

Wednesday Jan. 15, 1934
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CENTERVILLE DAILY IOWEGIAN & CITIZEN, WEDNESDAY

INDIANS MADE THEIR SILENT CALLS AT HOME

Mrs. Luella C. Hudgens Tells How
They Would Come Silently and
Remained at Night

Mrs. Luella C. Hudgens, Unionville Iowa, 74 years of age, daughter of James H. and Emmeline E. McAdams, who were residents of Udell township, recalls the following.

My father and mother came to Iowa, in 1853 from Marshall county, Tennessee. My father's father gave him some slaves when he married but he being opposed to slavery gave them their freedom, was denounced, consequently drove with his family and a few camping requisites to my grandfather Miller's at Unionville, Iowa. Uncle Johnny Miller, as he was known, built the first business house in Unionville and was one of the first to handle merchandise there. Much of his land was secured for town lots in the village. My father bought of a Mr. Blakesley and Mr. Christian land 2 1-2 miles southwest of Unionville in Udell township. It was there I was born April 27, 1859, in a log house with very primitive surroundings. Being the sixth child in our family, the low "trundle" bed was pulled out each night from under our parents' bed, and usually held four children, two at the head and two at the foot. Our mother must have toiled many hours by candle light or "tallow dip" (a shallow pan of softened tallow with wick of braided cotton cloth) in helping clothe and feed her family. Sheep were raised, sheared, wool washed, picked (often neighborly wool pullings or pickings were held), not the bridge social of today, then the carding by hand before the erection of mills, spinning, twisting, skeining, dyeing (native barks, herbs, roots, copperas and alum being used), spooling, warping, beaming, gearing, sleaying, weaving, on a loom made by hand of heavy oak-

which to cut and sew by hand clothing for both male and female of the family. It was marked progress when a "carding factory" was built on Cooper creek, where now is the west part of Centerville, and wool could be cleaned and carded into rolls by "machinery" ready for spinning at home into thread for cloth or knitting yarn. And out the millions upon millions of stitches taken on knitting needles by our pioneer mothers in making mittens and hosiery, before the knitting machine arrived.

Later a "factory" was built about two miles south of Unionville where now the first road turns west for Udell, owned by local stockholders. Operated by Whisler and Replogle, some of whom are millers now in Farragut, Ia., makers of Replogle Pancake flour. Said factory took the sheeps' clipped wool, cleaned, dyed and wove it into beautiful flannel and durable mixed jean.

Overnight at Mill

The expense of the mill being too heavy for the income it operated only a few years. I recall the rejoicing when a Mr. Zullof erected a mill on Chariton river, west of bridge about three miles north of Centerville, some nine miles for the home makers in our community to drive their oxen, but neighbors took turn about, taking large grists, often staying over night, returning with flour, meal and buckwheat for all those sending grain.

In the building of my father's frame house, to replace the log one, he cut his own native oak logs, hauled them about 35 miles to Ottumwa, (he by then had horses and mules), would stay over night, often returning with wares for Grandfather's general store in Unionville as his nearest shipping point for goods was Ottumwa by boat.

Saving the Food

Shelter, food and clothing are the need of all but the pioneers found difficulty in caring for what was secured in the way of food. There were no electric grills, pressure cookers, no known method of cold pack, no cans wherein to preserve food. The wild fruits, berries and some vegetables were dried. Also wild game and home meats cured. I can yet see the spirally cut ring upon ring of peeled pumpkin slipped on a fresh cut and clean hickory pole, then laid from joist to joist, above and in front of the

fireplace to dry. Wild crabapples made into butter with cane sorghum, "liver cheese", "scrapple," and crackling cornbread at butchering time. "Salt rising" corn pone, baked Saturday so no baking would be done on Sunday—my parents were of the strict Presbyterian church. We children were not to swing, nor play with our dolls, nor visit or receive visitors on Sunday. We had only testaments, no quarterlies, in which to study the Bible. Some mottled back Sunday school books were passed from family to family to read, said books being sent to our church from some New York church. There was a little cash realized by raising geese and ducks, picking and selling the feathers after one's own home was supplied with beds and pillows.

No Screens Then

Also raising peafowls, tying their beautiful tail plumage into "fly brushes" for sale. No mosquito bar or wire screen had then been heard of. It was quite an art at community feasts for young folks to stand and gracefully sway a beautiful peafowl fly brush over the food and heads of the guests at the table.

My first school years were in a log school house about one and one-fourth mile to the northwest, known as the "Clancy school house." J. M. Clancy had come up from Missouri looking about for a location before Iowa was open to settlers, decided on a claim but three times was run off by the Indians. He went back to his family in Missouri and when the time came for white settlers he was waiting on the line between Missouri and Iowa. At midnight of the day of entering he rushed over the line and hastened on up to his chosen claim which is the land now about two miles west of Unionville in Udell township. He had no time-piece, but owned a small rooster that never failed to crow at midnight so carried the rooster with him, and upon the cock's crowing, crossed the line. Referring again to the "Clancy school house" the walls were chunked with mud. Rough, native oak boards for flooring, long oak slabs for seats with the convex bark side down, having three strong oak pins set in each end for legs. The door was in the east. Across the west end was a shelf or writing desk laid on wooden pegs set in the wall. Our bench-

es had no backs. Neither had we desks but must place our books, which were not many, each evening on the "writing desk". A black board about 2x3 feet was in the front corner by the teacher's chair. Water was carried about one-fourth mile from a spring in a ravine to the northwest. We were surrounded by a dense forest. Several times I have looked out the north window watching a flock of wild turkeys steal across the open road, one or two at a time and glide into the opposite underbrush. Once three sleek deer bounded past the door to enter the forest on the other side of the house. In summer the woods were full of beautiful wild flowers, in autumn we children at noon gathered nuts. Some winters the school house floor had two or three inches of loose sawdust on the floor for warmth I suppose, or perhaps brooms were a luxury.

Helped Mould Bullets

The pioneers found wild game a welcome addition to the larder. At night we helped mould bullets as well as mould tallow candles. A method my father used to trap wild turkeys was a tall fence rail, square pen, rails also on top. A trench or runway began back far enough that a turkey eating as it walked would pass under the rails into the pen without noticing the trap. Shelled corn being scattered into the runway. Upon becoming startled at finding itself in a pen it did not look down any more, but up trying to get out. One winter we trapped twenty-one turkeys.

Indians Would Come In

It was about six years after the Indians were removed from Iowa to Kansas, my parents came. An Indian village in Iowa had been to the east in Van Buren county, other villages to the northwest. A few roaming Indians succeeded in visiting the old haunts occasionally. A few settlers in our neighborhood had this experience: a lone Indian would pull the latch string a few hours before midnight, no knocking, stalk in, unfold blankets, spread before the fireplace, rest until near daybreak, rise, fold the blanket and depart. Sometimes if food was in view he would eat. Never harmed anyone, however the family did not try starting a conversation.