

**THIRTY-THIRD ANNUAL
REUNION OF THE OLD SETTERS
OF THE JOHNSON COUNTY,
IA, AUGUST 17, 1899**

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Thirty-third Annual Reunion of the Old settlers of the Johnson county, IA, August 17, 1899 by Various .

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Thirty-third Annual Reunion

OF THE

Old Settlers



of
Johnson County

August 17, 1899

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PROCEEDINGS OF
THE OLD SETTLERS
OF JOHNSON COUNTY, IA.

AT THEIR ANNUAL REUNION AUGUST 17, 1899

At an early hour this morning the pioneers began to arrive from the country, and throughout the forenoon they assembled at the fair grounds. There, "camping" beneath widespread branches of fragrant apple trees, they chatted and told stories of olden days to their hearts' content. They rejoiced with one another, at the privilege of renewing the memories of the years of Iowa's territorial life and incipient statehood, they talked with glistening eyes of the perils and privations of a half century and more ago, and, as we have said, they sighed together over departed friends and dear ones.

They wandered through the quaint old log cabins, with their treasure trove of "ancient history," and in a waking dream beheld their boyhood and girlhood come back to them once more. At noon on Nature's own velvety tablecloths, they spread the contents of their baskets—rich viands such as only Johnson county housewives know how to produce, and feasted on delicious compounds that defy the art of the Waldorf-Astoria.

The association dispensed steaming coffee, the product of the skill of the grand high coffee maker Frank Luse, and the amber fluid and Nature's pure and crystal offering surpassed all the sparkling champagne that ever flowed at a political love feast or a millionaire's trust banquet.

The dinner hour passed, the literary and musical program of the day was presented at length. The committee had prepared a series of numbers at once entertaining and instructive, and the best program in the history of the association was the result.

The invocation was pronounced by Rev. M. A. Bullock. The principal address of the day was delivered by Dr. B. F. Shambaugh who chose for his subject "The Pioneer."

THE PIONEER. ¹

BY BENJAMIN F. SHAMMUGH.

Old Settlers and Pioneers, and the Sons and Daughters, and the Grandsons and Granddaughters of the Old Settlers and Pioneers of Johnson County:—

This day (old settlers' day) is the one day in the year set apart for the reunion of the pioneer settlers of Johnson county. It is distinctively *their* day. And, since I am addressing those settlers of our land who still survive the toils and labors of half a century or more, I may with propriety say that *this day is your day*—a day when it is yours to be seen and heard, when you may show the younger generation of what stuff the pioneer was made and recount the trials and deeds of frontier life.

To be called upon to address Iowa pioneers is always an honor. It is more than this—it is a rare privilege. It is a privilege which we of the present generation always welcome. For, to stand face to face with pioneers is to inspire feelings of reverence and foster a wholesome respect for our ancestors. To study the lives and characters of the pioneers of Iowa is to strengthen our confidence in the future of this commonwealth. For the Iowa of today and tomorrow is largely determined by those who first settled upon these hills and prairies. "It is with a reverence such as is stirred by the sight of the head-waters of some mighty river" that we turn to the consideration of the character of the pioneers of Iowa.

There is one principle in the life and character of the Iowa pioneer that has always commanded my admiration. I would commend it to the present generation and to the generations yet unborn. I refer to the *principle of economy*—that fundamental in all industrial progress. The old settler practiced economy; he saved wealth; he created capital. Thus he made possible the industry of today. For without saving there can be no capital, and without capital there can be no industry. The old settler was a "saver of wealth." He was a capitalist, since he possessed the capitalistic instinct to save.

At times, however, his economy verged on parsimony. I will make this point clear by way of illustrations drawn from documentary

¹ An address delivered on "Old Settlers Day," at Iowa City, Iowa, August 17th, 1899.

evidence. In a broader sense these illustrations will serve to indicate the pioneer's way of looking at things in general. Following the true historical method, I will let the pioneer speak for himself.

It is October 10th, 1844. The members of the Constitutional Convention of 1844, are assembled in yonder Stone Capitol. After listening to several reports from standing committees the convention took up Mr. Sell's motion to have daily prayers.¹

"Mr. Chapman spoke in favor of the resolution, stating that no outlay would be occasioned, as the ministers would gladly attend and render the service without compensation.

"Mr. Gehon said it would not be economical, for the convention sat at an expense of \$200 to \$300 per day, and time was money.

"Mr. Hall moved an amendment to the resolution, that the exercise of prayer commence half an hour before the hour for convention to meet.

"Mr. Chapman said if it passed with such a provision as that, the resolution would be an insult to those who believed in the superintendence of Almighty God, and desired his aid to be invoked in behalf of the convention.

"Mr. Kirkpatrick opposed the resolution, because the religion of Christ was a religion of peace and persuasion, and acknowledged no compulsion, save moral. To pass a resolution to have prayers was compelling men to listen to what they were opposed to, and violated one of the inalienable rights of man.

"Mr. Sells did not expect the resolution to meet with opposition, and should regret to have it said of Iowa that she had so far traveled out of Christendom as to deny the duty of prayer.

"Mr. Lucas regretted that there should be contention on this subject, and could not believe that any disbelieved in a superintending Providence. If ever an assemblage needed the aid of Almighty Power, it was one to organize a system of government. He was surprised at the expression of his friend from Dubuque, [Mr. Gehon] that we had not time to spend a few moments in prayer for divine direction. Mr. L. referred to precedents of similar practice in other assemblages.

"Mr. Kirkpatrick said if precedent was to be followed, we should go back to aristocracy. This was a day of improvement. Let those

¹ The reports of the debate on prayers here presented are copied from the *Iowa Standard*.

who believe so much in prayer, pray at home. Public prayer was too ostentatious.

“Mr. Hooten was opposed to Mr. Hall's amendment, and wanted to meet the question on its true merits. If a majority were for prayers, have them; but hoped those who were in favor would not press it at the expense of the feeling of others.

“Mr. Hall said he did not offer his amendment through levity, but because he believed it right. In the morning, if some were absent, the Sargeant-at Arms might be sent after them, they be compelled to attend upon what they were opposed to. If any refused to come, it would be told to their constituents, and political capital made of it. We were to have prayers not for the benefit they would do us, but to make the world think we were better than we were. He was opposed to that. Let those who prayed, enter into their closets. Prayers were introduced at political mass-meetings which ended in rows and riots. If prayer was had in accordance with his amendment, the President could invite some one for that purpose, and there would be no interference.

“Mr. Kirkpatrick said if the Convention had a right to pass the resolution, they had a right to establish a religion. It had no right to bring the members on their knees every morning. If it had, it might do it noon and night; and had a right to require the people of the Territory to do the same. We do not require the others not to pray, but they require us to.

“Mr. Chapman disclaimed all idea of force. The resolution was but a means of testing whether we should have religious services or not.

“Mr. Bailey said whenever politics and religion were mingled, excitement was created. When the motion was made to open the Convention with prayer the first day, he had no objection. But to do it every day would cost \$200 or \$300. Why not be economical in this as well as in other things. Gentlemen who voted against taking papers, voted for this resolution. Were the people more interested to know the acts of the Convention, or to know that it was opened by prayer? Their constituents did not expect such a thing to be intro-

¹ On Oct. 8th the following resolution was introduced by Mr. Hall: “Resolved, That each member of the convention have the privilege of taking twenty copies weekly, of the newspapers published in this city, and that the expense of the same be charged to the contingent expenses of this convention.” This resolution was voted down.

duced. Absent members might be brought in and compelled to hear what they were opposed to. This was contrary to the inalienable rights of man. If members did not feel disposed to come, it took away their happiness, contrary to the Declaration of Independence and the principle laid down by Thomas Jefferson, the Apostle of Liberty. If individuals wish prayer, there were meetings in town almost every night; let them go there and not take up the time of the Convention. Precedent exerted too much influence—operated upon the Convention that formed the Constitution of the United States. If we were to follow it always, we should hang for witchcraft, and punish for religious opinions. People were becoming more liberal in sentiment. No man could say that he ever opposed another on account of religion; he respected men who were sincerely religious; but he wanted to have his own opinions.

“Mr. Cutler desired the yeas and nays on the question. He had not lived a great while,² but long enough not to be afraid of meeting such a question openly. He was opposed to the resolution.

“Mr. Thompson said, when he looked at the system on which the Christian religion was propagated, and saw the excitement that existed in the convention, he felt satisfied, that although those in favor of opening the convention with prayer, might be a majority, they ought not to urge the point; and he hoped that the measure would be withdrawn.

“Mr. Fletcher said, that having made the motion by which the convention was opened with prayer on the first day, and voted to take up this resolution, he felt bound to say something. He regretted the opposition that he saw, and he was unwilling that it should go forth to the world that Iowa refused to acknowledge a God. He believed it was becoming in the patriot to appeal to the Almighty for aid and guidance. He was not a professor, and probably would not be acknowledged as an Evangelical Christian, but he acknowledged the God of his fathers, and was willing to supplicate His blessing. He hoped the resolution would pass.

“Mr. Hall rose to set his remarks right. The drift of the arguments of those who favored the resolution was to accuse those who opposed it of denying the existence of a God. Opposition was no evidence of disbelief. He believed, with the gentleman from Muscatine, in the God of his fathers. But he thought there were places

² Mr. Cutler was then twenty-eight years of age.

where the Almighty could not be approached in a proper spirit—and this was one. Precedent was invoked, but he did not believe in following it here. Effect abroad was what was desired—not good here. They did not tell us we were sinners, and call upon us to repent. If any gentleman needed religious instruction, he would vote to give it to them. It was wrong and hypocritical to send such a thing abroad for effect. Men on all sides caught this up for effect. At the great Doer meeting in R. I., a clergyman was procured, who prayed for the release of Doer, the election of Polk and Dallas and the success of Democratic principles. If the Almighty was a Democrat, he would perhaps grant the prayer; if not a Democrat, he would not grant it. Mr. H. desired to know what was to be prayed for? He would pray as did the man in New Orleans, that God would lay low and keep dark; and let us do the business of the convention. He objected to prayers not out of disrespect to religion, but because he thought them inappropriate. It would be going a step too far, and would be a mockery. The amendment he had offered would give those who desired to pray the free use of the hall for half an hour in the morning; the President was authorized to invite a minister, and would attend to preserve order.

“Mr. Evans said he never knew prayer to be any disparagement. He thought the example of the convention that formed the constitution of the U. S. a good one to be followed. He did not believe so much in “progression” as to exclude prayer, and had no fears of its leading to monarchy. When he was a boy, all kinds of meetings except political, were opened with prayer.

“Mr. Grant.—Did they open town meetings with prayer?”

“Mr. Evans.—No; but trainings were so opened. Time enough had been already consumed in the discussion to have had prayers for a fortnight. He would be in favor of providing a room for those who did not wish to hear prayers.

“Mr. Hepner said he would like to see the Convention be consistent. The committee that reported a Bill of Rights, had provided that no law should be enacted to establish a religion. None had opposed that, nor did he presume anybody would oppose it. There was a rule of the Convention which required all the members to be in attendance when it was in session. Suppose some of the members attend somewhere else on religious service in the morning, the Sergeant-at-Arms might be sent for them, and they be compelled to