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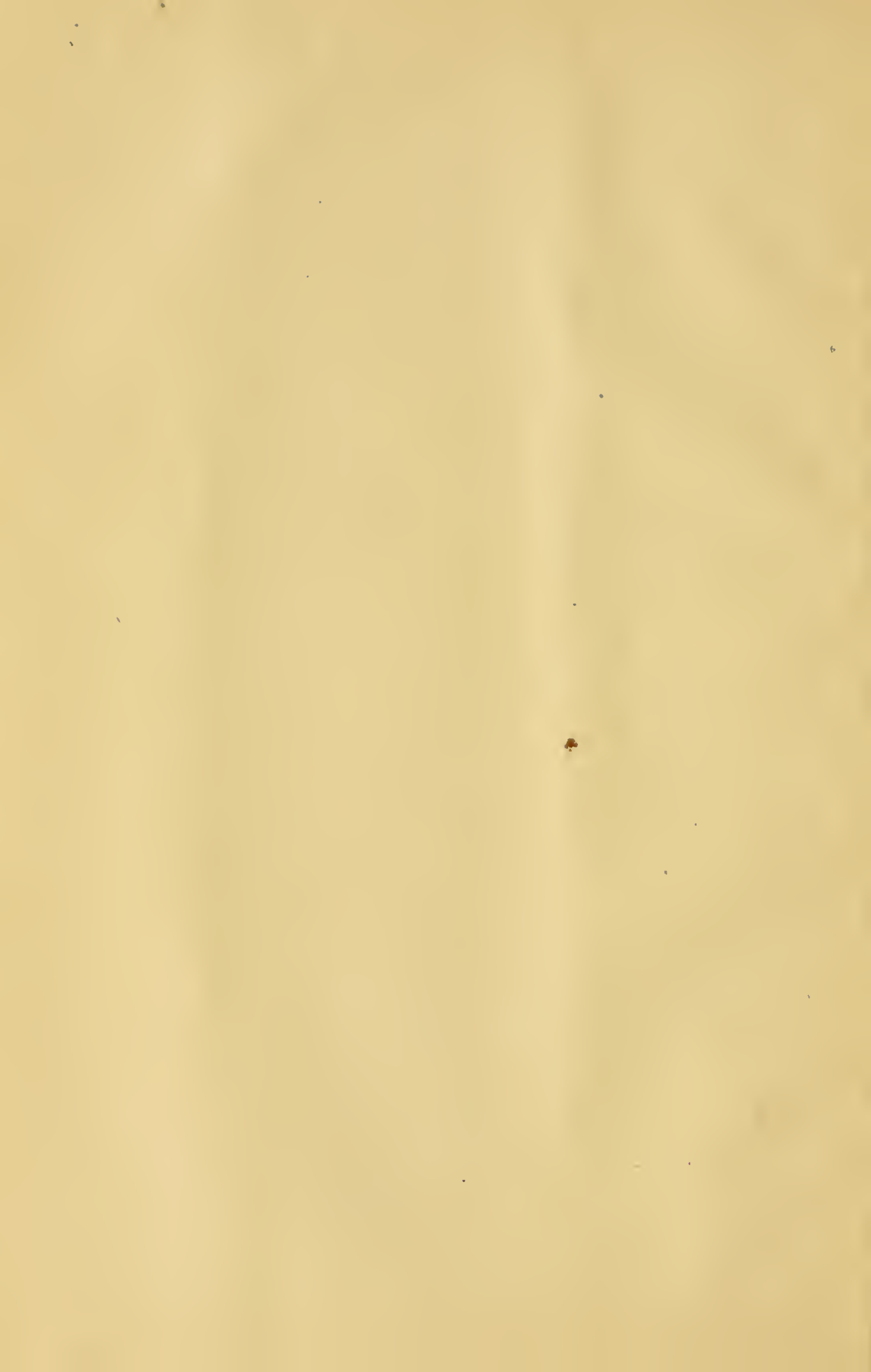
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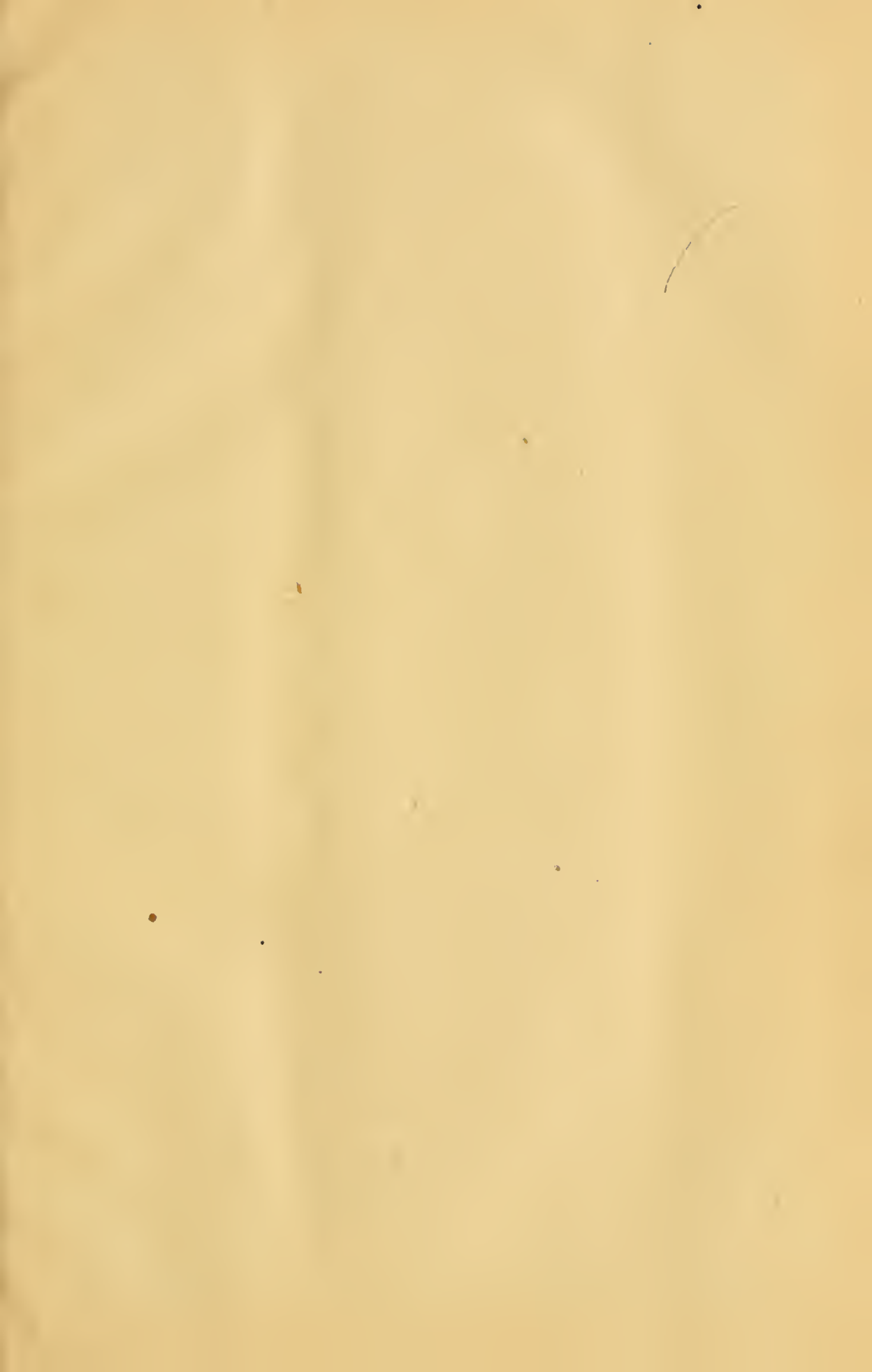
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.











BENTON COUNTY:

HER ORGANIZATION AND
EARLY HISTORY,

AND

Memorial Tribute to her Early Settlers.

BY

L. D. HAWLEY.

Inscribed

AT FOWLER, JULY 4TH, 1876.

LAFAYETTE:

S. VATER, PRINTER AND BINDER.

1876.

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FELLOW CITIZENS OF BENTON COUNTY :

Among the many bright and happy characteristics of the human family throughout the entire civilized world, none are more prominent than :

First—The love they all feel toward their early home, the scenes of their childhood, their school-boy days, and their early associations.

Second—Their great respect and veneration for old age, and for those who left the homes of their childhood and struck for life and fortune in the great unknown western wilds, and with only brave hearts and strong arms, assisted so much in the growth and development of this great western country, undergoing trials and hardships always incident to frontier life and wholly unknown to the young and rising generation of this country.

Therefore, in recognition of these facts, and as a mark of respect, and for the purpose of ever keeping in memory the early settlers, it has been thought right and proper for the people throughout the United States to meet at the several county seats in the respective counties in the several States, on this the One Hundredth Anniversary of our Independence this grand Centennial year, and commemorate by a brief sketch the early organization and history of such counties, and of the early settlers, as a perpetuation of the memories thereof, in connection with and as a part of the general and usual festivities, on this, the 4th day of July, A. D. 1876. This much, by way of introduction, to this, your Centennial celebration.

Before commencing such brief sketch of the organization of this county, and her early settlers permit me to say, for want of time it is not as general as I intended, but so far as I give it, I shall claim that it is fair, impartial, and truthful, and for many of the dates and circumstances hereinafter given, I wish to publicly acknowledge my obligations to several of the early settlers, and to express my thanks to the entire corps of county officers, for the great assistance they have rendered me.

The territory now known as Benton County, formerly

constituted a part of and was known as Jasper County, and many of the old settlers came here, settled here, and lived many years here, while it was Jasper County, and before the organization of the present Benton County.

The early settlements in now Benton, then Jasper County, were made along the line of a few small groves that skirted the banks of Big Pine and Mud Pine Creeks, in said county, in White Oak Grove, and along the southern boundary line of said county, and Parish Grove and Sugar Grove, (now called Sumner's Grove,) as it was not considered safe to venture out on the Grand Prairie at that time; the settlers frequently settling with two or three families, in a neighborhood but more commonly in a neighborhood of one, and from three to ten miles apart; and let me say right here, in giving dates I don't claim to give them exact, but on or about such times. This is as to settlers. As to dates of organization and attendant circumstances, I shall claim to be correct.

After the first settlement made in now Benton County by the Indians, in their little village, in a grove in the southern part of the county, and their camp at Parish Grove, and by the grand old chief To-pen-ne-ba, at Sugar Grove, and of which I cannot give dates, and as I have to have a starting point, I will say, that among the first settlers of this county, so far as I have been able to get dates, was Thomas Timmons, who, with his family, settled on Big Pine Creek, on or near the farm now owned by his son, Benjamin A. Timmons, in the year 1831; said Benjamin A. Timmons then being about sixteen years of age and has resided in this county ever since.

The next date I have, was Thomas Lewis, (father of Isaac W. Lewis, Esq.,) who moved to White Oak Grove, on or near the farm now owned by R. M. Atkinson, in the fall of 1832. About the same time, perhaps a little earlier, or a little later, Thomas Nolin, Matthew Terwilger, Levi Thornton, Henry Jennings, Philip Williams and others, settled in the timber along Big Pine Creek; also at Denton's Grove there were two or three families. Just the time that James O. and William Denton settled in the grove that bears their name, I am unable to say, but it was about or soon after the date above mentioned. From this time, until 1835, a few families pitched their tents in the same locality, but the increase was very slow.

In 1835, Uncle Basil Justus, with his family, moved to White Oak Grove and erected a log cabin, or or near what is now known as the Justus farm, and at that time one of the most advanced posts in the county, and on which farm Mr. Justus or some of his family have since resided, until the last few years. At the time of his first settlement there, there were only one or two families in the Grove. During the same year, John W. Robinson and his family, moved to Parish Grove, his sons Henry Robinson and Samuel Robinson coming in the spring of said year, and raising a crop, their father and the balance of his family coming in the fall of the same year.

There were living in Parish Grove at that time, Enoch Evans, John Foster, William Douglas, who had settled in said Grove a short time before. Robert Alexander came to the Grove a short time thereafter and lived for many years on the farm now owned by Parnham Boswell, Esq. At about the same time there was living at Sugar Grove, Hannaniah Huett and family, and a family by the name of Peck.

At about the same time, there were a few families settled on the banks of Mud Pine Creek, in the southern portion of the county, among whom were David Lane, Thomas Martin, Perigan Garland, William Smith, and James Smith and families, with perhaps a few others.

In the spring of 1836, Judge David McConnell and his family moved to White Oak Grove, and erected a little house near his present residence, and has resided upon the farm he first settled on from that date down to the present time. There was, at that time, living in said White Oak Grove, Basil Justice, James Holmes, James Thornton, Thomas Lewis and William Lewis, these being all living in or near said Grove at that time. Peter Jennings was then, living on the farm now occupied by P. P. Griffin, that being the only house east of White Oak Grove, in this county, on the LaFayette road. Philip Williams was then living on what is known as the old Williams farm. Milton Jennings lived on the farm now owned by George H. Jennings, Esq., and Thomas Nolin was living on the farm on which his son, George W. Nolin, now resides.

About the same time, there were a few families settled in what is now known as McConnell's Grove, about four

miles south-west of White Oak Grove, consisting of Samuel McConnell and brother and one or two others; a few families gradually settling in the county at the different localities before named.

Bear in mind that I have been talking about the settlement of now Benton, but then Jasper County, and Jasper County not yet having a county organization, being attached to Warren County for judicial county purposes, David McConnell above spoken of, being Associate Judge in Warren County. I now pass to the organization of Jasper County. Jasper County was organized and her first court held in the year 1838, the first Commissioners being Amos White, Joseph Smith and Frederick Conoyer, and held their first term in the spring of said year, in Parish Grove; and in the fall of the same year, the first term of the Circuit Court was held in the same place, in Parish Grove, then Jasper, now Benton County; the officers of said Circuit Court being, Isaac A. Naylor, Judge; George Spitler, Clerk; Henry Robinson, Sheriff; the Prosecuting Attorney being then a young man by the name of Joseph A. Wright, afterwards Governor of the State of Indiana, and later still, United States Minister at the Court of Berlin.

The next term of court of said Jasper County, was held near the Iroquois River far north of the northern boundary line of now Benton County.

A short time thereafter, Commissioners were appointed to locate the county seat of Jasper County, who reported and located said county seat at Rensselaer, in said county.

I have said this much about Jasper County, simply because I thought it necessary to get at the early history of Benton County and her early settlers in a proper manner.

A short time after the dates and circumstances above given, a few of the early settlers came to the conclusion that the territory of Jasper County was too large, and that they wanted a county of their own; so getting a petition to the Legislature, signed by several of their neighbors, and recommended by the same parties and officers who controlled and organized Jasper County, for a new county to be formed from the southern portion of Jasper County, and said petition being presented to the Legislature, being carried to Indianapolis by Henry Robertson in person, the Legislature thereupon passed a statute, which was ap-

proved February 18, 1840, declaring that hereafter, all that part of Jasper County south of the line between township twenty-six (26,) and twenty-seven (27,) north, shall be and constitute an independent county and shall be known and designated as the county of Benton.

Benton County thereupon became a corporation of her own and had to look out for and govern herself.

Under the same statute authority was given to hold both the Commissioners, and Circuit Court of said county of Benton, at the house of Basil Justus (it being situate in White Oak Grove, and just south of where the town of Oxford now stands;) the first term of Commissioners being held at said place, on July 28, 1840, Thomas Lewis, Amos White and John W. Robinson being the first Commissioners, all of whom I believe are now deceased.

The first term of the Circuit Court of said Benton County was held at the same place, in the fall of the same year, November 4, 1840; the officers of said court at that first term being Isaac A. Naylor, Pres't Judge, David McConnell and Mathew Tewiliger, associate Judges, Basil Justus, Clerk, Henry Robertson, Sheriff.

The Prosecuting Attorney then a young and rising lawyer, Joseph E. McDonald, now United States Senator from the State of Indiana, (let young Prosecutors not get discouraged.)

THE FIRST GRAND JURY.

Aaron Wood, Lewis Reynolds, Elias Smith, Benjamin A. Timmons, John Wallace, John Lane, Wm. P. Carson, William Smith, Jr., Samuel Robertson, John Frost, William Foster, Wm. F. Wakeman, Thomas McConnell, Robert Pollock and Lewis B. Williams, 14 in number, John Wallace, Foreman.

PETTIT JURY.

William McConnell, Solomon Birch, Peragin Garland, Hannaniah Huett, William Smith, Sen., James Thomas, Amos White, Sen., James O. Denton, William Denton, John Sheetz, Eli Woods, Samuel McConnell.

The Jury rooms were under the shade of some sturdy oak trees in close proximity to the Court room.

The list of said county officers and jurors supply many names not heretofore given of the early settlers, as they in a great degree constituted the prominent men of the county at that time.

The attorneys sworn and admitted at said first term, were Daniel Mace, John Pettit, Wm. M. Jenners, Robert A. Chandler, Benjamin F. Gregory, Zebulon Baird and Joseph Tatman, none of whom resided in this county, and after districting the county into three civil townships, known as Parish Grove, Oak Grove and Pine Township, the organization of the county and its courts was now completed, and Benton County might be said to have her "working harness on," and of all the officers and jurors of said county, at that time residents of this county, who are now living in or near Benton County, only six remain: Basil Justice, David McConnell, Henry Robertson, William Smith, Benjamin A. Timmons and John Sheetz; all excepting John Sheetz being residents of Benton County, he living in Tippecanoe County. I might here mention that it is supposed that Benjamin A. Timmons is the oldest settler of said county now living therein, and that Thomas McConnell, son of David McConnell, is the oldest person born in and now living in Benton County.

And while these old men above named were side by side in such organization of the county and parties thereto, and side by side they have lived since; side by side they have been honored with important public trust; side by side they have fought the flames of the prairie fire; side by side they have planted their orchards; side by side they have endured the privations and disappointments of frontier life; side by side they have assisted in the development of this grand county; side by side they have witnessed with pleasure the steady, solid and permanent growth of the county of their choice, and as side by side they are now passing down to the evening shades of life, to join their great compeers in early history, let us ever cherish their memory with those early settlers who have gone before, and ever be ready to hail with pride the names of the earlier pioneers of Benton County.

At the time of the organization of the county, 1840, coming from LaFayette, Indiana, the first house in Benton County was Peter Jennings', where P. P. Griffin now lives, then four miles west to houses of Justus and McConnell in White Oak Grove, then west no house for ten miles until you reached Parish Grove, and then none for eight miles further to Sugar Grove, then sixteen miles to Bunkum, Illinois, and not one house north of White Oak Grove to

the Iroquois river, about twenty-five miles; this entire grand and now beautiful prairie being wholly wild and uninhabited; for although a few families began to now move into the county, they still kept in the timber portion or close thereto, as the grand prairie was still considered a barren, bleak and dreary waste, and was known and spoken of as "The lost Land," its principal productions being prairie wolves, sand hill cranes and green head flies. (It has been found since, however, and its virgin soil has been yielding more valuable produce.) Up to this time and for a few years thereafter the nearest market for Benton County was the village of Chicago, and the Benton County farmers would once a year load up their grain and produce in a lumber wagon, and putting in two weeks' provision, with an ox team would start to market to sell their produce and lay in their necessary groceries for the coming year; and after swimming rivers, wading sloughs, and sleeping on the cold ground every night, would finally succeed in making the entire round trip inside of fifteen days.

Before proceeding further I should state that, the organization of the county being now complete, in 1843 the following Commissioners were appointed to locate the county seat of said county, to-wit: William Sill, Samuel Milroy, George Wolfer and William Coon; who on May 17, 1843, located the same at the extreme northern point of White Oak Grove, and on the same ground the town of Oxford now stands.

The first Court-house built in Benton County, and in said county seat, and then named Oxford, was a modest frame building one and one-half stories high, about twenty feet by forty feet in size, Francis Bayntro being the architect and builder of same; and at the time of raising the frame thereof he had to call the assistance of some of our Warren County friends, there not being enough help in Benton County within reach to raise the same. The first term of court held in said Court-house was the March term, 1845, the Jack Oak thickets then being so thick in the county seat that judges, officers, lawyers and clients had to follow cow paths to find the new Court-house. By this time a few settlers began to move into different portions of the county, and gradually encroach on the wilds of our grand prairie. On Mud Pine, about the

first were Isaiah H. Perigo and Joshua Howell, who settled on the prairie just north of what was then known as the Smith settlement, followed soon after by William Smalley, the McIlains, Jacob Cassell, David Ogburn, Jesse Lutz, Joseph Pierce, John Gage, John Hopper, John C. Anderson, the McDaniells, Wm. Hubbard, Vanovers and others; the Crawfords at West Hickory Grove, one or two settlers near Mound Gilboa, and in and near White Oak Grove came, among others, Wm. Oiler, James McKinsey, L. B. Wattles, Ezekiel Davis, Francis Boynton, the Littlers, Isaac Runner, Wakemans, Burch, Robert and Hartley T. Howard, Dr. Stembel, Thomas Atkinson and William Cochran and others; on Big Pine Creek, George H. Finch, James Thomas, Isaiah H. Young, William Young, James Emerson and many others, commenced breaking prairie for their future homes, all however up to this time clinging close to timber and groves as possible. In 1849 Parnham Boswell came to Parish Grove, buying the farm of Robert Alexander, while Ed Sumner a little more bold pushed across the prairie eight miles further, to Sugar Grove, settling on lands previously bought. At North Hickory Grove Samuel Finney had a little log cabin, and herded his cattle close around him; near Mount Gilboa, John Southard, Jones, Jacob Lucas and others.

At about the same time, 1849, the first jail in said county was finished. It was built of heavy hewed logs, was built by Basil Justus and was on a lot only a few feet west of where the Odd Fellows' building in Oxford now stands. I believe it only had one prisoner within its walls, and that one only for a short time, the prisoner being put in in the evening for safe keeping. Shortly thereafter he set fire to the building, and it was with the greatest difficulty he was rescued from the flames, and the building was entirely burned down.

This brings me down to the year 1850, and before going farther with this sketch, I have thought proper to give an entire list of your judicial and county officers and other matters down to the present time, and will then follow some settlers on to the prairie. The county officers already mentioned I might say were by appointment, the remainder elective. The first election held in the county in 1840, polled about seventy votes.

Circuit Judge—Isaac Naylor was Pres't Judge from

organization until 1852. The Associate Judges sitting with him to that time, after those already named, were: 1st, Basil Justus, John Sheetz; 2d, John McConnell and Harvey Crawford.

Probate Judges under the old system—Samuel McConnell from 1840 to 1847; William Cochran, from 1847 to 1852, when the office was abolished.

Now following the Circuit Judges—Wm. P. Bryant, 1852 to 1855; John Pettit, 1854 to 1856; Charles H. Test, 1856 to 1870; David P. Vinton, 1870 to 1872; E. P. Hammond, present judge—none ever residing in Benton county.

The Common Pleas Judges were: Dan. Mills, William R. Boyer, G. A. Wood, David P. Vinton and Alfred Reed, —the latter in common with other Common Pleas Judges was legislated out of office; Dan. Mills only having lived in Benton County, Benton County having never honored many of her citizens with the judicial ermine.

The Clerks were: 1st, Basil Justus, from 1840 to 1844; J. F. Parker from 1844 to 1847; H. P. Howard, 1847 to 1858; L. D. Hawley, 1858 to 1866; Charles M. Scott, 1866 to 1874, who was since succeeded by the present incumbent, S. F. Carter.

Auditor—J. F. Parker, 1840 to 1847; H. T. Howard, 1847 to 1856; William H. Calkins, 1856 to 1860; W. M. Jones, 1860 to 1868; William Snyder, present incumbent.

Sheriff—1st, Henry Robertson, organizing Sheriff, 1840; Ezekel Davis, first election to 1844; B. A. Timmons, 1844 to 1848; Elijah Littler, 1848 to 1852; Eran E. Thompson, 1852 to 1854; Samuel A. Keys, 1854 to 1856; William J. Templeton, 1856 to 1858; Samuel Chapman, 1858 to 1862; William S. Freeman, 1862 to 1864; Samuel Savage, 1864 to 1866; Alonzo Cowgill, 1866 to 1870; Elnathan Jennings, 1870 to 1872; Henry O. Harris, present incumbent.

Recorder—Basil Justus, 1840 to 1844; J. F. Parker, 1844 to 1847; H. T. Howard, 1847 to 1856; John Burns, 1858 to 1862; S. F. Carter, 1862 to 1870; Isaac H. Phares, present incumbent.

Treasurer—Milton Jennings, until his death; Thomas Griffin, appointed to fill vacancy; James Emerson, 1847 to 1852; James N. Holton, 1852 to 1854; Theodore Stembel, 1854 to 1858; A. J. Carnahan, 1858 to 1860; James Vawter, 1860 to 1862; J. J. Rawlings, 1862 to 1866; J. F. Parker, 1866 to 1870; W. B. McConnell, 1870 to 1874; William Marvin, present incumbent.

W. H. Calkins 2 years Treas

The several Coroners of said county in their order were : B. A. Timmons, Samuel Savage, Eli Frazier, Jonathan Kolb, William M. Sleeper, J. W. Barnes and J. F. Kinney.

Surveyors as follows: Henry Robertson, Thomas E. Torrence, Jesse McNeal, Daniel Campbell, Wm. M. Jones, S. A. Baldwin.

Commissioners—Thomas Lewis, Amos White and John W. Robertson, were first, and the following names have served since at different times: Hannaniah Huett, J. McKinsey, Samuel Bair, Francis Boynton, William Smith, J. F. Parker, James P. Miller, ~~Theodore~~ Stembel, Robert Hawkins, Henry Robertson, Charles Johnson, Wm. T. Rowe, B. A. Timmons, Wm. Cochrane, Joseph Caswell, Jacob Caswell, Thomas Atkinson, Benjamin Hawkins, Robert M. Atkinson, Samuel McIlvain, Wm. Fraser, John W. Swan, Joseph Perkins, J. F. Boswell, and the present incumbents being Robert M. Atkinson, Thomas Wilcox, W. G. W. Norwood.

As the names of several appear holding different county offices at the same time, I might say that this occurs from the fact that one person held the offices of Clerk, Auditor and Recorder, up to 1852, and had pretty hard living at that. This accounts for one or two names appearing so often in the above sketch.

Having followed the list of your judiciary and county officers from the organization of the county down to the present time, and before returning to my text, I wish to give in this connection a list of the earlier ministers, professional men, mechanics, &c., of said county.

It is claimed that about the first sermon ever preached in Benton County was by Rev. James A. Carnaham, of Dayton, Indiana; about the next and who preached somewhat regular for some time were Revs. Homer and Cozad, who preached in White Oak Grove, and old John Sargent on Mud Pine, all being earnest workers in the cause of their Master, and as a rule preaching their sermons in the open air in the shade of your beautiful grove, or by the fireside of the early settler, in his own rude log cabin; none of these however resided in Benton County. Among the first resident ministers were Rev. George Campbell, Rev. Evan Stevenson and Rev. Wm. H. Calkins; Rev. Evan Stevenson being the only survivor.

Among the early physicians were Dr. Stembel, (who at

that time practiced in all the territory west of the Wabash) Drs. I. H. Wright, Franklin Blades, — Boone, Anson Hurd, Jesse Daily, J. W. Barnes and W. M. Sleeper; Stembel, Barnes and Sleeper being the only ones now living in Benton County, and neither of them in active practice.

The first resident lawyers were James F. Parker, Jacob Benedict and Dan. Mills, none of whom now reside in the county.

Among the early mechanics I might mention Jonathan Vanhorn, on Mud Pine, John W. Bradley, in McConnell's Grove, Santford Wilson and Mark Brier, in Oxford, and James P. Miller, on Big Pine, as blacksmiths; George Brier, Joseph Casswell, John Ferguson, John P. Ross, George W. and John E. Bless, of Oxford, as carpenters; Edward Ferguson and Jacob Miller, of Oxford as shoemakers; George Blanchfield, Ed. White and Robert Wood, were first in the line of saddles and harness; T. E. Brake being among the first as to the manufacture of wagons and carriages, he claiming to have made and sold the first buggy ever manufactured in the county to William R. Johnson, Esq., whose name I had forgotten to mention as one of the early settlers, Jacob S. Albaugh opening the second shop in that line; as to stone masons, old Martin Benedict was "first, last and all the time" during his lifetime.

The first store in Benton County was kept by Aaron Wood in a little frame building in Oxford. The second and on a much larger scale was by Carnahan & Earl, of LaFayette, who built the first regular store room in Oxford, and stocked the same with general merchandise, Mr. James Vawter being for some time general clerk, who was succeeded by A. J. Carnahan, both of whom afterwards kept large stores of their own. The first ~~dry goods~~ store I think was kept by Burns & Bailey, afterwards Burns & Hurd, in Oxford, since which time many others have followed in different portions of the county, of all these professions and trades, but which my time will not permit me to follow as I am only giving the earlier ones.

The first Masonic lodge instituted in said county was at Oxford, being entitled Oxford Lodge, No. 190, F. & A. M. its charter bearing date July 24, 1855; the first officers under said charter being Elisha Sargent, W. M.; John

Barnkisle, S. W.; A. J. Carnahan, J. W.; George Champley, Treasurer; F. M. Mills, Sec.; B. Q. Norris, S. D.; Thomas Torrence, J. D.; George Armstrong, Tyler. The first Lodge of I. O. O. F. was instituted in Oxford, and known as Oxford Lodge, No. 169, I. O. O. F., its charter bearing date July 18, 1855. (The lodge was however not formally in running order for some ~~ten~~ years after.) The first officers under said charter, being J. W. Barnes, N. G.; John Sheetz, V. G.; Jesse Dailey, Sec.; A. J. Carnahan, Treasurer; since which time, and within the last few years, a lodge of each of said orders have been organized in the towns of Boswell and Fowler in this county.

As to newspapers: The first paper published in Benton County was the Oxford Evening Mail, started in 1855 by J. W. Jackson, editor and publisher, sold in 1858 to S. F. Carter, who changed name of paper to Benton Register, and paper discontinued about a year thereafter; next the Oxford Chronotype, lasting only a short time. The next the Oxford Tribune, first issue September 11, 1865, D. R. Lucas, editor and proprietor, changed hands Oct. 1, 1870; A. Cowgill, editor and proprietor; changed hands A. W. Carnahan, present editor and proprietor. The next the Central Clarion, first issue May, 1873, at Fowler, D. McA. Williams, editor and proprietor; changed name and proprietors August, 1874, to Benton County Herald, Ingram & Maxwell, editors and proprietors; changed name to Fowler Era, May, 1876, D. McA. Williams again becoming editor. Boswell Leader first issued November 19, 1874, in town of Boswell, C. G. Lyon, editor, H. N. Carson, proprietor, has since changed hands, Cal. Gault being the present editor. Earl Park Mirror, three publications, commenced October 31, 1874. Benton Democrat first issued July 2, 1875, in town of Fowler, W. B. Maddock, editor and proprietor. Templeton Tocsin, at Templeton, March, 1876, T. H. Bonham, present editor.

I now return back to the early settlements where I left them in 1850, and the settlers at that time still clinging around the beautiful groves and timber in your county, with a voting population of about two hundred and fifty.

Among the first who pitched their tent far out on the prairie, and far away from timber, about this time, whom I recollect was William Wisner, on to the farm he now

resides; Daniel Birdsall close by, on what is known as Austill farm; and a small colony of English people who had just come to this country, Mr. F. P. Greenwood being the advance guard, and pre-empting some land, a part of which is known as the Carlisle farm, and selecting some lands adjoining, erected a rough hut on the banks of Mud Pine creek, without doors or windows, after which he was joined by his family. The balance of the colony, to-wit: John Lathrop, Mathew Armstrong Joseph Bromely, John Compton, James Jarrett, William McQueen and George Bonn, settling and making some improvements on the lands so pre-empted. After a few years of hard toil, great inconvenience and many hardships, and suffering from a cold and dreary climate, and being unable to protect themselves from the bleak prairie winds, the colony was abandoned and separated, each going for himself, and all except Mr. Greenwood leaving the county; he moving some four miles south, nearer timber, settled on the farm on which he now resides, and is the only one of said colony now living in the county; Thomas Gornall and James Howarth, brother Englishmen not belonging to said colony, coming into the prairie about the same time, and all three of whom now own beautiful farms. From this time forward families began moving into different portions of the county, as a market had opened up at LaFayette, which at that time was considered very handy, as the round trip could be made during one-half of the year in two full days, allowing no time to stop for meals.

Oxford, the then county seat and the only town in the county, began to improve quite rapidly; several new residence and business houses being erected, and Jack Oak Thickets began to give way to pleasant homes and little gardens.

From this time forward, it would be impossible to give names of parties moving into the county. As a few whom I recollect, I might mention as settling near Oxford, Jas. N. Holton, Isaac Templeton, John Burns, Bloss, the Whites, Phares, Curl, Crossons, Rowe, John Campbell and many others. On Mud Pine, John Robeck, J. D. Roberts, H. W. and William Wilkinson, the Fords, Stanley, Jarvis and others. On the prairie between the two places, John E. Morgan, J. F. Mills, Charles, Aaron and John

Watles, J. N. Kiger and others, On Big Pine and eastern part of the county, Evan Stephenson, J. W. Swan, Benjamin Hawkins and brother, William Hawkins, DeHart, Haigh, Mattox, W. J. Templeton, Browns and other families moving into different portions of the county.

A few years thereafter, the old frame Court-house becoming deficient to meet the increasing wants of the county, a second and brick Court-house was built in 1856, Geo. W. Brown, of LaFayette, being the architect and contractor.

There began to be some excitement about this time over the prospect of a railroad being built along the northern boundary line of the county, and in anticipation thereof several settlers came into the northern portion of the county and commenced improving farms,

Among whom were John Fleming, sen. and family, A. D. Packard, Hall, E. C. Gould, Anthony Dehner and many others, the said railroad being completed in December, 1859, and its advantages appreciated. The northern portion of the county improved rapidly and settled up much faster than any other portion of the county, soon rivaling some of the early settled portions of the county and leaving the central portion still behind in improvements, the population of the county now being about 2,450.

This brings me down to the commencement of that great scourge, the late war, which for five years shook the entire country with the thunder of cannon, during which very little improvements were made, for Benton County early responded and was among the first to march into Camp Tippecanoe a company of men, which after some delays and some changes, became attached to and formed a part of the 15th Indiana Regiment, and from that time forward, until the close of the war, Benton County was continually sending men to the front, sometimes in companies, sometimes in squads and sometimes singly, so that there was hardly an Indiana regiment in which Benton County was not represented, and while many of her sons went down in the terrible shock of battle, some who sickened and died from disease incident to camp-life and a malarious climate, and many others returned home to their friends and families, and all of whom behaved and served honorably and nobly and reflect honor on the county.

The war being over, business began to revive and new

enterprises were being formed. After several failures in trying to build a railroad through this county, in 1869 a corporation was formed, known as the LaFayette, Muncie & Bloomington Railroad Company, for the purpose of building and operating a railroad from Muncie, Indiana, to the western boundary line of the State of Indiana, and running through the southern portion of said Benton County, the citizens of this county subscribing \$60,000 in stock, and the Commissioners levying a tax of \$40,000, and subscribing stock for same in said company.

Shortly thereafter, a corporation was formed, known as the Cincinnati, LaFayette & Chicago Railroad Company, for the purpose, in connection with other roads, of building and operating a railroad from LaFayette, Indiana, to Chicago, Illinois, the latter road leaving the line of the L., M. & B. R. R. at Templeton, in this county, and running centrally through to the northwest corner of the county. Work on both roads was pushed forward rapidly and after several delays, was finally completed through this county. Then emigration began to come in and settle in all parts of the county. Farms and farm houses grew as if by magic. Labor began to receive its reward, and old settlers began to think good times were coming and their early labors rewarded, the population of the county at that time (1870,) being about 5,000.

And let me say here that while to some it may seem up to this time that our progress was slow in the settling up of the county, bear in mind that the entire southern portion of the county and most of the central portion, excepting a few farms in the groves, had to wagon and haul all their rails and wood from Warren County, a distance of from four to fifteen miles, and their building lumber and material from LaFayette and Chicago; most all the fencing you see around those magnificent farms in the southern portion being brought that distance. Many farmers could only bring one load a day and hard work at that, and one load of wood a day was good work over the terrible roads at that early day, and to any person conversant with the roads, circumstances and trials of that time, instead of saying Benton County improved slowly, as he views the great improvements will rather wonder how it was possible that she improved so fast under all the circumstances.

Oxford, the only town in the county, began new life, many valuable and permanent houses being built. Other towns along the line of both railroads were springing into existence. Business houses, dwellings and grain elevators, sprang up rapidly, and were soon vying and competing with each other for the trade of the county. In the meantime, the central and northern portion of the county were settling up very rapidly, and as the second Court-house of said county was generally considered unsafe, an agitation commenced as to whether a new Court-house should be built at Oxford, the then county seat, or to have the county seat removed to the town of Fowler. After a good deal of excitement and considerable bad feeling, the requisite number of names under the law were signed to the petition for such removal, which petition was presented to the Board of Commissioners, at their December term, 1873, and the preliminary order made for such removal. At the June term, 1874, the contract was made for the building of the new Court-house at Fowler, Mr. L. L. Leach being awarded the contract, Mr. Randall, of Chicago, being the architect. Work was commenced on same immediately, and the corner stone was laid with imposing masonic ceremonies, on August 16, 1874. The final order of removal was made by the Commissioners, at the December term, 1874, records moved January 7, 1875, and first court held in the new Court-house February, 1875.

Having given the early organization and a brief sketch of her early history and settlers and gradual growth, I perhaps should close; but I trust you will pardon me on this occasion, for adding a few words supplementary to what I have already said.

On this day, throughout the entire country, where yonder flag waves, the people have met in their respective localities for the same purpose you have met here. Many incidents and early associations almost forgotten have been renewed and perpetuated, animosities of the past forgiven and promises for the future made.

So let me say to you, my fellow-citizens of Benton County of the present generation, you live in one of the grandest and finest agricultural countries in the world, the acknowledged garden county of Indiana, her soil planted by nature, genial, rich and kind, only awaits the influence

of honest labor, and care of the husbandman, to yield millions of wealth to her tillers of the soil, and to exercise her proper influence in the commercial interests of the entire country; and while your natural advantages are great and far superior to many other localities, yet the advantages of the increased knowledge of the times, the great improvements made in prairie farming, the grand railroads, the telegraph, your beautiful churches, your grand system of free schools, all of which were entirely unknown to the early pioneers, render this county one of the most attractive locations in the entire west.

With a railroad on your northern boundary line, one also passing through the southern portion of the county, and another passing from the south-east centrally through to the north-west corner of the county, every section and portion are happily accommodated; and no man can live in Benton County over ten miles from a railway station and a mart to sell the produce of his farm, and thus reap the reward of his industry.

So let me urge you onward in the grand march of improvement. If Benton County has made such advancement in the thirty years past, with none of the acquired advantages before spoken of, if her early settlers achieved so much under the great disadvantages they labored, what may we expect of her and her citizens in the next quarter of a century, with all the present advantages and the increase in knowledge and advantages that we expect to naturally follow during that time.

If disappointment and misfortune occasionally come as come they do in all times and in all countries, don't get discouraged. Recollect your trials are nothing to compare with those of early times; keep steady ahead; improve your farms, plant your orchards, plant and foster your groves and shade trees, beautify and improve your homes, make every thing around you pleasant and inviting, stick to the farm and your work, educate your children, and while you are educating them in the arts and sciences also teach them the great stubborn facts of life; teach them there is no dignity of character without labor, nothing more honorable than "honest toil;" teach them that grand old maxim, "that he who by the plow would thrive, himself must either hold or drive." With this kind of an education planted in the minds of your children, as they return

from their daily toil and nestle down under the shades of the ivy and the woodbine, planted, nourished and protected by the hands of a fond and loving mother, so they, under this influence, as they grow up to manhood and womanhood, will emulate your example, until this grand prairie county of yours will become one vast garden, and health, happiness and prosperity will be the reward of you and yours.

And now a few words to those brave old pioneers of Benton County. Grand old men! what shall I say to you on this occasion? When only a strange and beardless boy I came among you, and you kindly took me to your arms and welcomed me to your homes and firesides; you introduced me to your children, with whom I spent many happy days in roaming over this then wild prairie, and as time wore on you charged me with grave duties, and honored me with important public trusts, for which no language of mine can express the many thanks I owe you. Pardon me for this allusion to myself, I would say nothing less. I am not here for any purpose of flattery; you need none at my hands. Neither am I here to pass an eulogy on your life and character. A brighter eulogy than I can give is written all over the face of this grand County of Benton. Let us go and visit your beautiful homes and farms where you settled when this county was only a wild waste, when the embers were still burning from the campfires of the red man, view the beautiful groves planted by your own hands, see the many beautiful churches and school houses you have helped to build, and although a long time, almost beyond the confines of civilization, the care you have manifested in educating and training your children, all these with many other speak a grander eulogy than can fall from the lips of any one.

But I am here to say in behalf of the younger generation of this county, that they acknowledge with gratitude the great respect and veneration they have for the early settlers of this county. I am here to say that we point with pride to the record of your long and honorable lives. I am here to say that we acknowledge the great trials and hardships of all those who settled in both the first and second decades of our county history, and without mentioning names, we include those already named with hosts of others, and we appeal to history and challenge the world

to come and beat you "if they can." I am here further to say that we are glad to meet so many of you here to encourage us with your presence, and to mingle your voices with ours on this grand occasion, and while we in common with you regret that many of your great compeers in your start for life and fortune have passed away, yet we are glad so many remain to enjoy the festivities of this day. We hail with pride the fact that so many have lived to see this the 100th anniversary of this great Government of which you have so long formed a part. We are also thankful so many have lived to see the grand improvements made in this county since you first came within her borders, when the dreary blasts of the prairie wind wafted across the entire county, with nothing to break its power. Settling down with nothing but iron wills and steady hands you commenced the battle of life for a future home and bread for your little ones, and after fighting the wolf from your flocks and hunger and want from your door, for several long and weary years, you have lived to reap the rewards of your efforts, and your children and grand children grown up around you in one of the grandest counties in the world, and to-day as you look away back along the distance of the past, among the incidents of your early settlements, early trials and early triumphs, we sincerely hope that the proud record you have made of your early judgment, the steady and healthy growth of all this country round about you, and the bright prospects in store for those who come after you, ~~and~~ partly repay for such early trials and make such early scenes ever seem pleasant in your memory. So toil on a few years longer, my brave old men,

In your great struggle for life some of you have accumulated a fortune, some have not so much and can boast only of a fair competency in life, while a few perhaps are still earning their daily bread by the sweat of their brow. But far above and beyond these considerations, remains the proud fact that you are the representative type of the honest and sturdy western frontiersmen, and that as early settlers of this county your memories will ever be kept green by your children and grand children, and will receive the plaudits of all those who come after you, of well done thou good and faithful servants.

One word more. Time the great leveler of human pas-

sion, human hopes and desires, ~~as~~ traveling on as yonder
 sun goes down this evening on the grand history of the
 past, so on to-morrow morning he will rise on the great
 unknown history of the future, so let you one and all, old
 and young, as this galaday is passing away, resolve that
 where the evening shades appear to these old men, and as
 one by one they fall, as fall they must, and as you stand
 by and see the clods of the valley falling over their re-
 mains, and see the little mound made to mark their last
 resting place, and as you are about to leave, and you brush
 away the gentle tear that always moistens the cheek of the
 true and the brave, don't forget to turn and say, there
 lies the remains of one of the early settlers of Benton
 County, one who by his industry and untiring energy,
 assisted so much to bring this grand county of ours from a
 barren waste, to make it bloom and blossom as the rose,
 and thereby leaving as his proud legacy, this grand
 heritage for ourselves and those who come after us.
 Peace to his ashes.

APOLOGY.

To D. MCA. WILLIAMS, LEROY TEMPLETON, I. H. PHARES and others of
 the Committee :

When the foregoing sketch was written and read on the 4th instant,
 under the kind invitation of your committee, it was hastily prepared, a
 large part from memory, a large portion of the matters coming under
 my own observation, and not expecting it would be alluded to after its
 reading. Your committee, however, with some personal friends, kindly
 requesting its publication, it required a short time for revision
 before publication. This is my apology for its late appearance With,
 many thanks to your committee and to the press for their kindly notice
 I am,

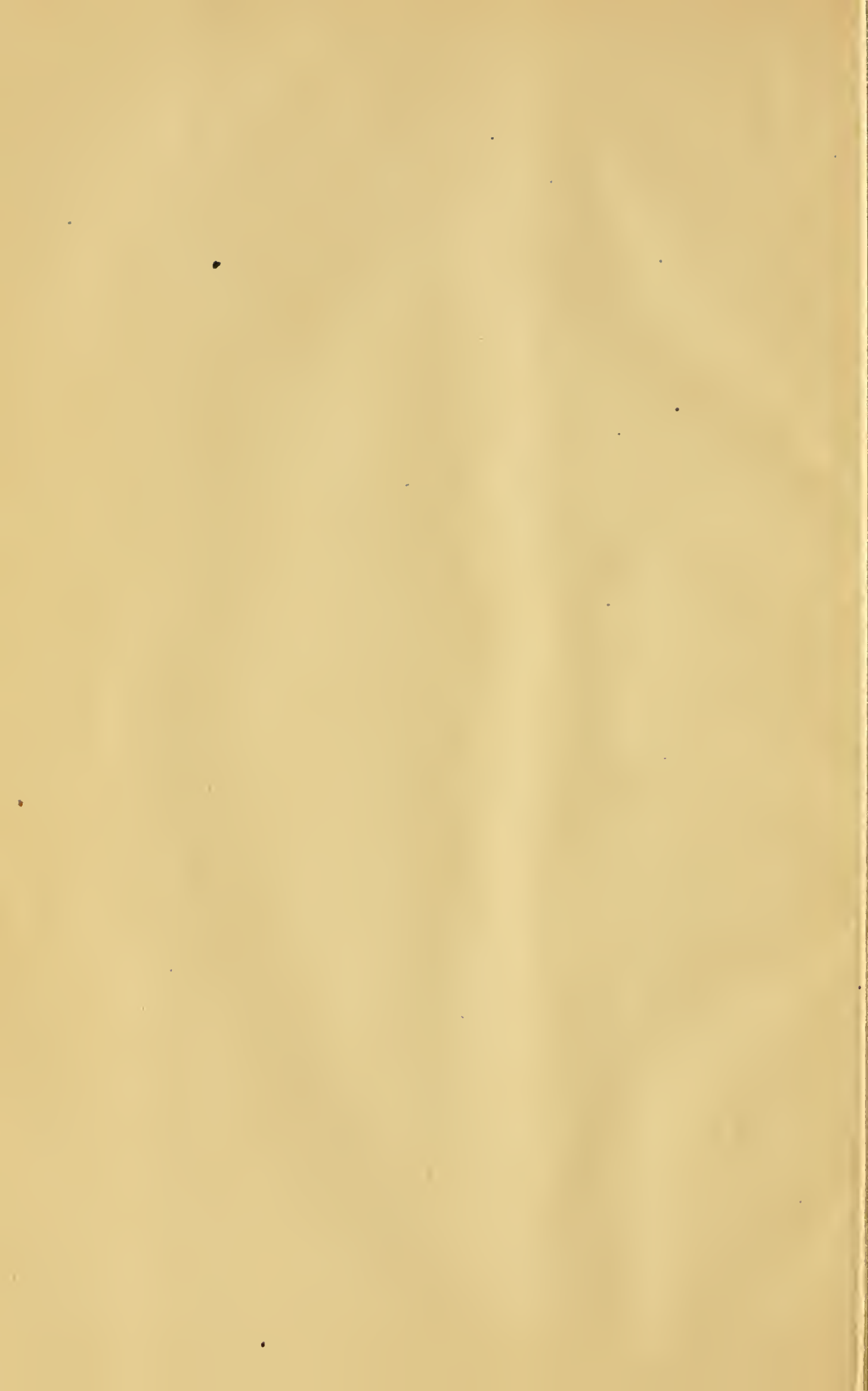
Respectfully,

L. D. HAWLEY.

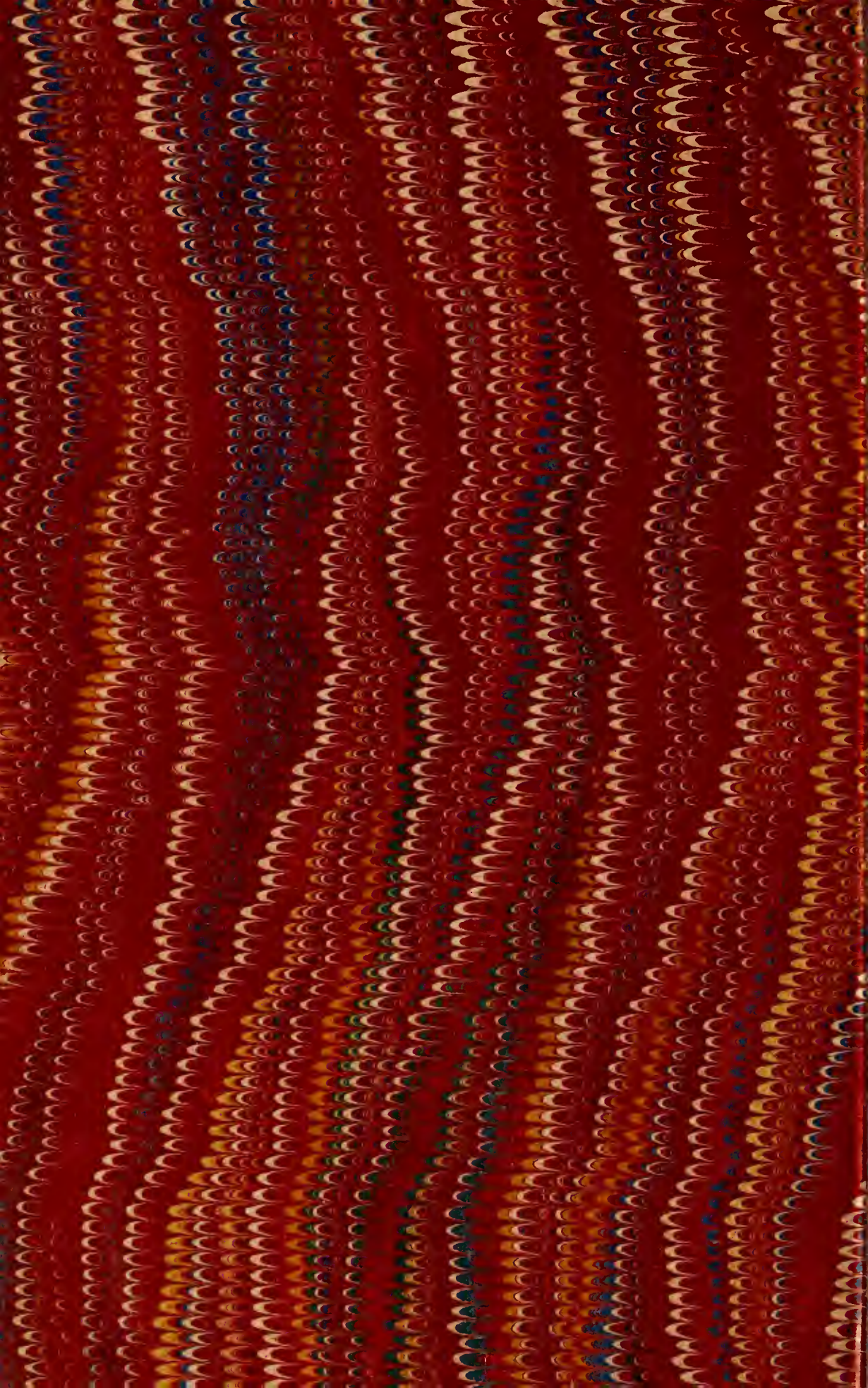
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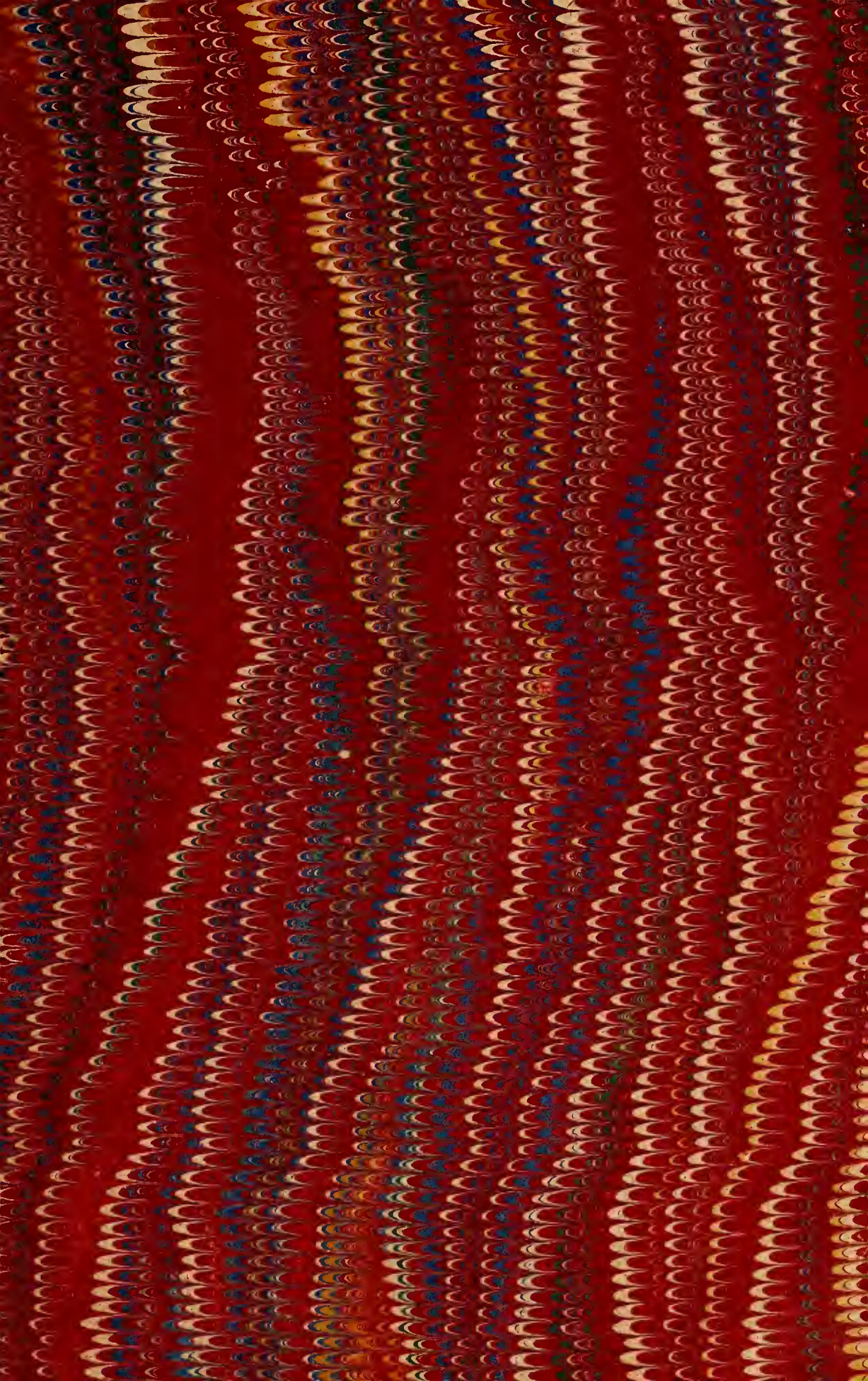




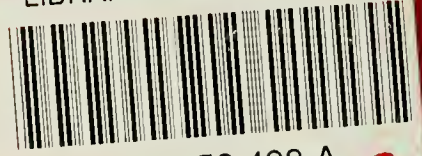








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