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An old settler who has been largely identified with public affairs of the city, county and state is Colonel George L. Godfrey, a Green Mountain State boy, born at Hardwick, Vermont, November Fourth, 1838.

He passed his boyhood days on a farm in that rock-ribbed section, attending the common schools, and as he advanced in years attended Barre Academy. In Winter, he taught school in the country, and in Summer worked on a farm.

In 1855, his brother gave him money to pay his expenses to Dubuque, where he taught a district school during the Winter, and in the Spring of 1856, he came to Des Moines, and soon after went to Sioux City. The United States Land Office had just opened there, and the town was crowded with land-seekers. He got on the warm side of the Chief Clerk of the Land Office, who gave him some pointers. He traveled over the country to get the "lay of the land," and mapped it out with field notes, so that when a settler wanted to make an entry of land, he was prepared to direct him to what he wanted, for which they were ready and willing to pay a liberal fee. In this way, he accumulated about one thousand dollars. In the meantime, he entered one hundred and sixty acres of land for himself, sold one-half of it for what the whole cost him, and had eighty acres left. He then came back to Des Moines, and in 1859, began reading law in the office of Judge Cole.

One day, in 1861, he and the Judge went to Indianola on business, and on their way home were met by a man who informed them that Fort Sumter had been fired upon. Both were Democrats. They started on, and the Judge said: "Well, Godfrey what is to be done?" "We must save the country," replied Godfrey. "I think that is so," responded the Judge. "I know what I shall do," said Godfrey. The next morning he learned that M. M. Crocker had

organized a company the night before, and he went to his office to enlist. Crocker told him the company was full, and, further, that he did not think Godfrey wanted to enlist as a private and sweep cigar stubs from an officer's headquarters. Godfrey said he didn't know the difference between an officer and a private, and insisted on being enlisted as a private. May Twenty-first, he signed the enrollment, and was elected Corporal of the company. The company was assigned to the Second Regiment, as Company D. December Fifth, he was commissioned Second Lieutenant; June Twenty-second, First Lieutenant, and the same day, Adjutant of the regiment. The regiment was attached to the Third Brigade, District of Southeast Missouri, where it served until February, 1862, when it was attached to the First Brigade, Second Division, Army of the Tennessee.

His company took part in the memorable charge at Fort Donelson. In that engagement, Godfrey was seriously injured by a Rebel bullet, which struck him on the breast.

He was in the "Hornet's Nest" of shot and shell at Shiloh, on the Sixth and Seventh of April, 1862. On the afternoon of the first day's fight, when it was supposed General Tuttle's brigade was holding its position—a very important one—successfully, at the right of the brigade, along a ridge, Godfrey saw the Rebs. pouring down a ravine to the right like a flock of sheep. He instantly suspected it was a move to get around the Second and Seventh regiments by the right flank, and he reported it quickly to Colonel Mills, who ordered him to report to General Tuttle, which he did with a rush. "Oh, you're rattled," responded the General. "Well, by G—d, you'll get rattled pretty soon if you don't get a move on you," retorted Godfrey. The General soon discovered the objective point of the enemy's movement, and ordered the Second and Seventh to fall back. The Rebs., seeing their plan was frustrated, withdrew, and thus the Second and Seventh regiments were saved from certain capture by the sagacity and quick action of Godfrey. As Adjutant of the regiment, he was in the thickest of the fight, and stood where he could have placed his hand on General W. H. L. Wallace when that gallant officer fell. The last gun was fired before two o'clock on the afternoon of the Seventh, and Grant's

army marched back victorious to their previous encampment, and took a rest.

Godfrey was also in the battle of Corinth, October Third and Fourth, 1862, where was fought one of the most decisive contests of the South and West. The Confederates numbered over forty thousand men, and as their ranking officer, Van Dorn, said, sufficient to capture the city.

The Second Iowa was among the troops sent out to encounter the enemy, and formed a line of battle at the front. Frequent changes were made in position to checkmate the advances of the enemy, and it finally became hotly engaged near what was known as the White House. It was stationed on high ground, on the edge of timber. In its front, the country was open, affording an almost unobstructed view for a mile or more to the right and left. In this position, it was assaulted in force by the enemy, who, by a charge, endeavored to break the Federal line, but they were repulsed. They did not renew the charge, but came back to within musket range, and from behind stumps and old logs, opened fire with the rifles. The fighting continued for an hour, when heavy columns of Rebel reinforcements were seen coming in the distance. For the regiment to remain where it was, and allow the enemy to hold their position in the immediate front until the reinforcements arrived, would result in certain defeat. Colonel Baker ordered a charge, and, as the enemy was being routed, he fell from his horse, mortally wounded.

On the morning of October Fourth, there was little hope for the Union army. Its lines on every hand had been forced back, and on the northwest and south sides of the city, the enemy had taken the outer defenses. The contest which would decide the final issue would be of short duration, fierce and vigorous. Soon after daylight, the enemy resumed their advance, and a few moments later the battle was raging in every quarter. On the north side, Battery Robinette was repeatedly charged by the enemy, and repulsed with dreadful slaughter. Failing there, the enemy massed their forces on the south side, and, with an appalling yell, at double-quick, came dashing into the town, many even reaching the Tishmingo House. At that critical moment,

when victory was almost within their reach, the Second, Seventh and Seventeenth Iowa sprang to the rescue, and, with an answering yell of defiance, charged upon the Rebel legions and drove them back in utter confusion, thus repelling the final assault of the enemy at Corinth. In that final charge, Lieutenant-Colonel Mills of the Second was shot, from which he died a week later. General J. B. Weaver was then Major of the Second, and in his official report of the fight said:

"Among those who distinguished themselves was Adjutant George L. Godfrey, who could always be seen and heard charging along the line upon his horse, shouting to the men to be cool and steady. He is one of the most valuable young officers with whom I have ever met."

Godfrey had two horses shot from under him in the battle, and had several narrow escapes, but singularly received no injury. The second had six different Colonels as a testimony of its valor.

Adjutant Godfrey took part in the expedition to intercept Forrest, in December, and Dodge's expedition into North Alabama, in the Spring and Summer of 1863.

In Alabama, there was a strong Union sentiment. The success of the Federal forces at Corinth gave encouragement. A regiment of cavalry was formed, and Adjutant Godfrey, who had shown his valor and competency, was commissioned its Major, October Eighteenth, 1863. The regiment was attached to the First Brigade of Cavalry, Sixteenth Army Corps, Army of the Tennessee, and was engaged in the operations on Memphis and Charleston, against Lee's attack, in November and December; the operations against Forrest, in Tennessee, from February Sixth to April Fourteenth, 1864; the advance on Dallas; the two days' battle of Resaca, May Thirteenth and Fourteenth; operations about Kenesaw Mountain, in June; the siege of Atlanta, July Twenty-second to August Twenty-fifth; the battle of Jonesboro, August Thirty-first; the March to the Sea, in November and December, and the campaign of Carolinas, until the surrender of Johnston's army, on April Twenty-eighth, 1865.

During the siege of Atlanta, Major Godfrey was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel, May First, 1864.

On the March to the Sea, the Colonel's regiment was at the head of the column, and one company was assigned as body guard to General Sherman. One day, his regiment was moving quietly along a road where the sand was very fine and deep, when suddenly there was an uproar of shots. The air was filled with dust and sand, the horses went into confusion, and the Colonel thought they had run into a Rebel ambush. Quickly spreading out the regiment, he halted and made investigation. The Rebs. had planted the whole roadway for a long distance with torpedoes. He called General Sherman to the spot, who at once, in not very refined language, ordered them cleaned out. One fellow, while scraping away the sand with his foot, hit a torpedo, which exploded and tore his leg off. Several horses had also been severely injured.

When Johnson surrendered, Godfrey was assigned to carry a message from General Sherman to him. Arriving at Johnson's line with a flag of truce, he was halted, asked his business, and was tendered an understrapper to carry his message to General Johnson, to which Godfrey replied that he would deliver it in person or return with it to General Sherman, whereupon they began to stand up and take notice. He demanded an escort, and they brought him a Lieutenant. Godfrey wanted proper recognition of his military rank—he was a little inspired with the bigness of his mission—and he refused to accept the Lieutenant as escort. The Rebs. scurried away and brought Colonel Rhett, who subsequently came to be a strong Union man and Federal officer. Godfrey was received by General Johnson with the utmost cordiality. When the reply to Sherman's message was prepared, Godfrey was escorted by Colonel Rhett back to the line.

When the Confederacy collapsed, Godfrey was near Raleigh, North Carolina. Wade Hampton, who occupied the city, moved out, and sent word to Godfrey that he might enter the city and protect the Government and citizens. Selecting a few of his staff officers and several line officers, Godfrey started in advance of the column to prepare the way, and also to hoist the stars and stripes over the State House. As they were riding through the streets, they were fired upon by a band of desperadoes, who had broken loose from Hampton's army. Godfrey gave an order to catch the devils. They

all escaped except one, but when the regiment entered the State House yard, the assassin was swinging from a tree.

Entering the State House, Godfrey found the janitor, an old negro, who was nearly white with fright.

"Uncle Sam," said Godfrey, "where are the flags?"

"Dunno, massa; 'spects dey's all toted off," was the reply.

"The Yanks, are here; the Rebs. are all gone, and we want the flags," said Godfrey.

"I reckon you'll find suthin' in dat ar' old box," pointing to a long, narrow box.

"Well, open it, quick," said Godfrey.

The old darkey hustled, with a broad grin on his face, opened the box, in which were twenty-one Union flags which had been captured, and several tattered and torn Rebel flags. The Union flags were quickly spread along the fence about the State House, to greet the Union column as it marched in.

The war being ended, the Colonel's regiment preferred to go to their homes and friends rather than to the final review at Washington. The consent of General Sherman was given, and with it they marched to Huntsville, where the men were paid off. He was mustered out and honorably discharged October Twentieth, 1865.

While he was in Huntsville, in October, closing up the affairs of his regiment, he was elected Representative from Polk County in the Eleventh General Assembly. Although political preferment of high degree was offered him in Alabama, he preferred his old home. He served through the legislative session and took an active part in its deliberations. He prepared and secured the passage of a bill providing for the building of the State Arsenal and headquarters of the Adjutant-General, which stood for many years at the corner of Walnut and First streets. He also prepared a bill for the erection of a Home for Soldiers' Orphans, at Des Moines, and in support of it he made the first public speech in his life. There was strong opposition to it, on the ground that a permanent institution for such a purpose was extravagant and unnecessary, as the lapse of a few years would show no use for it, the children would be grown to manhood. But after forty years, the increase of inmates has been ten to one, evidencing his foresight and his wisdom.

He also prepared a bill for the establishment of a School for the Deaf and Dumb, at Des Moines, but the rivalry of other towns and the scatteration policy, that Des Moines should have no state institutions except the Capitol, prevailed, and Colonel Sapp won the school for Council Bluffs.

At the close of the Legislature, the Colonel entered the first class of the Law Department of the State University, graduated December Seventh, 1866, and was admitted to practice in the State and Federal courts.

In 1880, he was elected City Solicitor, and served two years; was appointed assistant to Joseph Lane, as United States District Attorney, and served three years.

In 1882, he was appointed a member of the Federal Commission, under the Edmunds Law, to wipe out polygamy in Utah, and in 1889 was made Chairman of the Commission. His experience in that contest would fill a book. Under the limited powers of the Commissioners, they failed to wring the neck of polygamy, but they scotched its tail.

Politically, he was originally a radical Democrat, and cast his first vote for President James Buchanan, but he was also a patriot. He abandoned partisanship and gave himself to save the Union, since when he has been a stalwart Republican. He voted for "Old Abe," and in 1876, was one of the state electors who elected Rutherford B. Hayes President. He is now United States Collector of Customs, the importation of merchandise direct from foreign countries by merchants of Des Moines making such an office necessary. His political honors have come to him by common consent, rather than from political "pulls."

Socially, he is genial, companionable, of positive temperament, unostentatious, has no taste for fuss and feathers; is an active member of the Grand Army of the Republic, the Grand Army of Tennessee, the Loyal Legion of the United States, the Grant Club, the Pioner (sic) Lawmakers' Association, and the Pioneer Settlers' Association of Polk County.

Religiously, he is a Congregationalist, dating from the first little church, which stood near the southeast corner of the present Postoffice, on Court Avenue.

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