

## GEORGE BEEBE

A pioneer who was quite prominent in the early days was George Beebe. He came to Polk County in May, 1846, and made a claim not far from that of L. M. Burke, on the west side of Big Creek, near what is now Polk City. He put up a log cabin, without "chinking" between the logs, thus giving it abundant ventilation and affording space for wolves to thrust their noses through when prowling about for food, but when heavy rain-storms came, vigorous sweeping was necessary to prevent putting out the fire in the hearth. The Winters were cold, and against which the cabin was a poor protection. In Summer, the mosquitoes were a perfect terror. No one could go out in the evening without mittens and coats, and often veils. Mrs. Beebe said if she sat down in the doorway of the cabin to rest at twilight, she had to wrap her hands and protect her face, or be bled and tormented beyond any endurance.

Beebe was an energetic business man, and soon had his family in more comfortable surroundings. He improved his land and erected buildings. He was the first Justice of the Peace elected in Madison Township. In 1850, he laid out the town of Polk City. It was the site of a former Indian village, called Wa-kon-sa, and a very attractive place. There was no competing town nearer than The Fort, and he at once set in motion plans for a trading center. He built a much-needed mill on the creek, opened a general merchandise store, sold lots, and invited people to come in, and they did so, the earliest ones using poles left by the Indians to construct temporary shanties. It was a rival of The Fort for the State Capital, of some importance at one time, when Beebe was running things.

Beebe's cabin was one of genuine hospitality. Its doors were always open. He and his wife were fond of society, and their home was a favorite place

for gatherings of early-comers. There was no dress parade, nor formality, about it; it was just a getting together to give vent to the overwhelming desire for sociability. Mrs. Beebe's vivacity and conviviality was a sure cure for the blues, resulting from the isolation of their every-day life. Father Bird made it a resting-place, and preached in it when making a circuit of the county.

In 1860, the county having got tired of the system by which its affairs were managed by one man, the County Judge, at the October election of that year there was elected a Board of Supervisors, consisting of sixteen members, to represent each township in the county. Beebe was elected for Madison Township, and for ten years, during the formative and most critical period of the county history, that body had control of public affairs.

In 1868, when the Old Settlers' Association was formed, Beebe was the first to sign the compact, and he was elected one of a committee whose duty it was to report the names of old settlers who deceased or removed from the county, the purpose being to keep a record of them.

April Twenty-eighth, 1907.

**Transcribed from:**  
**PIONEERS OF POLK COUNTY, IOWA AND REMINISCENCES OF EARLY DAYS**  
**by L. F. Andrews**  
**Volume II**  
**Des Moines**  
**Baker-Trisler Company**  
**1908**