

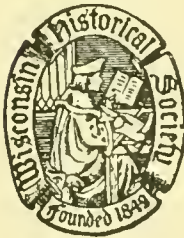
F589
P72E2

F 589
.P72 E2
Copy 1

EARLY DAYS IN PLATTEVILLE

BY

D. J. GARDNER
TRUMAN O. DOUGLASS
MARIA GREENE DOUGLASS



Reprinted from the *Wisconsin Magazine of History*
Volume VI, Number 1, September, 1922

#220

PLATTVILLE.

THE subscriber has laid out a new Town at Plattville, in Iowa County, Michigan Territory.

Plattville is handsomely situated on the border of the Prairie, in a grove that connects with the extensive Forest on the Platte Rivers; and is 24 miles North of Galena, 18 miles South-west of Mineral Point, and 12 miles East of the Mississippi; on the main Stage road from Galena to Prairie Du Chien.

The surrounding country is inferior to none, in fertility of soil, and adaptedness to agriculture. The timber on the Platte rivers, is of excellent quality, and abundant; and very convenient to the farming land on the Prairie; the little Platte, which runs within a mile and a half of the Town, is a valuable Mill stream, affording fine falls in various places for mill sites, and a sufficient volume of water at all seasons of the year, to carry extensive Machinery; a Saw mill is already in operation on this stream, 3 miles below Plattville, and another a few miles above Springs and streams of purest water abound in every part of the contiguous Country. In addition to those advantages, it may be safely affirmed that the mineral wealth of this region is equal to that of any other portion of the Mining District; attracted by such inducements, an industrious, intelligent and moral population is settling and improving the country rapidly, and purchasing the lands as they come into market.

Persons wishing to purchase property, and settle in the Territory; would do well to explore this section of Country, before purchasing.

JOHN H. ROUNTREE.

Sept. 19, 1835.

43—41.

EARLY DAYS IN PLATTEVILLE

The three articles which follow, from Hon. D. J. Gardner, Rev. Truman O. Douglass, and his wife, Maria Greene Douglass, all relate to the early history of Platteville and practically to the years prior to the close of the Civil War. The editor is very glad to present these contributions to the readers of the magazine. They are all well written, by responsible first-hand witnesses who, though venerable in years, are gifted with excellent memories and trained to careful, discriminating statement in historical matters. It will be noted that, whereas the two Douglass papers deal mainly with reminiscences of those pioneers whose interests centered in the school, the Academy, and the Presbyterian or Congregational Church, the reminiscences of Mr. Gardner deal with incidents more characteristic of the mining frontier. In a way, therefore, Mr. Gardner brings to us the atmosphere of the earliest Platteville, the Douglasses that of a somewhat mature community.

Platteville became a lead mining center with the discovery of rich deposits in 1827, the year that miners began fully to prospect the Wisconsin mining area. In the fall of that year John H. Rountree became part owner, by purchase, of one of the principal diggings opened in the spring. He and his partner, J. B. Campbell, are said to have taken out within a year mineral to the value of \$30,000.¹ They erected a log furnace, opened a tavern and store, and otherwise prepared to take advantage of the trade which the mineral wealth attracted to the vicinity. Communication was maintained with Galena, which continued to be the metropolis of the lead region, though Mineral Point soon became the leading town in the Wisconsin field. In 1829 "Platte River," as the place was at first called, was given a post office.

Soon after the Black Hawk War the Platteville mines began to attract wider attention. In 1834 a "rush" of small proportions occurred, which may have been due in part to the recent survey

¹ Castello N. Holford, *History of Grant County* (Lancaster, 1900), 454.

of the lands.² The increase in population justified the platting of the town, and in September, 1835 Major Rountree placed in a Galena paper the advertisement of the site of Platteville which is herein reproduced. It will be observed that among the advantages claimed for the place were a fertile soil, a good supply of timber, and a fine water power stream, in addition to the mineral wealth.

The village grew by irregular accretions to its mining population, and little by little, especially after 1846, when miners were permitted to enter at the land office the lands containing their mines, farming in the fertile prairies and adjacent openings came to furnish a more permanent basis of its prosperity. The census of 1850 assigns to the town of Platteville, including the village, a population of 2171. Just how many the village contained at that time cannot be ascertained. In 1855 it had 1427 when the entire town had 2789. An analysis of the population in 1850 shows that 1552 were American born, 616 foreign born. Of the American born 573 were natives of Wisconsin, 181 of Illinois, 164 of Pennsylvania, 142 of New York, and 122 of Ohio. Natives of the southern states aggregated 162; of the northern, aside from Wisconsin, 817. This reveals how rapid must have been the influx of emigrants from the northern states after the first flush of the mining boom had passed. Of the foreign element England was credited with 349, Germany 145, Ireland 69, Canada 28. There were 5 Scots, 4 Welshmen, 9 Norwegians, 4 Dutch, 2 Swiss, and 1 Frenchman. This is the social environment into which the narratives by Mr. and Mrs. Douglass fit. The Gardner narrative, except for the incident about General Grant, must be referred to a condition which by 1850 was already somewhat altered.

The footnotes appended to the articles by Dr. Douglass and Mrs. Douglass were very kindly furnished by Hon. James W. Murphy of Platteville, whose knowledge of the antiquities of the place is at once extensive and minute.

From the pen of Mr. Josiah L. Pickard, who figures so prominently in the article by Mrs. Douglass, this Society has an

² The range of townships which includes the town of Platteville, range one west, was surveyed in 1833 by Sylvester Sibley.

extended manuscript of great value as a source for educational history. That manuscript will be published in later issues of the magazine.

INCIDENTS IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE WISCONSIN LEAD MINES

D. J. GARDNER

John H. Rountree, who came here from Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, early in 1827, and who remained here until his death, was the first permanent settler of Platteville, although there were hunters and trappers in this vicinity many years prior. Grant County takes its name from one of these hardy men. A man named Grant came into the county and located on the river bearing his name, in the year 1816. He had a kettle which fitted over his head and which he frequently wore in that manner. An incident of him is related by one of the early settlers. While attending his traps on the Grant River, a band of Indians came upon him suddenly and one of them rushed up and struck him on the head with his tomahawk, which did no more damage than to produce a ring from the kettle. The Indian turned back and yelled, "Manitou," and the whole band fled.

Prior to the advent of the white man the Indians mined and smelted lead ore here quite extensively, and when the early white settlers came they used the same method employed by the Indians, which was known as the "log furnace." In the early forties the Yorkshire English brought in the blast furnace. Two of these furnaces were in operation for many years here, the Coates furnace and the Straw furnace, the latter being dismantled about twelve years ago. The first white settlers came from southern Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri, and a little later there came numbers of Europeans. All of the lead was hauled to Galena by ox team and shipped from there by boat to St.

Louis and other points down the river. Dubuque is as close to Platteville as Galena, but the road to Galena, until recent years, has been much better than the road to Dubuque. The average lead ore of the early-day mining ran from seventy-five to eighty-eight per cent metallic lead. Most of the early mining was shallow, and in fact many of the largest bodies of lead ore were discovered at the grass roots. The Rountree lode was discovered in 1827 in a ground-hog den. The Finney patch, one of the most extensive lodes ever worked here, was discovered in 1828 at the grass roots. This mine turned out nearly five million pounds of lead ore and was not over thirty feet deep in the lowest place. Mining was the principal occupation of this region until about the year 1846, when agriculture began to have a good start.

One of the early settlers of Platteville was Jacob Hoosier, who came here in 1828 and located on a tract of land about a mile south of this city. In the year 1831 he built a house on this piece of land, and in 1846 he built a stone house and occupied it until the date of his death. His daughter, Mrs. Frank Young, now owns the farm. This farm has never been out of the family since it was first occupied by Mr. Hoosier. Mr. Hoosier was noted as a crack shot with the rifle and a race-horse man. In the fall of 1848 he participated in one of the most unique horse races that was ever run in Wisconsin. As related to me by Mr. Hoosier, he and Mr. James Vineyard, who was also a race-horse man, had had a race in which Mr. Vineyard came off victorious. Mr. Hoosier then went down to Edwardsville, Illinois, and purchased a sorrel mare which he called Big Ann, and he turned her over to his jockey to care for and train. In the meantime he fixed up another race with Mr. Vineyard. Mr. Vineyard found out from the jockey that Mr. Hoosier had purchased a new horse, and he and some of his friends and the jockey stole the horse out one night, tested her



fraternally yours
John H. Rowntree

speed, and found that she was much more fleet than the Vineyard horse. They made an arrangement with Mr. Hoosier's jockey, by the terms of which he was to hold Big Ann in and let the Vineyard horse win the race.

In some unaccountable manner Mr. Hoosier found out what had been done but did not let it be known and kept on putting up money on Big Ann until he exhausted his resources. The morning of the race he put up an additional five hundred dollars brought to him by Tim Barr from Beetown in this county. He also drove up all of his horses and cattle to the place of the race and bet them against money. Judge Paine, one of the early-day lawyers of Platteville, was the stake holder. The race was run in a straight mile track about two miles northeast of the city of Platteville. All of the lovers of horse racing in southwestern Wisconsin were on the ground the day of the race, and Mr. Vineyard and his friends felt sure of breaking Mr. Hoosier.

As the hour approached, the jockey, all togged out for the race, was walking the mare up and down the track when Mr. Hoosier stuck his finger in his mouth and blew a shrill whistle and a young man by the name of Gregory, dressed for the race, came out of the hazel brush. Mr. Hoosier whipped out a brace of pistols, walked up to his former jockey, and said, "You d— thief, stand aside," and picked up the young man from the hazel brush and put him on Big Ann, at the same time saying, "You win this race or I will kill you." At this juncture of affairs excitement was running high and the Vineyard forces were trying to withdraw their money, but the unwritten law of the mining district would not permit it and Judge Paine held fast to the stakes. The race was run and Big Ann came in first, winning her owner about ten thousand dollars. After the race was over, Mr. Hoosier went up to Big Ann, put his arm around her neck, and patted her and said, "Ann, horse racing and me is done. You will not have

to work any more or run in any more races." He gathered in his boodle and went back to his farm home and never tried racing any more. If some of the modern race-horse men would follow his example they would be much better off. Mr. Hoosier lived about a mile from my father's farm, and Big Ann lived until she was about thirty-five years old. I remember seeing her in the early seventies.

Most of the early settlers coming to this vicinity brought their rifles with them and many of them brought pistols and bowie knives. I very distinctly remember the first governor of Wisconsin, Nelson Dewey, who was living at Cassville, Wisconsin, in 1878. He had had some trouble with a doctor then living in the town. I overheard some remarks that the doctor had made and I went into the Governor's room in the hotel and told him to be careful, that the doctor had a revolver. Whereupon Governor Dewey said, "If he pulls a revolver on me, I will cut his d— head off," at the same time pulling out of his inside vest pocket a bowie knife.

There were a great many rifle matches held here in the early days, the prize usually being a fat three- or four-year-old steer. The best shot had the first choice of hind quarters, the next best shot had the second choice of hind quarters, the third best shot had the first choice of fore quarters, the fourth best shot had the second choice of fore quarters, and the next best shot took the hide and tallow. Mr. Jacob Hoosier quite often went away from these matches with the choice of hind quarters. There were many other crack rifle shots in the Wisconsin lead mines, and every early settler had from one to three rifles hanging up near the fireplace with all ammunition ready for any emergency. They were all of them muzzle loaders. Mr. Hoosier had one gun that he called "Long Tom." I think it weighed about fifteen pounds, and he had another rifle which he called "Old Rusty." My father, who came here

in 1840 from Ottawa, Illinois, was also a crack rifle shot. He had two of the famous old-fashioned guns. Col. Joseph Dickson, who came here in 1827 and who lived about two miles west of my father's residence, and who was noted as an Indian fighter, was also a crack rifle shot.³

From 1850 to 1855 there was an exodus of the early settlers from here to the California gold fields. Mr. Jacob Hoosier and his eldest son crossed the plains in 1850, and men who were in his company have related to me that Mr. Hoosier and his son supplied the train with fresh meat all along the trip. They had two saddle horses with them and killed a large amount of game on the way.

Many of the early settlers of Platteville were personally acquainted with General Grant before he went into the Civil War from Galena, and when he was a candidate for the presidency in 1868 he visited Platteville and made a short speech in the normal school here. A new addition to the school was dedicated at that time. General Grant came again in 1878 after he had made his tour around the world, and had a public reception at the residence of Major Rountree; while there some gentlemen from Lancaster, Wisconsin, wished to talk to him over a telephone, which had been built by Capt. W. H. Beebe—one of the first telephone lines in southern Wisconsin, if not the first. General Grant was sent for and came to Captain Beebe's office, and for the first time in his life used the telephone.

Another very interesting character of the early days was a man by the name of Colonel Teller. He started mining on lands now belonging to Hon. J. W. Murphy just southwest of this city, and sunk a shaft without the aid of a partner. In doing this he used what was known to early miners here as an "Indian ladder." After working for some time the Colonel became short of funds and could not obtain credit at the stores. His wife pleaded with him in vain to stop the

³ For Colonel Dickson's own narrative, see *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, v, 315-317.

mining and go at something else which would give them a livelihood, but he insisted that there was a large body of lead ore under his shaft. He left home one morning intending it to be his last day in the shaft. He did not return in the evening, and his wife waited until about midnight and then called upon some friends to assist her. A searching party was formed and they went toward the prospect. When they arrived at the shaft, they heard the Colonel shouting at the top of his voice. One of the men went down the ladder and tried to get him out, when he saw a sheet of lead ore covering the entire bottom of the shaft. The Colonel during the day had struck it rich and had got beside himself in his excitement. This lode made him a few thousand dollars, and a few years afterwards he left here.

One of our oldest living residents at Platteville is Mr. Frank Rowe, who came here in the forties and who crossed the plains to California with an ox team in 1852, leaving Platteville on the last day of March. There were five ox teams in the company. Close to the mouth of Shell Creek, Nebraska, the company was attacked by Indians, but fortunately at that moment another company bound for California came in sight. A corral was quickly made of the wagons, and the oxen, horses, and non-combatants were put in the center. The battle lasted for a considerable time, and finally the Indians withdrew leaving nine of their number dead. This company had difficulty with the Indians not far from Salt Lake City, but no one was hurt. After something over three months' travel the company arrived at Placerville, commonly called "Hangtown," California. Mr. Rowe states that while in California he called upon the family of Mr. James R. Vineyard. Mr. Vineyard had preceded Mr. Rowe to California and never returned to Platteville. Mr. Rowe was present at the "Hoosier horse race." He is now past ninety years of age and in possession of good health.

Dr. William Davidson came to Wisconsin Territory in 1828 and lived close to my father's home. He also discovered in 1830 one of the large bodies of lead ore. His principal occupation all of his lifetime was mining, although he used to pull teeth, bleed, and dispense calomel and other early-day medicine, and many an old settler has been the victim of his "pullicans" and bleeding methods. He was frequently a guest at our table for Christmas and Thanksgiving dinners.⁴

Another famous character who lived near my father's farm was a Mr. James Clark, who was nick-named "Boots." He was killed in his cabin by another miner, named Kerns, during the course of a heated political argument. Kerns was arrested, tried, and acquitted. It was shown in his trial that "Boots" was a bad man generally and always carried a bowie knife, and some witnesses were introduced who showed wounds which they had received in encounters with "Boots" and his famous bowie knife. Mr. Clark had no relatives in this part of the country. My father discovered a body of lead ore and called it "Boots Range" because "Boots" had his cabin on this range.

PLATTEVILLE IN ITS FIRST QUARTER CENTURY

TRUMAN O. DOUGLASS

My biography can be written in three sentences: born in Illinois; raised in Wisconsin; lived in Iowa. California is simply a remnant, and doesn't count.

On my father's side I belong to the innumerable Douglas clan of Scotland, and on mother's side to the prolific McCord family of Protestant Ireland. Both families settled in the South. Father was born in middle Tennessee in 1812, and mother in Bond County, Illinois, in 1817. Shortly

⁴ Dr. William Davidson wrote his reminiscences for the Society. These are published in *Wis. Hist. Colls.*, v, 317-320.

before her birth, in 1816, a colony of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, grandfather Robert McCord the patriarch of the company, moved from Tennessee to escape the influences of slavery, although some of them had made merchandise of human flesh. They settled at Bethel, near Greenville, the county seat. Here father and mother were married February 19, 1833, Rev. Albert Hale, a member of the Yale band of Illinois and a home missionary pastor, officiating. Here, too, I was born May 3, 1842. The same year my people moved to Platteville, Wisconsin, and this was counted my home for a quarter of a century.

I never lived in the village of Platteville but grew up in the country near by. Great multitudes drifted in with us to the lead regions about Galena. Galena in those days was a rival of Chicago, and had the prospect of becoming the great metropolis of the Middle West. I think we selected Platteville as our place of residence because Rev. Alvon Dixon, mother's nephew by marriage, was then in charge of the Academy recently established.

The *American Home Missionary Magazine*, about the best history of the Middle West, gives us glimpses of Platteville as it was when we arrived. In the April number of 1840 we have the following:

Platteville is near the Little Platte River, some sixteen or eighteen miles from the Mississippi, having a small mill stream on one side and an extensive forest of hardwood timber on the other, with prairie all around, and rich beds of lead ore under the soil in all the surrounding country. There are therefore at this place all the facilities for a flourishing town—the most so of any in the western part of Wisconsin. The only church organization has been a Methodist Society, strong and numerous, until a few months ago when a Presbyterian Church of twelve members was formed by Rev. Messrs. Hale and Kent.⁵ The Methodists have a convenient, and even for this country, an elegant church, with basement rooms for a school or academy, now consisting of about 130 pupils of both sexes and of all ages. The teacher, Mr. A. M. Dixon, a graduate of Jacksonville College, is one of the elders of the infant Presbyterian Church. I may add that the present population

⁵ Albert Hale was from Bethel, and Aratus Kent, coming to Galena in 1838, was for over forty years pastor there and did missionary work in all the region round about.

on a mile square is perhaps 400—so that it is not a paper town, many of which sort are exhibited at the East, and are likely to exist a long time only on paper. The town has the reputation and appearance of being healthy, abounding in springs and streams of water in hill and dale, the village being mostly on the eminence.

Here is a picture of Platteville in 1842:

This place contains 800 inhabitants, and is located about twenty-five miles from Galena, and the same distance from Dubuque. There are here facilities for a flourishing inland town. The Church was formed by Rev. Messrs. Kent and Hale about three years ago. The church is exerting itself to erect a building to be occupied both as a place of worship and an academy. It is expected that this building will be completed the present autumn. Mr. Dixon, who now supplies the pulpit, having devoted himself particularly to the interests of education, will then take charge of the academy with from 70 to 100 pupils. Of course an efficient minister will be needed for the congregation. There will be work enough in the vicinity for two or three ministers.

Mr. Dixon reports for the Church:

During the past nine months there has been an increase of religious feeling. Fifteen have been added to the Church. The congregation has been doubled. The Church now numbers 57 members. Almost everything that is done in a pecuniary way, goes into the building which is nearly finished.

A belated report was published in 1844. *The Missionary* says:

The cause of the delay of this report is the existence of the smallpox in an epidemic form in our village; we have been and are being most severely and dreadfully scourged with it. It commenced in this village Oct. 28th [1843] in very mild form, and continued such for a considerable length of time, so that four weeks elapsed before any of our physicians discovered its true character so as to venture to call it by its true name; and another week passed before they could be persuaded of it. No deaths occurred until Dec. 6th, since when it has been very fatal. All business is at a standstill; the schools are suspended; and places of worship are nearly deserted. The whole village is affected with the disease. Fifteen, who a few days since were among us in all buoyancy of spirits and of life, now lie beneath the turf. What the end will be, God only knows. The disease stole in among us in so mild a shape that almost the whole community were fully exposed to its contagion before they were aware of the danger. When the alarm came it was too late to flee or take measures in self defence. The vaccine matter imposed upon us proved to be no protection, and was worse than none. May Heaven dispose this people to profit by this severe judgment.

We spent the first winter in a double log house a short distance from the village. This was our welcome to Platteville. Often did I hear my father tell of that fearsome winter. At times he was utterly homesick and discouraged. I grew up with those whose faces were pocked and pitted in this dreadful scourge.

In the spring of 1844 we moved out into the big timber six miles to the northwest, and there began the attempt to grub out a forty-acre farm, destroying enough of wood to serve almost a township. My earliest recollections are of a log cabin sixteen feet square, with puncheon floor, in the midst of the black stumps of this timber farm. The fireplace was built of sticks and mud. The shake roof was weighted down with logs and stones. The door had wooden hinges and a wooden latch, and the latch string was out all the time to neighbors and to strangers. I really pity anybody who never lived in a log house and does not know what this "latch string out" signifies of frontier hospitality. In that one room were six of us, and beds and a table, all the cooking outfit, and a spinning wheel and a loom—and sometimes we had company. The hired man had to sleep in a straw stack.

My only association with Platteville while we lived in the timber was in the church on the Sabbath day. The twelve miles in a lumber wagon was something of a journey, but our people had been brought up to attend church and they continued to do so now. The meeting house of those days was a room in the old Academy building, and Rev. John Lewis was the home missionary pastor.

But the timber home was too far from church, and our people could not long endure separation from kindred and friends. Both father and mother had the clan instinct fully developed. Four years of this isolation was sufficient. During this time a number of the Bethel community, including uncle James B. McCord, had settled at Limestone, on

Limestone Creek, among the limestone quarries one and one-half miles west of the town.⁶ Thither late in 1847 we moved, and this was my home until I went to college in 1861.

For the first years of our residence at Limestone my associations with Platteville continued to be confined almost wholly to church attendance. Almost the whole neighborhood went to meeting in the village. The hitching-posts around the meeting house were all occupied in those days. We did not care much for the Platteville society. We were sufficient in ourselves and quite self-satisfied. Were we not more pious than were the town people? Did we not send five young men into the ministry while Platteville sent only one?⁷ Were we not all abolitionists and prohibitionists? And then was not a Lodgeman in the neighborhood; were we not equal to the town folks in intelligence? Did we not take the *Ladies Magazine* and the *National Era*, in which *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was first published? Did not our log schoolhouse, with its slab desks and benches, soon develop into a large stone structure with modern furnishings? Under the tuition of our able teachers did not a number of us only by a little "fall below Demosthenes and Cicero?" Did we not excel in music, with our tuning fork and violin and clarionet and splendid voices? Deacon McCord turned up his nose at the tuning fork but I must relate that at times he would back up and start again, although usually he would strike the key note at the first trial. We had sufficient social life among ourselves. We had our social

⁶ Limestone Hollow is one mile north of the city, on the east side of Little Platte River. Lime kilns, stone quarries, brick yards, and turning mills were operated there. There was also a sawmill and later a woolen mill on Platte River near the mouth of Limestone Creek. A stone school building stood on the north side of the valley. It was abandoned in 1877. Many laborers were employed in this valley. They owned and cultivated little plots of ground around their homes, which were situated between this valley and the city.

⁷ Mr. Douglass mentions that five young men from the valley entered the ministry. That number is now increased to seven by the addition of Rev. Francis Kehoe and Rev. James Kehoe, Catholic missionaries, of whom the former is now a missionary in India, to which place the latter will soon follow him.

gatherings, our spelling schools, our debating societies, our charade parties, etc., etc. And we had our own Sunday school and neighborhood prayer meetings. We were not very refined; we had most of the crudities of a frontier settlement. Our men were sometimes rough in speech, and our boys followed the example of their elders. Our women were very homely in their virtues, and our young ladies were some of them rude and some of them were prudes; but on the whole we were a fine bunch of people, and we needed not to seek our well-being in the society of the village.

When I was old enough to go to town on errands, I came in contact with the "seamy side" of Platteville life. "Grocery Street" was given up to groggeries. I often saw men reeling on the streets or lying in the gutters. I met men on the road, homeward bound, running their horses at the top of their speed and shouting with all the strength of their voices. Now and then some poor fellow would fall out and break his neck or some of his bones. Well do I remember when Pat was pitched into the Platte. I heard his call for help; when we fished him out he was almost sober, but not quite.

Sometimes the young hoodlums of the town called me "Country Jake." Considering the source I did not care much for that. Well do I remember my supreme disgust when two distinguished men—great babies!—complained that when they first came to this country they were called "Dutch" and "Sheeny," and "the iron entered into my soul!" each said. I was ashamed of them both for their unmanly whining. I think I rather enjoyed the doggerel which the town boys sometimes sang to me:

Abolition Hollow; ten feet wide;
Nigger in the middle, and a McCord on each side.

This was a faint echo of the feeling of some of the people toward our Puritanical neighborhood. But these whisky

shops and this harmless hoodlum element were not the real Platteville. The real Platteville was the churches; the Academy; the honorable business and professional men of the town; "The Beloved John" [Lewis] of the Congregational Church, and his wife Electa Page, and Mr. Pickard of the Academy, and the scores of good men and women who worked and prayed for the moral and spiritual well-being of the community, and for the uplifting of men the world around. This was the real Platteville, and its ideals were more and more realized as the years went by.

Of course the Platteville of our days was a mixed multitude. There were Yankees—not very many of them—and a few New Yorkers. The English were a good deal in evidence, and there were many Germans. We called them all Dutch in those days. There were a good many Southerners—some of them of "the first families of Virginia," but more of them had simply passed through the South on their way from Scotland and Ireland; and there were also many Catholic Irish. Limestone at length was captured by these people, and the schoolhouse and the mill pond and the prayer meeting disappeared.

The nativity of people is to a considerable extent manifest in the churches to which they belong. The Methodist Church of Platteville was composed of all sorts and conditions of men. The Presbyterian, organized in 1839, became Congregational in 1849 because our people, Scotch-Irish, were outnumbered by the New Englanders. The English, of course, must have their Primitive Methodist Church; and the Germans divided into Presbyterian and Lutheran camps. Late in the day some of the English and some of our United States people united in forming the Episcopal Church. All these and perhaps other churches were in Platteville in my day.

As a matter of course, as the years went by, I got more and more into the social life of the village. Now and then I

attended a lecture or a concert in the town, and I attended the Academy, though irregularly because father was in ill health, and I, the oldest son, was needed at home. But in one way and another I became acquainted more and more with the young people of the town, homes were open to me and I ventured to call at a few places. There was one house especially that I passed by more often than was really necessary, and a few times I knocked at the door, and, only once, sat at the table with the family. So, at last, Platteville became dear to me as the home of a good many friends—one of them the best friend “in all the world to me.”

Maria Greene, of English ancestors on both sides of the house, both families coming to America in the seventeenth century, was born at Richmond, Ontario County, New York, September 10, 1843. She was the daughter of Benoni Greene and Oracy Clark. In 1855, at the age of twelve, she came with a remnant of the family to Platteville. She graduated from the Academy, from the Albany Normal School, took a course in the Oswego training school, and was a teacher for two years in Philadelphia. In 1868, at the age of twenty-five, she was a little body weighing less than one hundred pounds, with brown hair, brown eyes, and brown cheeks. Her dress, showing the characteristics of her mind and heart, was always simple and of quiet colors. She was unassuming, sober-minded, serious, conscientious even to a fault, studious, industrious, and ready for every duty or sacrifice life might have in store for her. But, withal, she had a mind and will of her own, and some shades and tinges of radicalism, the product of heredity and environment, for she was born and brought up in the midst of anti-slavery, anti-saloon, anti-Masonic, anti-Mormon, and other anti-agitations of the middle decades of the last century, and her father took radical grounds on all these questions. We were married at Platteville June 25, 1868, Rev. J. E. Pond, the pastor of

the church, performing the ceremony. We took a short wedding trip and then began at Osage, Mitchell County, a life of fifty years in Iowa. Four years ago we observed our golden wedding.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF PLATTEVILLE

MARIA GREENE DOUGLASS

As I sit at my desk there is before me the portrait of a man in the prime of life, of large frame, broad shoulders, wide brow crowned with an abundance of dark hair, a well formed nose, firm mouth, and dark beard. The outstanding of the features are the dark, full, kindly, piercing eyes. When fixed upon one they seem to penetrate to one's inmost being, "discerning even the thoughts and intents of the heart." Such was the outward appearance of one of the great educators of the Middle West in the last half of the nineteenth century, Josiah Little Pickard.

Born in 1824 in New England, where his early life was spent and where he was educated, his life service was given to the Middle West, and his last years were spent in California, whence he departed this life in 1914, a noble Christian man and educator, the impress of whose life was left upon many thousands of young men and young women. No one could fail to be a better man or woman from having come in contact with this great-hearted friend.

I first met Mr. Pickard when I was at the age of twelve. My parents, with their minor children, moved from western New York to the young state of Wisconsin in the autumn of 1855, and settled at Platteville, Grant County, in the southwest corner of the state. Entering as strangers the Congregational Church, where we were accustomed to worship, we were greeted by Mr. Pickard as a deacon of the church. The opening of the Sunday school found Mr. Pickard as its superintendent, alert and interested in every

individual member; so he became a formative influence in my life from our very first meeting.

Platteville was a typical western village of those early times, rude and uncouth in many ways but not lacking in signs of refinement and good taste. Situated in the midst of the lead mining region, its people were of a number of nationalities and tongues. The men and women who were counted as leaders and who gave tone to the town were largely from New England and New York, and from the South. These were for the most part enterprising, public-spirited, cultured people, bringing with them the traditions of the several sections from which they came. The majority of them, being professed Christians, were gathered into the Congregational and Methodist Episcopal churches. The miners' families were predominantly English and Welsh, and a Primitive Methodist Church accommodated them. A considerable German population supported a Presbyterian and a Lutheran Church. The growing Irish population erected a Catholic house of worship, and later an Episcopal Church was built. There was one institution open to all, and patronized freely by many of the citizens—namely, the saloon. In those early days, because foodstuffs and drink were supposed to belong to the same category and were dispensed by the same business houses, the term "grocery" was appended to the store which furnished them. Later, when staple foodstuffs and dry goods were combined in general stores, the term "grocery" still clung to places where drinks were the principal merchandise. Thus, in my early days in Platteville "groceries" were the equivalent of saloons of later years.

Main Street in Platteville extended east and west through the entire length of the village. Branching off about midway of its length to the north was Grocery Street,⁸

⁸ Grocery Street (Second Street) was a unique institution of modern city government. The first business houses were erected on this street, but gradually business drifted onto Main Street. The first village board, 1845, refused to grant licenses for sale of liquors

where the drinking places were segregated within a block or so. Beyond this section were residences, but that part of the street was popularly known as Slab Street. In addition to the groceries (or saloons) there were several other business houses on Grocery Street, a shoe shop, harness shop, etc. From the doors of the groceries drunken men were often seen reeling, and men and boys were often seen entering for drinks. Women and girls were not often seen on Grocery Street.

On all sides of the town the mining industry was carried on in a primitive way, and mineral holes abounded everywhere. They were well-like excavations sunk for lead ore. The ore mixed with earth was lifted in buckets operated by a hand windlass; when the vein of ore was exhausted, the digging stopped and the hole was left open; not seldom a drunken man or an animal would fall into one of these holes and suffer injury. The holes varied in depth from a few feet to twenty or thirty feet, so one had to watch his steps carefully if he were walking elsewhere than on the regular highway. Many were the warnings given us children when we went into the country to gather flowers or nuts, not to fall into mineral holes. As I remember it, the lead ore that was mined was taken to a smelter and melted and run into a mould of certain dimensions, and came out "pig lead," in which form it was taken to market. I have no data as to the annual yield of lead, but it must have been considerable.

At the time of my first acquaintance with Platteville there were three public schools. The north and south schools for younger pupils were accommodated in small brick structures. The more advanced boys and girls were gathered into the one-time dining room of a rather commo-

on Main Street, but no ordinance to that effect was ever enacted. It remained the unwritten law, however, and the saloons were ever after confined to Second Street, which thus became and remained Grocery Street.

dious brick hotel building called the Campbell House, which had ceased to be used as a hotel and was rented for school purposes. It was this school that I entered in the autumn of 1855, Mr. H. Robbins, a farmer-citizen of Platteville, being the teacher. The one thing that I remember with distinctness about that school was the thorough daily drill given us in mental arithmetic. At the close of the winter term the school was discontinued. The following summer I attended the south school taught by Miss McMurray, who afterward became Mrs. W. Grindell. The next year, because there was no other place for me to attend school, I entered Platteville Academy as one of its youngest pupils. Looking back over a period of sixty-five years, I count my enrollment as a pupil of Platteville Academy one of the most fortunate occurrences of my life. I do not hesitate to assert that in my belief it was providential, as have been all the orderings of my life. Mr. Pickard as principal and Miss Fanny S. Josslyn as preceptress were rare teachers, and rare persons for a young girl to be associated with. To these, together with our pastor and his wife, Rev. and Mrs. John Lewis, I am more indebted than to all others outside the family circle, for influences exerted and ideals presented which determined the course of my life. During the previous winter, after a few weeks of residence in Platteville, my father suddenly sickened and died of pneumonia, so that because of our great loss and bereavement I was in a state of mind to be influenced in the best ways.

At the time I entered Platteville Academy there were a number of boys and young men from Southern slaveholding families enrolled as students. They were among the popular and influential students. In course of time a refined colored girl came to town with a prominent white family and was entered as a student of the Academy. There were threats on the part of the Southern students of leaving

school if that colored girl were allowed to remain. The matter was taken up by the trustees of the Academy, who decided the girl must be dismissed. Mr. Pickard, being ill at the time, gave notice to the trustees that when the colored girl was sent away they would receive his resignation as principal of the Academy. While the matter was pending, the girl in question announced that she had applied for admission to Rockford Seminary and had been accepted, so the matter quieted down; but young girl as I was, and almost heartbroken at the prospect of losing my beloved teacher, the thought of his great sacrifice in giving up all rather than compromise principle made an impression on my mind which remains to this day, and many a time has helped me to be firm and uncompromising in standing for the right as I have seen it. I count that as one of the most valuable object lessons of my life, and in my girlhood imagination it set Mr. Pickard upon a pedestal high above most other men that I had known.

The Academy building of my day was a rather imposing three-story stone building west of the business section of the town.⁹ The first floor consisted of an entrance hall with stairway, on either side of which were recitation rooms. In the rear was a large assembly and study hall, where also recitations were conducted in front of the teachers' platform. It was a well lighted, pleasant room. Its decorations were engraved portraits of great statesmen—Washington, Webster, Franklin—also several framed mottoes to which reference was often made from the platform.

In the second story were music room and physical laboratory, and the third story was used as a dormitory for men students. The building was surmounted by a belfry from

⁹The Academy building described is still standing, being now used as the State Mining School; and the houses described as across the street, one occupied by Mr. Pickard and one by Mr. Lewis, are still standing.

which a sweet-toned bell tolled off the hours for coming and going, change of classes, etc. In the principal's record book are found the names of the pupils who had come under his instruction in Platteville Academy, to the number of 1137.

Across the street from the Academy were two brick residences of similar construction, in size and quality above the average of the dwellings of the town. These were the homes of Mr. Pickard, with his devoted wife and three wide-awake, happy children and foster daughter; and of Rev. and Mrs. John Lewis, with mother and sister and foster daughter. The Academy and these homes formed the center of efforts and influences which radiated in all directions for the building up of true, noble manhood and womanhood of that community, and reached well into the country beyond.

Much less time and thought were given to recreation and social life in the Academy of those days than is devoted to athletics and social occasions in most educational institutions of today. I think there was no organized form of sports among the boys, though they were often seen on the Academy grounds playing ball. For the girls there were classes for drilling in calisthenic exercises, which were the forerunner of girls' gymnasium work.

There was held annually a May Day picnic, in which all, both teachers and students, joined. The crowning event of the day was choosing by ballot the May queen and king and attendants—then came the weaving of floral crowns, the making and decorating the throne seats, the ceremony of escorting the queen and attendants to the throne, followed by the picnic lunch, at which we were seated in a circle; then songs, speeches, stunts, and games concluded the gayeties. These were red-letter days spent in the open under great pine trees by a clear running brook,

with the freedom and good fellowship known only to young people in natural and wholesome surroundings.

The boys would sometimes plan jokes of their own, as when one morning, all being assembled, Mr. Pickard opened his drawer to take from it his Bible and hymn book for the opening devotional services, and found a rooster hidden there. A titter was heard from a nearby group of boys, but Mr. Pickard, lifting the rooster from the drawer, walked down the aisle and passed through the entrance door. Having disposed of it, he returned and went on with the usual exercises, making no reference to the unusual occurrence. Some of us wondered on whom the joke was.

In the early years of Platteville Academy a record was kept of deportment, attendance, punctuality, and church attendance, and each student was expected to report on these several points. These reports helped to determine the students' standing in the school.

A literary society met weekly, to which the upper classes were admitted. It was regularly organized, and varied programs were given, consisting of declamations, essays, recitations, debates, music, etc., with regularly appointed critics to pronounce upon the several parts. Much earnest work was done and not a little fun was extracted from the programs. The attendance and help of the teachers added dignity and interest to these gatherings.

The tone of the social life in Platteville on the part of a few families was more or less aristocratic, but for the most part was friendly and democratic, as became well meaning, industrious, intelligent citizens of an American town in the making. Anyone of worthy character and life had an equal place for helpfulness and influence with that of any of his neighbors. This was finely exemplified during the Civil War when the people generally were united in sustaining the government measures and in ministering to the comfort of the soldier boys. There were a few exceptions where

families sympathized with the Confederate South, but these sympathizers were usually discreet in expressing their views. Well do I recall the mass meetings of the citizens, the speeches, the martial music of the band, the singing of popular war songs, and the recruiting of our boys for enlistment in the war. The women and girls of every community were gathered into soldier aid societies for the knitting of socks and mittens with one finger, the making of garments, scraping of lint, rolling of bandages, etc. The making of "housewives" containing thread, needles, buttons, scissors, etc. for the soldiers was generally claimed by the young women, and into many an one was slipped a pocket testament, a note, a photograph, or other token of remembrance and regard.

In the year 1859 Mr. Piekard was elected state superintendent of public instruction in Wisconsin, so he resigned as principal of Platteville Academy. He was succeeded for a year or two by Mr. A. K. Johnston, a young man from a New England college. He in turn was followed by Mr. George M. Guernsey, who continued at the head of the Academy until it became a state normal school.

Having finished the Academy course in the winter of 1861, I taught the following summer at Limestone, but was graduated with my class in June of that year. The following year I taught country schools near Platteville. In the spring of '63 I entered the state normal college at Albany, New York, from which I was graduated the following year. Then taking a short course in the Oswego, New York, training school, I accepted a position in Philadelphia in a young ladies' seminary, where I taught for two years. In this way I was removed from close connection with Platteville for several years. In the summer of '67 I returned to make preparations for my approaching marriage to Rev. Truman O. Douglass, which took place in 1868, upon the completion of his theological seminary course in Chicago,

when we removed to Iowa. Occasional visits to Platteville through the following years kept me in touch with relatives and friends there, until by removal and death most of them were gone and I began to feel a stranger in a strange land.

One memorable visit there was on the occasion of the Pickard reunion in the summer of 1887. Former students of Platteville Academy conceived the idea of bringing together as many as could come of the old students, in honor of our beloved Mr. Pickard. Committees were appointed to plan for it. Just as far as the addresses could be secured, every living former student was notified of the plan and urged to be present. Local committees made careful and rather elaborate preparations for entertainment, social functions, and banquet. A program committee had a varied and interesting intellectual feast prepared, and opportunities to renew friendships in delightful fellowship were enjoyed to the full. Expressions of esteem and loving regard for him whom we all delighted to honor were freely given and gratefully acknowledged. That so large a number could be brought together after the lapse of years was a marked testimony to the strong hold Mr. Pickard had on all our hearts.

During all the busy years of nearly half a century, my husband and I were happy in keeping in touch with Mr. Pickard by occasional exchange of letters, meetings at religious conferences, and rare visits—the last, in 1910, in sunny California. During several months' stay there we received calls from Mr. Pickard and, best of all, spent a happy day with him in his daughter's pleasant home in Cupertino. It was a rare occasion as we talked over old times and acquaintances and experiences in Platteville and the Academy, and were shown many cherished mementoes and memorials of his life work, with the prized pictures of students and friends of the early days, especially those associated with Mrs. Pickard, who had been a helper and loved companion for over fifty years of wedded life.



At Christmas time of 1913 we received a beautiful characteristic letter from Mr. Piekard; then in a short time came the news of his passing beyond the realm of our earthly vision, and we doubt not he had entered upon that larger, fuller, blessed life of the spirit for which he had been preparing in the long years of faithful service here.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 016 091 553 5 ●