

FIRST DUEL IN IOWA.

BOTH PARTICIPANTS FIRED IN THE AIR.

S. E. Greene of Chicago Tells a Story Based on Historical Facts from an Old Diary.

The following reminiscence of the expedition that built Fort Armstrong was furnished the Davenport (Ia.) Republican by S. E. Greene of Chicago, whose grandfather was a member of the expedition, and from whose diary the story is taken:

Spring of year 1815 found the Eighth Infantry at St. Louis, awaiting orders. Most of us were penniless—had spent every cent down South the year before—and were glad to get the rest and recreation that barracks life afforded. But there was little doing at St. Louis. The town was barely a trading post, and save being the assembling spot for bodies of troops which were occasionally sent up the river, and a sort of frontier station for emigrants had not made itself very conspicuous on the map. In the early days the star of empire found few followers, and it was not until some 15 years after that the real period of the growth of the Northwest began.

It was late in the year when the Eighth was ordered out. The objective point was Rock Island, some 300 miles up the Mississippi. We were assigned to places in keel boats, which were extensively used in the inland waters at that time, and started up the river with a well-equipped fleet, including the members of the rifle regiment, boatmen and the contractor's help. The contractor's agent was George Davenport, who afterward became quite a conspicuous figure in the history of the Northwest. At this time there was no commissary department in existence to provide for the troops and contractors provisions were left to private individuals and concerns. The supplies were also brought up in large keel boats.

I have frequently heard allusions to the inadaptability of the larger keel boats to river ferrying. As may be supposed they were not perfectly constructed, nor did they meet all the exigencies of the weather, "sawyers," "wooden islands" and the like, but on the whole their service was satisfactory. It was not an easy matter to construct a craft that must be light and draw very little water, and yet able to transport a large number of men. The keel boats of 1815 did not fill all these qualifications, and yet they succeeded pretty well. They were chiefly propelled by rowing, in case of a good wind sails were erected, and if the water was deep enough near the bank, additional motive power could be furnished by low horses, which were, however, on account of the irregularity of the channel, rarely used.

The autumn leaves were falling when we started up the river, and the weather for the first few days of the trip was exceedingly chilly, especially at night. There were fog without number, and some time was lost in the delays which resulted from unfamiliarity with the channel. There were times when we could not see the way for half a mile or ahead of the boat, and on such occasions there was nothing to do but wait. It was for this reason that we did not reach our destination—Rock Island—that year. But this leads me up to the point of my narrative.

NEW KLONDIKE ROUTE.

SECRETOR ROUTE THAN YUKON RIVER NOW AFFORDS.

Government Engineers Engaged in Plan to Take 300 Miles Off Distance to Dawson.

To reach the gold region of Alaska by a much shorter route than the Yukon river now affords seems a possibility of the not distant future. The government will soon be called upon to consider the possibility of a plan for the utilization of the Talibkask river, a tributary of the Yukon to connect the latter with the Kuskokwim, a river which ranks next to the Yukon in the matter of size.

At present over 100 steamers run regularly on the Yukon, carrying passengers and freight to and from the gold district. Engineers have recently gone over the ground and reported favorably on a scheme of connection between the Yukon and Kuskokwim whereby the navigable route will be shortened by 320 miles. The Kuskokwim can be navigated by steamers for a distance of 600 miles from its mouth, and because of its greater freedom from obstructing islands, and the fact of its having a slower current it is more favorable for ships than the Yukon. The thing is to make a connecting route between the two rivers by means of the Oknakluk lake and Talibkask river, and in order to do this a portage now existing between the two latter bodies of water must be cut through.

Near the northern bend in the course of the Yukon, the Talibkask has its mouth. Here steamers winter, enroute to the gold regions, waiting for the ice to break, as the ice here does not obstruct navigation as it does at St. Michael's, by lying on the bars long after the deep water is free. To winter at Talibkask river mouth means that a steamer doing so can go on up to Dawson and get back before the season opens at St. Michael's.

As the birds fly, just 20 miles south of the Talibkask mouth the Kuskokwim descends a great bend in its course. The Talibkask itself is a slow flowing stream, with low banks on both sides. At its southern end the proposed improved route starts from the village of Kalchagamut. There a slow stream descends into the Kuskokwim, navigated northwesterly for some three miles. This stream at its mouth is 70 feet wide, increasing within the first mile to 100 feet, but narrower by degrees to between 30 and 40 feet. It varies a little in depth from the average of seven to 12 feet above the mouth—having at that point a depth of 30 feet. The banks are usually about five feet high.

For the passage of boats, portage is necessary at certain points, in order to reach a pond 150 feet in length; after which portage is again resorted to over a high bank of earth. From thence boats are pushed or pulled for 1,000 feet of a narrow water channel until another lake 600 feet wide is reached. Having crossed this lake the boats are shoved through shallow, reedy water to a stream which runs northwest and with a serpentine course—having between 200 and 300 different bends. This stream is 30 feet wide and averages about seven feet in depth. Further up it narrows at points to even ten feet, but again widens later, it is bounded alternately by banks and swamps.

TOWN SOLD FOR TAX.

THE FATE OF AN ILLINOIS MINING TOWN.

Knocked Down to the Highest Bidder to Cancel a Tax Indebtedness of \$20—Changes of Ten Years.

"Sold to Emil Freier for \$57.29." With these words County Clerk Fred Mann of Kankakee county disposed of the village of Tracy to cancel a tax indebtedness of \$20 and costs. Mr. Freier is a carpenter who has an ambition to start a co-operative colony.

"It will be a good place for me to go when I get out of a job," he said to the county clerk. "I borrow money, build a few houses and start a colony." "Suppose that the property is redeemed?" suggested Mr. Mann. "Redeemed? I get a clear title, don't I? I've paid the money." "Sure, but the original owner has a certain length of time in which to redeem it."

Mr. Freier was disgusted, but what could he do? Four days later Walter Lawless appeared at the county clerk's office to redeem the property. It originally had belonged to him. His 200-acre farm adjoining it on the east. "Do you suppose I'd let that land go for \$57?" he inquired of Mr. Mann. "It's worth \$75 an acre." "Why didn't you pay your taxes, then?" Mr. Lawless didn't say, but it cost him considerably more than \$57.29 to secure a clear title.

Ten years ago the village of Tracy was a thriving settlement, covering an area of 30 acres. Deserted when the vein of coal that was its sole excuse gave out, the village houses rotted and furnished lumber and fuel to neighboring farmers for years. Sold for taxes, the town site passed into the hands of a carpenter, who disposed of it a few days thereafter to the farmer whose land it adjoined. Next year a deserted mining town, and deserted mining towns in this country are of superlatively evanescent character.

Doubly melancholy is the forgotten hamlet shrouded in the deep snow. It is like the neglected grave of a first wife—supplanted for the more lively, younger town of Clarke City, one mile farther south on the coal road that has been mentioned.

TO SWITZERLAND BY WATER.

Plan for a Water Highway from That County to the Sea.

New York Sun: Switzerland is the only important country in Europe, except Servia, that has no sea coasts.

It depends upon other nations for sea ports and steamship lines, paying large sums of money to foreign transportation companies to carry all its foreign trade. This is, of course, a commercial disadvantage.

A young Swiss engineer has submitted a plan to the government for an all-water route from the city of Basel to the North sea. Basel, on the Rhine, is about 300 miles from Rotterdam, the nearest port on the North sea. This engineer, Mr. Gelpke, proposes to render the Rhine navigable for freight at all seasons of the year by regulating its water level. He suggests that between Basel and Mannheim, the present head of navigation on the Rhine, fourteen dams be constructed to raise the water level along that entire stretch of the river. Each dam should be provided with suitable locks for the passage of vessels and with sluices for driving turbines for the production of electrical power.

He estimates that the project would cost \$20,000,000, and that the turbines would yield at least 100,000 horse power, which could be utilized by industrial establishments in Alsace and in the grand duchy of Baden.

Germany has larger commercial relations with Switzerland than any other nation, and it is thought she would not be averse to adding a practicable water route to the fine railroad facilities which now connect her with the little republic.

The Swiss government and people would be glad to encourage any feasible scheme for connecting their country by water with the sea. Mr. Gelpke's plan is, therefore, receiving consideration, as well as another project that is attracting attention. This plan is to build a canal from Basel to connect with the famous Rhine-Rhone canal that now enables small Rhine boats to travel all the way to Marseilles. The Rhine-Rhone canal starts from Mulhausen on the Rhine and extends in a southwest direction to the Doubs river, which is a navigable tributary of the Rhine.

QUICK AND EFFECTIVE.

Getting an Audience Safely Out of a Burning Hall.

Judge: Panic-stricken, the stage manager rushes to the chairman of the school entertainment committee.

"The hall is on fire!" he exclaims. "If we tell the audience, there will be a riot and many will be killed in the rush to get out. If we do not tell them, they will all be burned. Oh, what shall we do?"

Now, the chairman is a man of coolness and ingenuity. Stepping quietly before the curtains, he says: "Ladies and gentlemen, we will next be entertained by Miss Winnie Wurdleigh, the well known elocutionist, who will render 'Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight.'"

As by magic the audience sits from the hall, one by one, until the last but the furious appetite of the red demon.

Forum: By the distillation of sawdust all the distillation products of wood are obtained, and this manufacture can be conducted as an adjunct to the working of wood in a way to insure a profit. The products obtained are gas, wood alcohol, acetic acid, tar, and oils. From the tar there have been obtained benzole, toluole, xylene, cumole, paraffin, naphthalene, and hydrocarbon, which are used in the manufacture of aniline colors. Carbolio acid and cresolates are also obtained. As a last product charcoal is left in the retorts.

Maxim Gorky, the Russian novelist, purposed to found in Nijal-Novgorod a vagabonds' inn, which will receive every vagabond who may apply for shelter for a limited time, no matter whether he is worthy or not. It will be conducted on humanitarian principles, and will contain a small brewery and a huge ice hall. Only habitual drunkards and professional card cheats will be barred.

MADE A GOOD BLUFF.

But It Was Upset by His Wife's Lack of Comprehension.

Detroit Free Press: "I hardly think my wife sees the joke yet," said Brown with a smile, "and I am also inclined to think that she has an idea that I was deliberately trying to create a false impression, to which I plead guilty."

"One night last week I thought I heard some one prowling about the house, and, as there have been a number of house broken into lately, I concluded that the noise was made by burglars. As I sat up in bed listening, I chanced to glance into the next room, the door of our bedroom being open, and there stood a sure-nought burglar, coolly examining our silverware. With this startling discovery came the chilling thought that I hadn't such a thing as a firearm in the house. But I determined to 'run a bluff,' so, turning to my wife, I said in a loud voice: 'Who's my revolver?'

"Who's my revolver?" she answered in a voice equally as loud, "there isn't such a thing in the house, and you know it!"

For \$150.51 first-class, or \$90.71 second-class, one can buy a ticket equal to a pass for a whole year on all the Swiss railways.

The British Lifesaver committee is considering the establishment of wireless service across the Atlantic.

Dewey Was Always Early. Dewey was lucky in getting away from the Philippines before the commencing of the revolution. Chicago Record-Herald.