

First White Child Born in Nebraska

IN HIS ADDRESS at the Lewis and Clarke centenary celebration at Fort Calhoun, on August 3, Edward Rosewater spoke of a person being present who was born near Fort Calhoun in 1827, seventy-seven years ago. This man is Antoine Cabaney, or Cabanne. He is the "first white child" born in Nebraska.

Antoine Cabaney was born at Cabanne's trading post, near Fort Calhoun, in 1827. This was long before the location was known as Fort Atkinson or Calhoun, Cabanne's trading post being located at the mouth of Ponca creek, now in Douglas county, near the forgotten site of the town of Rockport. He is the son of John P. Cabanne, then and for many years previous connected in a prominent capacity with the American Fur company. His mother was Mary Jane Barada of the Omaha tribe of Indians, the second wife of John Cabanne. When but 3 years old, Antoine was taken to St. Louis and placed in the care of his foster mother, John Cabanne's first wife. Mary Barada was the daughter of Michael Barada, who died at Bellevue at an early day. Antoine remained at St. Louis until 1855, when he returned to Nebraska as an engineer on one of the Missouri river steamboats, which profession he followed until 1863. In fact his river career began in 1849, and embraced river work on both the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. He went to Kansas in the early 70's, then to Colorado and California, returning to Nebraska in 1883, where he has since resided, his home now being at Bancroft, Neb.

His father, John P. Cabanne established Cabanne's trading post in 1822-5 about ten miles above Omaha, and remained in charge of it until 1833, when he was succeeded by Major Picher. He was also in charge of the trading post at Bellevue, where he was succeeded in 1824 by Peter A. Sarpy. He died in St. Louis in 1841, aged 68 years. He was associated with Pierre Chouteau, jr., Bernard Pratte, Bartholomew Berthold and James B. Sarpy.

In 1831 Narcisse Le Clerc started in the fur business, and the following year set out for the Sioux territory with a cargo to trade with the Indians. The American Fur company wanted to keep him out of the valuable Sioux territory then occupied by them and Cabanne, who was their agent, and authorized him to offer Le Clerc cash if he would not go up the river as far as the Sioux country, but confine himself below. Le Clerc started up the river with 250 gallons of alcohol on board by authority of the then Indian agent, General William Clark. It appears that before he had embarked that congress had passed a law prohibiting taking liquor into the Indian country, but Clark claimed that he had not received official notice of the prohibition. A representative of the American Fur company by the name of Chouteau protested, but Clark refused to act. Instead, he gave Chouteau authority to take 1,400 gallons of liquor into the Indian country, but before he had passed Fort Leavenworth the delayed order was received by Clark and the liquor was confiscated. Le Clerc in the meantime had gone beyond recall with his cargo, and was not molested. When he neared Cabanne's post near Bellevue, three of Cabanne's men deserted and went to Le Clerc. Cabanne took a force of men and recaptured them. From them he learned of the liquor on Le Clerc's boat. While not in any sense a government of-



ANTONIO CALEANNE, BORN IN NEBRASKA SEVENTY-SEVEN YEARS AGO. From a Photo Made for The Bee at Fort Calhoun August 3, 1904.

feer and having no right to molest the liquor or its owner, it gave him a pretext which he seized upon. He sent his clerk, Peter A. Sarpy, with an armed party and a cannon to intercept the independent trader. They took a position above the post and when Le Clerc came along in his boat, ordered him to surrender, which he did. The liquor was confiscated. Le Clerc hastened back to St. Louis where he began suit against the American Fur company and criminal proceedings against Cabanne. The case was finally settled by the payment of \$9,500. But Cabanne had to leave

the Indian country for a long time to escape punishment.

Antoine Cabanne related many interesting stories of the early days on the river to a group of interested listeners at the Fort Calhoun celebration.

"You have doubtless heard," he said, "that in the old buffalo days that it was not an unusual thing for a herd of buffaloes to delay a train of cars, but I doubt if any of you have ever heard of buffalo stopping a steamboat. It is a fact and on more than one occasion have we had to

anchor in midstream to let a herd of I don't know how many thousands swim across the river ahead of the boat. There is one particular instance that I recall where we had to anchor in midstream up the river here, but a few miles from this point, to let a herd of 15,000 or 20,000 get across from the Iowa side. The captain of our boat was named Terry. It didn't take much of a man to be a steamboat captain in those days, and this fellow was a good sample of the know-it-all. He ordered the yawl lowered and a crew of darkies was put into it for the purpose of capturing a lot of the calves. They were about three months old and could be easily caught with a sort of a swing or net being passed in under them, and then they were brought down to the boat and hoisted on board with a temporary derrick. We caught about 150 of them this way. Well, Captain Terry concluded that he wanted to capture a big bull, saying that it would be a fortune to him down at St. Louis. Some of us old-timers cautioned him to leave the bull alone, and confine himself to the calves. But he was bound to have his own way, and the darkies got the net under a powerful old bull and pulled him down to the boat to hoist him on board. The old fellow was bellowing and struggling like mad, and while we had him hoisted with the derrick and swinging in the air, I suggested to the captain that he had better tie the bull's legs tight and strong or there would be lots of trouble. But he wouldn't take any advice, so he ordered the bull lowered. We fellows that were posted hiked back to safe quarters at the other end of the boat. They had a strong rope tied around the bull's horns, and this was fastened to the yawl.

"Well, no sooner had that old bull's feet touched the deck than he charged the darkies, dragging the net with him, as well as two or three fellows who thought they were holding him. He cleared the deck, dragging the derrick with him and made for the Nebraska shore, dragging the yawl, and derrick with him, and drowning two darkies. He was so strong that he pulled the boat loose from its anchorage and dragged it up to a sand bar and there we stuck. The old bull managed to get himself loose, all but the rope around his horns, and with that he dragged the yawl to land, tearing it to pieces in dragging it up the bank. Well, he got away all right, but we had to stay there for nearly two weeks working to get the boat off the bar, and repair the damage done by the falling derrick.

"This happened along in 1860 or 1861, in June. We held on to the calves, and took them down to Leavenworth, where they were turned over to the managers of the steamboat company. We had been delayed two weeks by the buffalo scrape, and a delay of that length meant a heap of money to the steamboat company. We had to report the cause, and the result was that Captain Terry lost his job. I will give him credit for admitting that it was all his fault, and he told the company that we had advised him to let the buffalo bull alone.

"We had considerable fun with those calves going down the river. They soon became about half tame, and were very playful. But, Caesar, how the little fellows would kick. We had them in a strong pen on the deck, and if a fellow should happen to pass near them he was likely to get a kick that he would remember. The little cusses kicked as quick as lightning, and seemed to be always watching for an opportunity to hit some unsuspecting fellow a swipe."

"The Pumpkin Show" of Fifty Years Ago

MY KNOWLEDGE of fairs in general is not very extensive. Never being very strong, I generally found it difficult to endure the fatigue of attending "pumpkin shows," as county fairs were sometimes called, but I finally saw about all—from pigs to preserves—that was on exhibition, and notwithstanding the fact that frail nature often suffered from overtaxation, I fully enjoyed seeing what nature and man, in full accord, could accomplish.

Along in the '50's husband and I attended a county fair at LaPorte, Ind. I do not remember much about the horse racing, but presume that it was "up to date," as there were racers and racings almost everywhere in those days.

Of horses, mules, jacks and jennets there was a goodly number. Farm horses of every shade of color, and well matched; well matched and well trained roadsters, runners, trotters, pacers and "plugs;" great "blocky" mules that looked as if they might be able to pull the corner out of the court house; and well matched, trim built mules hitched to carriages, heads and feet all ready to run away or to kick the first thing that came near—mules were just recently becoming fashionable—and then there were the Spanish, common and ever so many breeds of jacks, with their everlasting braying; and the sleepy looking little jennet that looked as if she had neither friends or home and was patiently

waiting for the dinner bell to call her into the great verdant pastures of the glorious "beyond."

I don't remember all about the cattle, but I think that the display of both the common and the improved breeds was very creditable. There were many pens of fine sheep, Leicesters, Southdowns, Merinos, etc. Most every farmer kept a few sheep to help clear his place of noxious weeds and help keep up the fertility of the soil, as much for the wool that the farm wife needed to work up into comfortable clothing for her family.

The swine were thought to be fine; in fact, they were, but nothing to compare with those of the present day. There were the "big-boned China" hogs that were very greasy to look upon, the Chester whites and the great, big Russian white hogs that were about two years traveling from their mother's milk to the pork barrel; and then the little China hogs that went wheezing around like they had the asthma, were quite pretty to look upon and said to be profitable on account of the little food that it took to keep them, besides, they were always ready for the slaughter house at any time or age. There were other breeds of swine, with and without their "fine points," but just now I cannot recall their names.

There were quite a number of pens, or rather coops, of poultry, such as wild and tame geese, ducks, guinea hens, pea fowls, turkeys, barnyard fowls and pigeons. But

as fowls were considered—by most men—destructive things, belonging to the women and children, and of little value other than to be a factor in man's much-prized breakfast food—ham and eggs—or an occasional fried chicken or chicken pie, there were not so very many of the improved breeds, although I noticed some fine games, Brahmans and Shanghai.

The display of grains and grasses was fine. Wheat, rye, oats, barley, millet, timothy and red clover, in the sheaves and in the half bushel. The field corn, sweet corn, squaw corn, cow corn, with its every kernel on the cob wrapped in a tiny husk, and popcorn, all in the ear, made a speckled display that was interesting to look upon.

The display of vegetables was elaborate and very interesting. Cabbages, Brussels sprouts and cauliflower of immense size, turnips, rutabagas, potatoes, etc., seemed to have outgrown their usual proportions. And of pumpkins and squashes there seemed to be no end of varieties. One pumpkin, said to be seven years old, was quite a curiosity; it looked very much like a medium-sized common Yankee pumpkin, but it was called a "seven-year pumpkin." One of our neighbors had a similar one, which he said had been on his mantle shelf over the fireplace for three and a half years when I saw it. It had been slightly frozen on one side and that was turned toward the chimney. I think that he told me that the seed had been sent

him by a friend from his old home in Ohio. Those two were the only "seven-year pumpkins" that I ever saw, or even heard of. And then there were South Carolina squashes that were marked "240 pounds weight"—great, big, coarse, russet-looking things; and Mexican bean pods, with a bean every two or three inches, stringless and a yard long—possibly a fair snap bean, but no account for succotash.

And what shall I say of the flowers? Call them old-fashioned things and let them go at that? Not a bit of it, for there were as fine flowers then as now, only perhaps there were not so great variety of very fine ones as at the present time, and many might now be called old-fashioned, yet, nevertheless, many of them were highly prized for their beauty, or fragrance, or both. True, there were some coarse, weedy-looking things, such as Youth-and-old-ages, Old Maid's nipples, globes, snails and a few others, the names of which I have forgotten. And shall we not place the potted pepper plants as a connecting link between the vegetables and the house plants? For surely, from the great big bull noses and sweet mangoes all the way down the line of reds and yellows to the little cherry and cayenne, they were pretty and shapely enough to occupy a prominent place in a window garden. Many of the house plants were very fine and some that I did not

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