

**EARLY SETTLEMENT AND
GROWTH OF
WESTERN IOWA;
OR, REMINISCENCES**

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Early Settlement and Drowth of Western Iowa; Or, Reminiscences by John Todd

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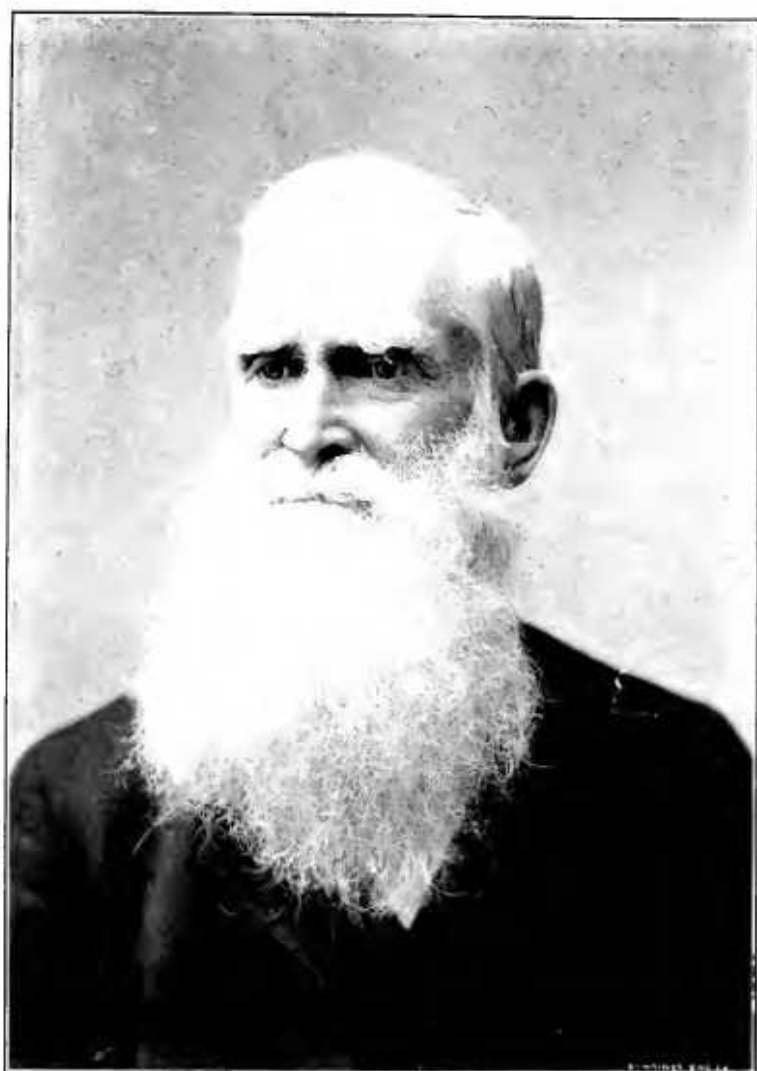
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JOHN TODD

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REMINISCENCES
BY REV. JOHN TODD



Most respectfully
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REV. JOHN TODD
OF TABOR, IOWA

117

DES MOINES
THE HISTORICAL DEPARTMENT OF IOWA

1906

P R E F A C E

THE writer of the following pages was enjoying the well-earned leisure of his closing years, when some who had heard by the fire-side and in social gathering his vivid recollections of early days, suggested that he should put his reminiscences into more permanent form.

Consequently the material herewith presented appeared in "*The Tabor Beacon*," the weekly paper of his home town, in 1891. This naturally led to verification, corrections and additions, which added much to the value of the work. The revision was carefully made by my father and the following is the result. He corresponded with some publishing houses to learn the cost of publication, but hesitated, partly from characteristic modesty, I believe, to undertake the work.

After his death in 1894, his children thought to publish the work with a sketch of his life, but hitherto a favorable opportunity has not presented itself.

Very little change has been made in the manuscript since it left the hands of the author. Some of the original chapters have been combined so that the whole number has been considerably reduced. The order has not been changed and only a few repetitions have been omitted.

These Reminiscences derive their special value from several facts. They are the experiences and observations of one, who, by his varied occupation of pioneer, teacher and pastor, was brought into intimate relations with many in all walks of life, and one who uniformly gained their respect and confidence. By his education and wide reading he added to his own personal experiences and was enabled to correctly discriminate and value the facts coming to his knowledge from others. His acquaintance extended over forty years and spread over all of western Iowa, and parts of adjacent states. These years were years of rapid growth in a naturally rich country, and glimpses of the extent of improvement come to us very forcibly as we read some of the early incidents and contrast them with present conditions.

Moreover, this development was at an eventful period of our nation, the time of the Anti-Slavery Struggle, including "the Kansas troubles" and the Civil War. No other town outside of Kansas had more to do with the "Free-state struggle" than did Tabor, Iowa. Its location also made it a prominent station on the "Underground Railroad," and consequently a special object of suspicion and hatred to all pro-slavery men in Missouri and the vicinity. Incidents connected with these subjects will doubtless wake the widest interest.

The term "Reminiscences" in our title is used advisedly. They are strictly records of events recalled with rarely any reflections thereon.

The frequency of personal names which naturally grew out of its first publication in a local paper, may seem to some undesirable, but to others this very fact will present an added charm. It will be a satisfaction to know that such a relative or friend participated in such or such an incident, which now possesses historic value.

The mythical tendency is strong in the early stages of a country as well as in primitive conditions of society. Certain incidents and characters become distorted by imperfections of memory and of statement, till both the good and the bad are greatly exaggerated. He, therefore, who gives a clear and "unvarnished tale" renders a substantial contribution to history and to truth, which is of value to everyone.

J. E. T.

Vermilion, S. D., April 27, 1905

