



DAVID B. MURROW

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A pioneer of Polk County who has been a resident for sixty years, and prominently identified with its development, is David B. Murrow.

Born in Parke County, Indiana, March Second, 1832, of Scotch-Irish ancestry on the side of his father, and Welsh on that of his mother, he passed the days of his youth on the farm of his father, who, in addition to farming, dealt in live-stock.

During the Winter, he acquired such education as the common school of that time afforded, in a log schoolhouse with puncheon floor and slab seats, without back or desk.

He attended no other school, but by keen observation and diligent reading, stored his mind with such intelligence as made him successful in business, a good and helpful citizen.

In the Fall of 1843, having a family of children and a very small farm, his father decided to come to Iowa, where there was more land to the acre and more acres to be had, not only for himself, but prospectively for his children as they reached their majority. Accordingly, with the proverbial "prairie schooner," loaded with bedding, a few household utensils, and clothing, with his family, he came to Henry County, driving also a herd of cattle and sheep, camping at night, or seeking the shelter of a convenient settler's cabin, and located about eight miles west of Mount Pleasant, where he remained one year, when he removed to Jefferson County, near Fairfield. In the Fall of 1846, he came to Polk County, and located a claim of one hundred and sixty acres of Government land four miles west of Fort Des Moines, on which are now the railroad shops at Valley Junction. He hired a man to build a log cabin with puncheon floor, on the claim, and returned to Jefferson County. In March, 1847, he sold his holdings and came to Fort Des Moines, bringing with him a drove of cattle, sheep and hogs. He crossed the Des Moines River

on the ice. There was not a frame building in the village. Everybody was living and doing business in log cabins.

He took possession of his log cabin and began the cultivation of his claim. As the years passed, the Murrow farm became conspicuous for its improvements, magnificent grove of timber, and adjacent highly cultivated fields. The stork very generously brought him six girls and seven boys, who are married and all living on a farm except David.

David remained on the farm until he was twenty years old, when his father offered him his time if he so desired, as there was little doing, and he went to work for Davis Boone, at Bonnevillie, at twenty dollars per month. At the expiration of the second month, his father sent for him to come back to the farm. Though Boone offered to largely increase his wages, he considered his services more naturally due to his father. He went back and worked two years for nine dollars per month. He then rented twenty acres of Alex. Scott, on the East Side, where the Rock Island Depot now is, plowed it with one horse and a shovel plow, having to go three times across the field for a furrow, so small was the plow; planted the field to corn, cultivated it carefully, had a big crop, and sold it to Alfred Lyon for twelve dollars an acre in the field. With the proceeds, and that from the sale of his horse, he purchased one hundred and sixty acres four miles west of his father's farm, in Walnut Township. On his father's farm, he cut down trees and got logs for a cabin. For lumber for flooring, sheathing, and rafters, he hauled logs to a sawmill two miles east of Adel, and had them sawed. At one end of the cabin was a stick and mud chimney, with a big fireplace to take in four logs five feet long, to furnish caloric to keep the cabin comfortable in Winter and do the cooking. For glass in the windows, oiled paper was substituted. He put a family in the cabin, and boarded with them. His land was open prairie. The first crop raised was sod corn.

Sometimes, the flour and corn meal became exhausted. The weather and roads were bad, mills far away, and corn meal could only be got by grating the corn on the cob. The meal was a little coarse, but it satisfied the hunger and bred no dyspepsia. From the first crop of wheat he raised, he took a

load to Oskaloosa, the nearest milling place, and had to wait eight days for it to be ground—camping under the wagon at night. At another time, in Winter, he took a load of corn to Three Rivers, and waited eight days for his grist—sleeping in the mill at night, with the crowd of other waiters for grists.

In 1859, he married, and soon after sold his farm and went to Kansas, where he remained until 1865, when he returned, purchased his father's farm, and at once entered into the social and industrial activities of the community. He still owns the farm, which he has made a very attractive place, and will ere long be needed to provide westward expansion of the city.

When the Iowa National Bank was organized, he became a large stockholder. He is also a heavy stockholder in the Des Moines City Railway Company and the Inter-Urban Railway Company, and has always been an enthusiastic supporter of Mr. Polk in his endeavors to develop a system of interurban roads, believing them to be potent factors in the upbuilding of Des Moines.

In 1889, having, by industry and business sagacity, acquired nearly eight hundred Iowa golden acres, divided into four farms, to give his children of minor age better educational advantages, and himself more ease, he built an elegant residence on West Twenty-second Street, and there, undisturbed (sic) by the frenzied financiers of Wall Street, is passing his days in contentment, with the conscious assurance of the highest esteem of his neighbors and fellow citizens.

He is of frail physique, nervous sanguine temperament, optimistic, seldom indulges in retrospection, keeps daily posted on what is going on in the world at large, has positive opinions of his own, to change which would necessitate the showing that you "are from Missouri."

Politically, he has always been a Republican, though his father was a Democrat, but a strong Union man through the war period. He cast his first vote for President for "The Pathfinder," John C. Fremont. He is not a politician by inclination or adaptation, and would never master the game.

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