

SAMUEL HENRY McCRORY **1807 -1878**

By: Linda Arnold Marek
Great-great granddaughter

Samuel Henry McCrory was born in Virginia on August 6, 1807. He was the son of a Scotch-Irish family that had settled in Rockbridge County in western Virginia. He set out from there before "reaching his majority" and after spending a short time in Peoria, Illinois during which he established a store, became a member of the municipal council and founded its first newspaper, *The Register*, he decided to move farther west to obtain a holding of land in order to become a man of stature.

Sam apparently left Peoria and visited his home in Virginia in 1837. It is said in the family that he and his father differed on the question of slavery and that is said to be why Sam went north to the Wisconsin Territory and his father talked of moving south. Sam established his claim in the valley of the Iowa River and built a log cabin. This area later became a part of Johnson County, Iowa. The Iowa Territory split off from the Wisconsin Territory and there was talk of statehood. Many new settlers were flocking to Johnson County and the pioneers established the Claim Association of Johnson County to protect their land claims. Samuel was elected Clerk and recorder. The completeness and neatness of the records are excellent proof that he was qualified for this position. The purpose of the Association was "to observe the constitutional status of these early settlers".

Samuel drafted the first code of laws which regulated the conduct and secured the rights of men in this section with impartiality. He took on many civic responsibilities. He was appointed Foreman of the Grand Jury when the first District Court was opened May 13, 1839. A horse thief was found guilty of passing

counterfeit money. On May 15, 1839 he was appointed as a Commissioner of the County to locate a territorial road. He was appointed the first postmaster in the county on July 4, 1839 by Postmaster General Kendall and kept the office in his home until space was available in a store in Iowa City. It was said that he carried the mail from Muscatine to Iowa City in his hat. (His portrait hangs today in the Iowa City Post Office).

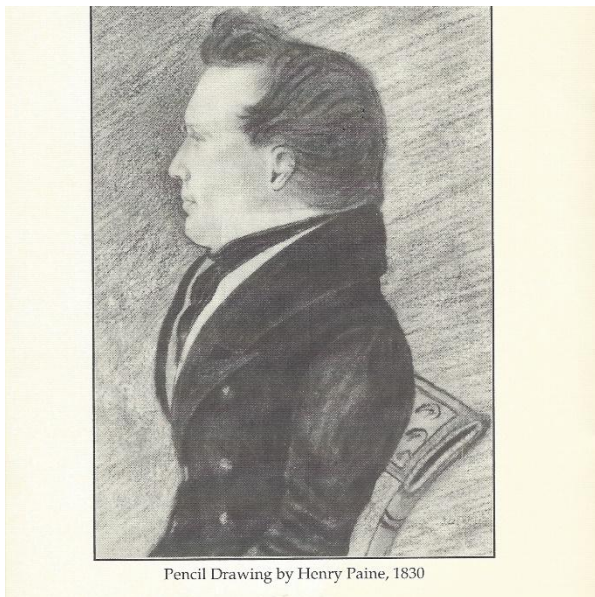
Samuel was active in state and local affairs. He was elected as one of the three delegates from Johnson County in 1844 to attend the convention to draft a State constitution. He served on the committee appointed to prepare articles dealing with Education and School Lands. He voted in favor of opening the daily sessions with prayer and participated in the formation of the document. He served in the House of Representatives in the Fifth General Assembly (1854-1855) and was on the committees on Elections and Federal Relations. Throughout his life his character and calm and thoughtful advice must have carried weight, for he occupied many positions of trust

Education was one of Samuel McCrory's special interests. His own education was obtained "away from school and after business hours". He was treasurer of the Iowa City school district for many years and helped formulate the rules for the government of the board and the schools. At the beginning of the State University (1847-1851) as one of the members of the Board of Trustees he did much of the "pioneering" in an effort to get the University started. He helped formulate a plan for the establishment of a law department of the University and was active in all the framing of the institution.

Sam was visiting a friend in Iowa City in 1840 when a coach arrived with his friend's sister-in-law. When she alighted from the coach, Sam said "That's my girl!" She was Elizabeth Pamela

McCloud from Worthington, Ohio. She was seventeen. They were married the following spring on April 6, 1841 and were to have thirteen children of whom eleven survived. My Great Grandfather, George Wells McCrory, was the ninth child. In 1852 or 1853 they built an eleven-room house on their property. They called the home "Virginia Grove" and planted a row of sugar maples up the lane from the road to the house. He lived to be over seventy and died on March 11, 1878. He is buried with his wife, Elizabeth, in the Oakland Cemetery in Iowa City near the grave of Territorial Governor Robert Lucas.

Many of Samuel Henry's descendants lived in Cass County. His son, my great grandfather, George Wells McCrory, and his wife Anna Rachel (Fawcett) lived in Clay township in Shelby County until moving to 306 East 6th Street in Atlantic in 1917 when he moved from his farm.



Pencil Drawing by Henry Paine, 1830

Pencil drawing of Samuel Henry McCrory



References:

The Palimpsest— March 1939 Published monthly at Iowa City by The State Historical Society of Iowa

Samuel Henry McCrory by Ruth McCrory Rice, Self- published

GEORGE M'CRORY, RETIRED FARMER, DIES HERE TODAY

Atlantic News telegraph September 11, 1940.

George Wells McCrory, 84-year-old retired farmer, died at 10 o'clock this morning at his home, 306 East 6th St. He had been in poor health for some time. The son of Samuel H. and Elizabeth McCloud McCrory, he was born Feb. 15, 1856, in Johnson county, IA. And was married at Iowa City Nov 25, 1880 to Anna R. Fawcett.

Surviving are five children. Henry McCrory, living north of Atlantic; Will of Anita; Mrs. Clara Smith north of Atlantic, Jesse, at home, and Archie, north of Atlantic.