olin, and is actually the oldest of the organized towns existing in Jones county today.

While it is the oldest existing town at this date of 1977, it was not the first founded settlement of Jones county as many believe. That distinction, by all official records, goes to the now ghost town settlement of Bowens Prairie.

Rome is a beautiful township, enjoying a topography that would suit all but those who insist upon mountains. Its timbered areas are second to none in the county, and the prime farm ground is not to be bettered by any of its sister townships.

At this date, just a short distance south of Olin can still be found evidence of one of the many covered wagons trails that crossed Iowa, this particular trail beginning on the Iowa side of the Mississippi at Sabula.

GREENFIELD TOWNSHIP

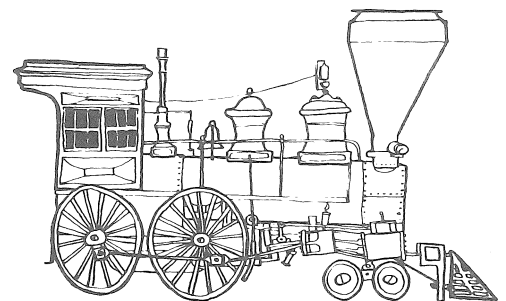
Greenfield township founded at the same time most of the others came into legal

existence, 1842, vies with all other townships in Jones county for the position of tops in prime farm ground. Sparse of wooded areas, almost its entire surface is subject to the plow.

It is the envy of most of its sister townships in the natural drainage of water. Drained by walnut and white oak creeks and their tributaries, the loss of topsoils is held almost to a minimum by this natural topography and by intelligent and up to date conservation measures practiced by its outstanding farm operators.

Martelle, located in the northwest part of Greenfield township, was an important crossroads in the early history of Jones county. Wagon trains from the east, following the Sabula trail, and those from the north following the Military trail from Dubuque to Iowa City and on to Kansas City, converged at this spot, and so it was that the wagon builders, harness makers, coopers and others found a ready market at this place for their trade.

Martelle and Greenfield township were the first in Jones county to observe the Bicentennial year, with Martelle becoming an official Bicentennial town Dec. 14, 1975. It was active in many Bicentennial festivities during the Bicentennial year of 1976.



Little remains of 43 settlements now remembered as "ghost towns"

Whenever we of the midwest hear the term ghost town, our mind's eye inevitably flies to the far west. American history (not the schoolbook type) has always equated ghost towns with gold and silver mines. True, there are many ghost towns in the western mining areas, and most were quite colorful, due perhaps to the fact that no statutes existed during their life span which would control lawlessness, or give a semblance to civilization of the day.

Ghost towns? The west never knew what they were in numbers, as compared to the early settlements of midwest states.

Jones county, Iowa from the time of its conception immediately following the infamous Blackhawk War, and subsequent purchase of the area to which it adheres, has seen the birth and ghosting of 43 "towns". There actually were more than this, we are only counting those officially registered.

While each of these "towns" has a history of its own, and many quite colorful and interesting, we will give here but a brief synopsis. This will include location and duration if known.

ARGAND: This tiny settlement existed from 1880 to 1899 in section four of Castle Grove township.

BIG WOODS: Officially Big Woods is listed as coming into existence in 1847 in Jones county, and R. M. Corbit's history of Jones county places it somewhere in Castle Grove township. This writer would softly dispute this location, and believes it to have been located in the area of the boundary between Rome and Jackson townships.

BLOOMFIELD: Short lived, it came into existence about 1841 on the north bank of the Wapsipinicon river in Fairview township, almost on the Jones-Linn county line.

BLUE CUT: Officially recorded from 1873 to 1878, it gave way in name and location to what we today know as Amber.

BOWENS PRAIRIE: The FIRST officially recorded settlement in Jones county, it having been settled upon in 1835, and recognized as a settlement in early 1836. Located in section 6 of Richland township, it was platted in 1853 and was a postal center from 1849 to 1902. ALL official records mark it as being Jones county's FIRST settlement.

CASS CENTER: The center of activity not only for Cass township, but also surrounding areas. Located in section 22, it was a postal center from 1862 until 1865.

CASTLE GROVE: Center of activity for a large area, it was located in the southern part of section 3, and derived its name from the large "castle" type home

situated in a grove of hardwoods. Many meetings, reunions, picnics and celebrations were held here. It officially existed from 1851 to 1903.

CLAYFORD: This little hamlet is often confused with, or thought of as, another ghost town of near like name. Clayford predated the other town by some five years, and was located in the eastern portion of section 7, Clay township. It legally existed from 1861 until 1902.

CLAY MILLS: Better remembered than Clayford, and confused with it. Clay Mills was down river on the Maquoketa from Clayford, was much larger in area and population than Clayford, and while founded later than Clayford (1863 to 1902) it continued its existence until the early 1920s. It was located in the southern portion of section 10, Clay township.

CONDIT: Closely related to Cass Center, but never enjoying the popularity of Cass Center, its existence was short, and never much more than a wide spot in the old trail. Located in section 21, of Cass township.

DARTMOUTH: While popular for quite a number of years, it was never recorded, although elaborately platted. It was the first name given to a small town laid out in 1840, within the present day city limits of what is now Anamosa.

DOWNERSVILLE: After its founding in section 14 of Castle Grove township, it

promised to grow rapidly, and was expected to become a center of commerce. Fate played it badly, and while it existed for over three decades, it officially lasted from 1870 to 1872.

DUANE: Another three-building hamlet in Cass township, boasting a post office from 1855 to 1861, it was located in section 3.

EDINBURGH: Settled in 1840, located in the northern portion of section 36 Wayne township, it was the first county seat of Jones county, from 1840 to 1847. Boasting five buildings, four of which belonged to one owner, it never developed, but was the sole post office in Jones county at first. The post office existed from 1840 to 1847, then was again revived in 1856, running until 1873.

It was undertaken by the Jones County Historical Society in 1973, to revive Edinburg as a ghost town, and across the road from its original spot a replica of the first log cabin courthouse was constructed, other buildings moved in and reconstructed, a steel and masonry museum built, other buildings for display of artifacts, and general public park was dedicated to the people of Jones county. At this writing, in March 1976, the old ghost town of Edinburg is much prettier and larger than when it actually existed.

ELKFORD: Much confusion centers around Elkford, Walnut Creek, Rome and



IT WAS CASH only in early day stores such as the one shown here. Credit cards and charge accounts were in the future.

Elkford only one of several settlements in Olin area

Olin. The original survey of Rome township was made by Deputy Surveyor W. Barrows during that period from Jan. 13 to Feb. 3, 1838. He reports in his official notes of finding the town of Elkford laid out on the northeast and southeast quarter of section 11 and the northwest and southwest quarter of section 12, "but it has no improvements, and seems not to be inhabited."

This would be about one mile northwest

of the present town of Olin, and while application had been made for post office status, if it were ever granted, it was never recorded or didn't live very long. When early travelers would inquire the whereabouts of Elkford, they were told, "Oh, that is now Rome, which in actuality is today Olin."

FARM CREEK: It never had a post office, but many people during the existence of Clay Mills, claimed they were

from Farm Creek, and as far as they were concerned, Clay Mills didn't exist. We can only deduce from this that the earliest settlement had been given the name Farm Creek, and was later changed to Clay Mills, by the Clay family who held much property in the area.

FAIRVIEW: This village was laid out in 1841, near the exact center of section 20, Fairview township. On the official roster it existed from 1843 to 1904, although it is still in evidence and going strong in this year 1977.

FULLER'S MILLS: This hamlet was located in the very northeast portion of Scotch Grove township on the banks of the Maquoketa river. Never very active, it nevertheless was a trade center and maintained a post office from 1859 to 1869.

GARFIELD: Almost a town within a town, being the official location of the post office within the town of Oxford Junction during the time 1880 to 1884.

GROVE CREEK: Again a location of convenience for the settlers, it was found on the north line of section 4 in Castle Grove township. A post office was maintained here from 1850 until 1880. It soon deteriorated and gave way to Buck Creek located a short distance north in Delaware county.

HALE CITY: Officially classed as a ghost town, it does still exist in location, and its few inhabitants are rightfully proud of its past and present accomplishments. It is known to have existed prior to 1880, however.

HALE VILLAGE: This is the name of the post office as it existed from 1872 to 1883. Both Hale City and Hale Village were located in section 10 of Hale township.

HIGHLAND GROVE: Here was a small settlement, although active and boasting a post office from 1852 to 1875. It was located in section 36 of Fairview township.

ISABELL: A village of less than 10 dwellings, most of them both living quarters and business houses it was located in Jackson township at the intersections of sections, 13, 14, 23 and 24. A post office was maintained here from 1857 to 1867.

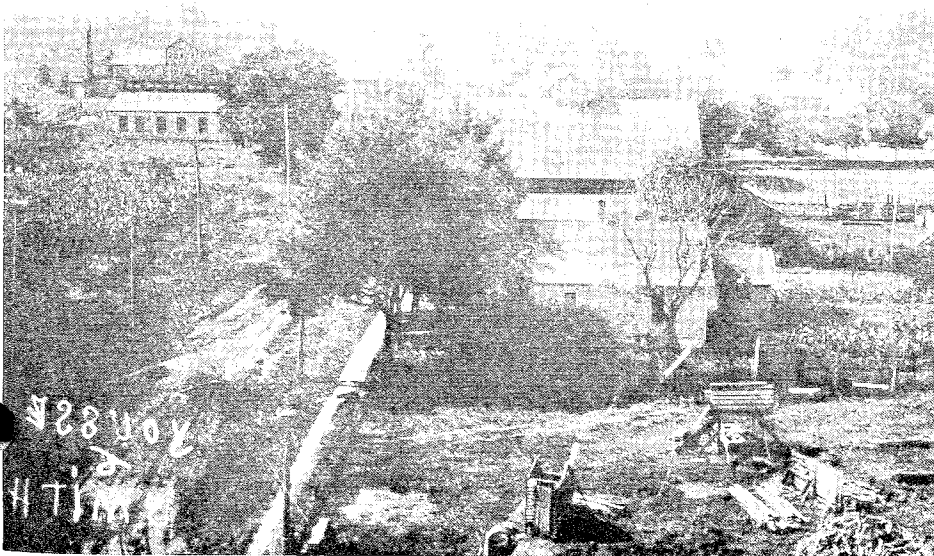
JOHNSON AND JOHNSONTOWN: Again founded out of necessity to serve the surrounding settled area, this village was extremely popular and busy. Known by both names, it was a postal center from 1853 to 1880. It was located at the junctions of sections 23, 24, 25 and 26, Scotch Grove township.

JONESVILLE: We may refer back to Edinburg for Jonesville existed but for a few months before renamed Edinburg. It did maintain the first post office, and is the only town because of its post office status shown on the official maps of Jones county printed prior to 1840.

LEXINGTON: This was a settlement that later became part of Anamosa. It was



Clay Mills - Now a memory



Village of Monticello

Post offices, meeting places formed nucleus for towns

called first Lexington, later Dublin, and finally Anamosa. No official postal service station is recorded.

MADISON OR MADISON CENTER: Officially known as Madison, it was located in sections 20 and 21 of Madison township, and was laid out as a town in 1856. Quite a center of activity for a brief period, it also maintained a post office from 1855 to 1873.

MARSHFIELD: Research indicates that the name was first given to the post office at the present town of Wyoming in 1854 and later changed to Wyoming in 1855. Very early and incomplete history, however, has Marshfield located 10 years prior to these dates at a distance some one and one half miles east of the present town of Wyoming. Being so clouded, it cannot be said for a certainty, but this writer through much research believes it to have existed in 1845 in section 21 of Wyoming township.

MINERAL CREEK: This was simply a "place" in section 34 of Setoch Grove township where a cabin served as meeting place, and early settlers gathered for picnics. It is shown to have existed according to official maps of 1868.

NEWPORT: Selected as the second county seat of Jones county in 1847, it never assumed its role. It was platted in 1846 in anticipation of being the county seat, and was located in section 33 of Jackson township just north of the Wapipinicon river.

NORWICH: Another of the "simply a place" to meet, it served as a gathering place for early settlers in section 32 of Fairview township. It was shown on official maps as early as 1856.

PAMAHO: Believed by this writer to have been the second official post office in the county, having postal service for the surrounding community in 1840. It was located about one mile west of the village of Fairview, but by mid-1841 the post office

had been moved to Fairview. It retained its name of Pamaho until 1843, then gave way and officially became part of Fairview. (It should be noted that Pamaho while it existed was the site of perhaps the largest wagon train convergence, there being at one time over 150 wagons camped here for three days, before heading out for Council Bluffs and points west).

PIERCE: A post office from 1853 to 1857 it was located in section 22 of Wyoming township. Little more than this is known, and it is doubtful that any other buildings for any purpose existed.

RICHLAND: This village was platted in 1856, and located in the southwest quarter of section 5 of Richland township. While it materialized past the dream stage, it never flourished and was jokingly referred to as a "suburb" of Bowns Prairie.

ROME: One of the original names of present day Olin, it was platted in 1842. It did not give its name to a post office, and changed its name to Olin about 1868.

SPENCERVILLE: Another "place" shown on official maps of 1881, it was located in section 3 of Wyoming township. Little is known of it, and assumingly it lived less than three years.

STRAWBERRY HILL: A village by itself, independent of its sister immediately adjacent to the west, it gave way and joined the growing city of Anamosa in 1901.

TEMPLE HILL: A hamlet with a post office from 1857 to 1860, then again from 1884 to 1901, it was located in the northern part of section 27, Washington township. It truly held the center of attraction for many years because of its location and large native stone church edifice. While the church still exists and is active, it is the only reminder that a village ever existed at this spot.

VIROQUA: Viroqua simply ceased to exist as Viroqua, and became the town of Morley about 1887. The Viroqua post office is recorded as existing from 1873 to 1886.

WALNUT FORK: This village was platted in 1854, and maintained a post office and small settlement of buildings from 1841 to 1872. It was located slightly east of the present city of Olin.

ZURICH: A bustling creamery and produce center in section 4 of Richland township, its official existence lasted from 1860 to 1866. While not listed on official maps of the day, it lay along the old Military trail and enjoyed its own post office.

P.S. There was also Deweytown and East Monticello, Sumner later referred to as Downersville, Hardscrabble Forks, and Henrytown, Supplesplace and Irishtown, and many, many more.

There existed many other places we could refer to as "ghost towns". Present day Monticello was first known as "Varvel's Place" or Varvel's town. There was Baderville, Berlinville, Lime Kiln Hollow steam mill corners, and that portion of Canton in Jones county.

There was a settlement or gathering place almost every two miles, and if they only existed as a wide spot in the trail, knowing there was a named place close by, gave courage and comfort to many an early settler's wife and children, for many if not all had left the bustling east from Maine to Ohio, virtual metropolis states of that time, to come to Jones county's vast wilderness and set up their homesteads.

researched and submitted by,
C. L. Norlin, Monticello, Iowa

SUBSCRIBE NOW TO
THE JONES COUNTY
HISTORICAL REVIEW

1 year ----- \$3.00

Check enclosed

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

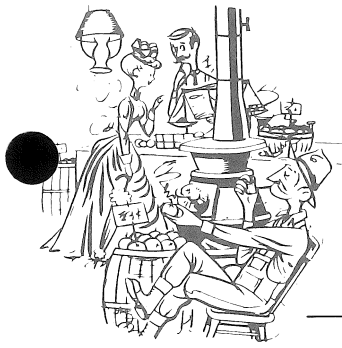
(Clip this coupon and send to:
C. L. Norlin, 323 N. Chestnut,
Monticello, Ia. 52310



Jones County Historical Review
Monticello, Iowa 52310

Anamosa Public Library
100 E 1st Street
Anamosa, Iowa
52205

Nonprofit Org.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 187
Monticello, Iowa



Jones County

Historical Review

Vol. 3

Published Quarterly by the Jones County Historical Society

No. 2 - 1977

Vignettes of "The Hired Man" -- memories of the escapades of Little Buck and others

by Mrs. Charles W. Gray, Sr.

Anamosa
FOREWARD

They are a vanishing breed. The boys and men who "helped out" over a period of some 30 years or longer; some 15 or 20 of them. I have selected a few vignettes of the most "colorful" and interesting types only.

I know of six who have died since those years, and there may be -- and doubtless are -- others.

They belonged to no unions and observed no eight-hour days or five-day weeks. They "dickered" awhile over their wage per day or by the month usually, and ended up taking about \$30 a month with every other Sunday off or \$1.00 a day with dockage for everyday it rained!

As the depression years eased up and wages climbed in other lines of work -- when there were any jobs -- some of them were paid \$1.50 and \$2.00 by the day or \$45.00 to \$60.00 a month with the same restrictions. In looking back I'm sure the "fringe benefits" loomed larger in the transactions than the "cash money".

They were sure of a clean bed, three meals a day with lunch carried to them in the fields in harvest-and-haying-times twice a day, never any question of their participation in evening games, music, or whatever was on the schedule; even family worship if they cared to join in! Some of them did! Their washing, ironing, and mending was as much routine arrangement as the family's own.

Some of them had horse-and-buggys and the horse's "keep" was figured in the "contracts". Later, a few had Model Ts, and one even boasted a Harley-Davidson. The rest depended on "getting thru" early enough to walk to Blue-Cut and take the evening train to Lexington on Saturday eve and taking a chance on catching a ride home Sunday evening. No trains on Sunday! Mostly, they made sure they were late enough getting home to be sure the chores were done.

I suppose, in the light of more psychological education and other factors, it is debatable as to whether the constant

presence of "outsiders" within our family circle was in the best interests of bringing up a family. But in those days one made do with the material and time one had, and they had to be part of the warp and woof of living.

I can see no visible scars, and one could not see "invisible" ones anyway, could one? They got along with the children -- I'm not at all sure it would work as well today -- but we were all children of our own times, were we not?

I need make no acknowledgements to anyone for help in compiling their little histories. I have drawn the pictures from memory alone, but I do hope if this ever comes to the hands of any of them, they will remember kindly "the Boss's" wife" who at least tried to perform a few miracles for them from washboard to ovens of bread.

The Author

LITTLE BUCK

It was haying time on the Brown Place, and hot and bright as haying weather ideally must be. The top of the load on the south end of the barn was as hot as the vestibule to the Inferno, but at the other end of the long, long cable that threaded its way along the track in the roof-peak, it was a few degrees cooler.

In the shade of Old Fly, the big Clydesdale mare who was on the hay-fork, stood Little Buck. His bare toes were squishing the dust with various designs. His bib-overalls were secured by only one suspender, Buck having lost a button to fasten the other side with.

He was just waiting the call from the man on the load to "Go ahe-e-a-a-d!", upon which he would turn the huge beast around and "walk 'er" in the desired length out farther north till the call came to "drop 'er" from inside the barn. The man on the load would yell "Whoa!!" and Little Buck and Old Fly would majestically turn about and retrace their dusty steps to await the next call.

Little Buck (10 years old) never weighed more than 100 pounds in those days. He looked like nothing so much as a tug-boat

inching an ocean liner into its proper berth on "Pier 17", but he never lost his sense of French dignity, and "proportion" meant nothing to him.

"She's bigger'n me, but I move 'er around, don't I?" And who could gainsay such logic? He was a relative of one of the "in-laws", the youngest of 10 children of French Canadian parentage. His sister "next to him" was working for a few weeks for the Boss's wife, also; and their sibling loyalty was beautiful to behold. She was so proud of him and adored him, red hair -- always on end, freckles, runt-size and all!

"He's smart, Buck is! He kin read 'n write better'n any of us!" Some of them were completely illiterate, but in that day and age there were not a few who didn't have a spark of book-learning!

The Boss's wife asked Buck one day why his mother always bought his overalls so many sizes too large for him -- he could hardly keep them on -- and his answer gave a cryptic insight into the economic thinking of one who always had had too little money for too many purchases and also shows a gleam of his quick French wit. For he said, "Oh, Maw always bleeves in gettin' all she can fer her money!"

It was during haying time that Lonzo J. came along, too. He drove a beautiful stallion hitched to an old topless buggy, over which he had rigged a huge commercial umbrella. By the time he would get to the Brown farm -- his timing was perfect -- he would have to wait, of course, until the mares were out of harness for the business at hand was servicing them; and Father Stallion had gotten some beautiful colts for his "labor of love".

"Why, Lon, you just unhitch now and tie him up in the shade there in the orchard and go on up to the house. Mrs. has some cold lemonade ready!"

Mrs. did have, of course. She also peeled about six extra potatoes and baked an extra pan of biscuits for Lonzo was a hearty trencherman and had the bulk to prove it. He weighed 300 pounds!

He also had most glorious tenor voice,

Tie up those jaws and go ahead with the butchering

and being a deeply religious man loved to sing hymns. When his journeying brought him to the Brown Place, it was never any other time of day; so he, naturally, had to spend the night. That meant lots of extra eggs and pancakes in the morning, too.

The Mrs. could never understand how anyone who could hold so much food could, within an hour or sooner, roll out such golden tones without a wheeze; but he could. So, long after she and C. W. and Lonzo had played and sung an uncounted list of the old hymns of the church, she would be clearing the table, washing and drying dishes, putting the "sponge" to "set" for next day's bread and shutting the chickens in for the night. By that time, it was bedtime for the tired men-folks, too, and that calls to mind what Little Buck said that night, when the Mrs. had arranged for Lonzo and him to share the spare bed.

Lonzo loved to tease him anyway and enjoyed his quick repartee; so he said, "Buck, do you suppose you can sleep alright with me for a partner?"

"I guess so," Buck replied. "Why?"

"Well, I was just wondering. I toss around pretty much in my sleep. If I'd happen to roll over onto you, what would that mean?"

"I guess it'd mean dere'd jes be a dead Frenchman in the mornin'!"

And needless to say, there was no such tragedy "in the mornin'". But years later, when Little Buck was helping his brother-in-law load some hogs into a truck, the brakes loosened, the truck rolled back, and crushed the life out of Buck against the hog house door. So there was truly a "dead Frenchman", and "in the mornin'", who knows? Perhaps, Little Buck and Lonzo talked it all over about how it was "on the Brown Place!" I like to think so.

MUMPS ARE NO FUN!

It was March and cold enough to get the butchering out of the way before it got too warm to properly cool the hog-carcase out before it was brought in the kitchen to be processed by Mom and whatever help she could get out of Dad and the hired man; sometimes more, sometimes less!

"Four-year Old" and "Nearly Two" were recovering from the mumps, but as incubating period for mumps is from three to four weeks, no one knew who would be the next victim. Mom was nearly 30 then, and pregnant, and had never had mumps -- measles, whooping cough and chicken-pox, yes -- but never mumps.

And Carl, the current hired-man in his late teens, wasn't sure, but didn't think he'd ever had them. He hadn't! Proof of that plainly showed a few days after he mentioned it, when he came downstairs with jaws wider than the ones Mom was to carve out of the hog's head that day.

And he had company, miserable com-

pany; Mom had the mumps, too, on both sides at once. But "the show must go on" wasn't spoken just of a cast on a stage -- the meat had to be processed just the same.

"Well, Carl, you won't dare go outside to chore with those jaws -- so I guess it's up to you to play the "hired-girl" part for a few days -- you are at her mercy, and from the looks of her jaws this morning, I doubt if she will show anyone any mercy as long as she has to work!"

So, with a "that's that!" air, Dad got his chore coat and cap on, and went barnward, glad to be out of the "House of Mumps" but not too happy at the prospect of choring alone, a new thing for him.

With a long, painful look at each other, Mom and Carl tried to laugh -- just that once! Did you ever try to use even one muscle of your jaws when they were so tight the skin felt like it would burst, and



Mrs. C. W. Gray, Sr.

your head would hardly have fit into a 12-quart milk pail? It doesn't work to even try to smile!

So, resignedly, Mom got a yard square tea towel and tied it tightly around Carl's jaws, under his chin -- only he had none -- and in a knot on the top of his head and putting a square of red-flannel in the same fashion on her own head, she organized for battle. The "wrappings" kept their jaws warm, thus easing the pain somewhat -- nothing hurts worse than a cold mump -- and in the northwest kitchen, the temperature never got above 50 or 60 degrees in early March.

Mom washed dishes; Carl dried them -- this in silence -- it hurt to talk. Then handing him the long butcher-knife, and pointing to the huge tub of fat Dad had brought in from the shed, she showed him the size pieces to cut it into for lard to be

fried down, handed him a kettle and motioned "go to it".

Carl was a good sport, and fell to with a will, while Mom took care of the boys who thought it was funny. They were not hurting any more with their mumps. In time, the meat was duly processed, "fried down" and covered with fresh hot lard, and taken to the cellar.

So the summer meat was saved and long afterward Carl said, "Well, we sure 'cured' the meat before we did the mumps", but it was all the tastier for the suffering we endured from the delicious smell of frying-down sausage -- worse than eating pickles, far worse!

Little Boy No. 3 came along the last day of July, and Carl was still with us to welcome him. By that time it was so hot that even mumps would have been endurable outdoors.

He is one of the six or more mentioned in the foreward. He married the "girl next door", and Mom played for their wedding on the old foot-pedal organ in the Presbyterian church. He eventually became an elder in the church; much loved by his family and friends; a German "gentleman of the old school"; but he never did forget the days he got out of doing chores, and donning a "head-gear" in the house, by getting the mumps!

MAC AND CHARLEY GREY BOX CAR BUDDIES

Corn picking time in 1914 had been delayed and hampered by fall rains, so that extra help was welcome, even tramps who occasionally slipped off their "observation-car" perches under the freight cars in the Blue Cut station yard, when no one was looking.

On this particular frosty morning, the Boss had just started for home after the morning cream delivery, when someone hailed him from the street, "Hey, Mister, somebody at the store said you could use a hand or two at corn picking! We're ready, if you are!"

"Alright, hop in. Can you pick corn?"

"We can do anything, Mister, tho' my friend here has never worked on a farm, but I have, and we need a job bad. We haven't eaten since yesterday morning!"

"What are your names?" from the Boss, while they climbed over the wheels and stood up beside the cream cans full of buttermilk in the back of the wagon.

"My name is Mac, just Mac, if that will do. I'm Irish, myself. My friend is Charley Grey."

With a start, the Boss looked at him again, then said "So am I, and I hope it's just a coincidence!"

They both laughed, but he still maintained his name was Charley Grey. As it was spelled with the English "E" rather than the Yankee "A", the Boss made no

Takes extra help to keep tramps filled

Further issue of it.

Charley was quiet, low-voiced and seemed a little diffident, while Mac was a real foil for him; talkative, jovial, and full of Irish jokes.

Charley never mentioned past jobs, places he'd been, or any other news of himself, but Mac had been around the country completely, according to his version.

The Boss's wife was only weeks away from their first baby, and while able to be about the house, was hard put to feed the extra "hands", so had a hired girl who helped out with meals, at least. She and a sister picked corn, too, afternoons.

But filling up those two tramps was an almost impossible job. Mac didn't eat quite so much as Charley, as he punctuated his platefuls and bites with talk and waving knife and fork in the air for emphasis; but Charley!

Charley had gravy dripping off the edge of his huge dinner plate of meat and potatoes, both first and second helpings, and never less than two pieces of pie, both noon and evening meal. No one even tried to keep count of the breakfast pancakes and slabs of salt-pork. The marvel was that those men could move after such meals as they ate much less work!

But they did work, quite creditably for men who evidently had done very little real farm work, and stayed until the crop was nearly in the cribs; then moved themselves -- they had not even any other changes of clothing -- over to the Boss's brother's place next door to help him finish his crop. Well, they stayed three days there and moved on only Heaven knows where. I over 50 years there has never been an inkling of where they went or what their ultimate fate was.

But they left one memento, or should one call a bedfull of body lice "one" memento?

"Poor brother's wife discovered a "horde" in the wool blankets they had slept in, the morning after they left. She phoned the Boss's wife to see if any little "free-riders" had been left with us!

Filled with horror -- they had been with us nearly a week -- the Boss and his wife hastened to see, as their bedding had been removed to the wash-house when they left, and whether the November cold had caused them to perish, or whether they had just all hitched their ride in Mac and Charley's warm clothing, we never knew!

The Mrs. boiled all the blankets, pillowcases and sheets in old-fashioned yellow soap, and soft water in the big copper boiler, just to be sure. The brother's wife had her Mr. take everything out and burn it; straw tick, featherbed, and all!

Poor Jim's hired help for the three days was pretty expensive, even if the going price for corn picking was only two cents

per bushel.

The Boss's wife never did know why there were none of the little white, bitin' devils ever found in her bedding, but the Boss was a little cautious for a long time about hiring bums, even bums named "Charley Grey"!

BILLY FAIR

It was a cold, blustery night in March, along about 1918, and no one had been to town to stock up on groceries or meat. At that season, most of the homecured butchering products had been used up during the winter, so the Boss's wife decided a nice dish of scrambled eggs for supper, after chores, would have to do for the entree. So into a large bowl she broke 11 eggs and thinking an even dozen would be better, broke the 12th egg.

In the rather dim light of the ordinary farm kitchen, "B.E." -- Before Electricity -- the 12th egg, while seeming a little smaller and lighter, went into the bowl. A split second too late! It was so very aged, it had ruined the rest. Nothing to do but empty all out, scrub the bowl, and start over. This time doing what she should have done in the first place, breaking each one carefully into a preliminary saucer.

Billy Fair came in from choring, innocent of any sense of wrong-doing, to be met with, "Billy Fair, where in Heaven's name did you get a rotten egg this time of year? Look at this!" Holding up the empty shell gingerly.

"Why Mrs. I found it in the haymow, way back in a corner. Was it a bad one?" Billy always drawled!

"Bad one! Can't you smell this kitchen?"

"Well, you've always told me to hunt 'em good and not leave any to freeze; but you know, I thought it was kinda funny how she got up there to lay one, when the hens are shut up in the hen-house!" What could one say? And anyway, eggs were only about 15 cent per dozen, so we laughed!

Billy Fair was a bachelor, a little older than the usual run of "hands", but still young enough to be classified 1A in World War I. Though he never got beyond Camp Dodge, he was so proud to be one of "Uncle Sam's doughboys". He was one of the five that were drafted, one right after the others, that winter and summer from the farm.

He was a mixture, truly. He had very nominal formal education, but he read every thing available and retained much of what he had apparently just skimmed over.

"Yuh know Mrs., I'm just plumb disgusted with 'T.R.'."

"Why, Billy, what has he done now, since he split the party in 1912? I thought you were a great Teddy man!"

"I was once, but not anymore! Looka here. In this paper it says he's trying to get

the President to outfit him a regiment of his own to go and fight the Kaiser! All he wants is just to show off, and be a big "Colonial" again! That was the way he pronounced it! and that was what made it so funny!

"Colonel" Roosevelt would either have been deeply grieved or highly amused at Billy Fair's opinion.

When Billy first came to work, the Boss's wife had a few hard sessions of teaching him he could not walk directly from the barnyard in four-buckle overshoes onto her clean kitchen floor. It was scrubbed -- literally -- with old yellow soap, lye, and water; then rinsed and wiped dry. Four-inch boards, sans varnish, wax, or paint, didn't take kindly to well-fertilized shoe marks. Billy grumbled at Mrs. being so fussy, but he gradually learned, letter-perfect.

On a chilly, but bright Sunday afternoon, C.W. and the Mrs. came home from a three-day trip to Chicago, where they had gone on business and to visit friends. They had left Billy Fair alone to be in complete charge of both chores, and the house, which was a great challenge to his ego.

Opening the kitchen door and stepping inside, the Mrs. was met with a blast! "Hey! Don't track my floor. It's all wet yet!" Billy Fair had not even looked up from his lowly position across the room, where he was on all fours scrubbing away near the pantry door!

"Bill, what do you mean by scrubbing the kitchen on Sunday afternoon?"

He scrambled to his feet then with a sheepish look of apology for his method of addressing the Boss's wife and said, "Why Mrs., it's you! I jest thought it might be one of the neighbors." Then, as my mention of Sunday registered, the look of puzzled chagrin was a delight to behold. "Did you say Sunday afternoon?"

"Yes, this is Sunday. Why?"

"Well, I'll be. I thought it was a Saturday afternoon, and I wanted the floor clean when you got home on Sunday! If I'd know'd it was Sunday, I'd agone to church, of course!"

C. W. teased him about sleeping one whole day, thereby "losing" it; but we knew better. Billy Fair was not so untrustworthy; he had just gotten his calendar dates mixed. Also he meant what he said about going to church. He was a true and loyal member, and it would always seem to him that he had "broken the Sabbath" somewhat with unnecessary cleaning.

I'm sure St. Peter didn't even look at Billy Fair's footgear when he arrived at the Gates only a year ago. "Come right in, Billy Fair. You are more than welcome. You are needed -- streets of gold need polishing, too, occasionally!"

Anything is worth a wager to John Bleu

A BET WON AND A BET LOST

John Bleu came on the scene before the Boss and his wife were married -- the first of the long line of hired men to share the farm work, and partake of all the privileges attaining thereto.

Young, strong and lean; loved baseball, thus looming larger in the good graces of the Boss than his day's labor in the fields might warrant, he was a gambler by nature, and losing mattered not at all to him, just so he could "get a bet" out of the Boss or his brother, Jim!

The next day's weather; the outlook of the timothy crop; how many pigs in a litter that looked most promising a few days before "schedule" -- anything was worth a quarter or "you name it" to John Bleu.

The Boss decided to quit smoking after some 10 or 12 years of pipes and "roll-your-owns". This happened to coincide with his beginning courtship of his current girl friend, who a few months later became the Boss's wife, though she was not the motivation for his resolve. He was sure smoking was really not good for his health.

This was a golden opportunity for John B. to "bet he couldn't quit", but it was also an opportunity -- not golden, or even silver, but "sweet", for the Boss to do a little missionary work himself on John's behalf.

They both quit; betting each other a box of chocolates on the deal -- which ever one "gave in" to "Lady Nicotine" first, to buy said box for the winner.

The Boss, in telling his lady of it through the many years following, said it was the hardest thing he ever voluntarily did in his life; days of sweating, throat-parching toil in the corn fields, and haying time; long evenings when the habit was strongest, and the indulgence of it most satisfying, were fairly agonizing the first few weeks, but he made it. In over 50 years, not one lone cigarette or pipe ever touched his lips.

But poor John Bleu -- he fought a losing battle for 30 days -- and the Boss's girl helped enjoy the box of chocolates his "down-fall" provided.

He was a guest at the Boss's wedding and the dinner following that summer; and stayed throughout harvest time; never failing to laugh at his own wager, and how much more the Boss got for his winning than just a box of candy!

THE LADIES MAN -- G. B.

He was little, lean and wiry -- and some 45 or 50 years old -- a bachelor, surely from necessity, not from choice. He could build fence; work in a timber all day long, seemingly never tiring; dig tile-ditch, or do simple carpentry, as well as regular farm field work -- an all-around handy-man; in his own way a colorful personality, vain, tho' exceedingly homely as to face, and with a peculiar "bended-knee" stride like nothing one had ever seen

before. But it got him over the ground anyplace he wanted to go; he had no other means of locomotion.

He chewed tobacco; therefore, his chin was usually a little more swarthy than the rest of his complexion, but his air was good, and he got his evening exercise in the winter time by the unique method of walking from his chair to the little air-tight heater, lifting the top off the hole where the chunks of wood were inserted, and sometimes if the blaze was low, fairly extinguishing the fire with the beautiful brown parabola his "chaw" had accumulated behind his lean but flexible lips; replacing the lid; returning to his chair, and in due time repeating the process!

A fascinating process to the children -- a highly disgusting one to their mother -- but one did not comment audibly on a man's right to "chaw" if he liked, -- as long as he made it to the stove in time!

He had a habit of declaring a sentence and asking a question at the same time; for instance, "Nice day today, George."

"Oh, it is, is it?"

One day when the Boss's wife had almost reached the limit of her endurance fighting a migraine; head wrapped in a cold wet towel, and blindly trying to get the noon meal on the table in spite of it, George walked in.

"Got a headache, have yuh? I never had a headache in my life! Haw! Haw! Haw!"

"Well, you should know by this time, George, that you have to have brains before you can have a headache!"

"Oh, yuh do, do yuh? Haw, Haw!"

Pretending to be a woman-hater, he was still sure he was irresistible to the fair sex. On his Sundays off, he started out on Saturday eve in time to take "the 7:30" to Lexington, having to walk about a mile and a half to reach Blue Cut in time to board the train and allow for a little ceremony all his own.

Wearing his work clothes and "low shoes", and with brand new overalls in a bundle under his arm, he would stop under a little bridge just outside of town and change into his weekend garments, leaving the work bundle like the chrysalis

of the butterfly he thought he was, hidden in the reeds along the creek bank till he would pick them up again after his "fling" in town.

Coming in one Sunday evening before the family had retired, we were privileged to see him "dressed up", and to be regaled by his tale of conquest.

"Boy, I never saw the like! Of all the women stopping me when I got off the train! Why, d'yuh know, it took me 45 minutes to get from the deepo up to the Grill? Just women stopping me to talk!"

Said trip from the "deepo" to the Grill cafe was perhaps 10 minutes away, if one strolled! We didn't pin him down as to who the ladies were.

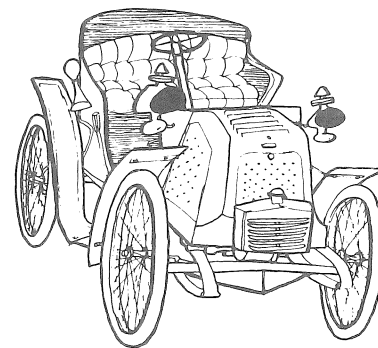
G. B. claimed he was an atheist. "Don't bleeve any of that stuff." Tho' he tolerated, without comment our custom of evening reading and prayer in the wintertime. In the summer evenings, of course, he could escape, and did, to where the "stars in their course", could confront his "heresy".

But one never can be sure. In the field one day, one of the boys working along with him asked him point blank, as little boys are likely to do, "George, you do believe in God, don't you?"

And the answer, after a brief, perhaps startled, silence, "Why, yes, I guess so!"

Which was more of a positive statement, than any preacher could have wormed out of him, at any time!

"And a little child shall lead them"?



Jones County Historical Review
Monticello, Iowa 52310

Anamosa Public Library
100 E. 1st St.
Anamosa, Ia.

57305

Nonprofit Org.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 187
Monticello, Iowa