

CHAPTERS FROM 1910 12-23 LIFE OF PIONEER

The life story of Collin Martin, Sr., who passed away at his home in Richland township, Jasper county, on December 19, is the story of all the sturdy pioneers who built up this section from an untitled wilderness into the beauty spot which it has since become. He was one of the oldest of these pioneers and the story of those early days is full of interest.

Mr. Martin entered his land in Richland township in 1853, coming from Michigan. At Davenport he met Michael Austin, a Quaker from Maine, and together they secured a horse and buggy and drove into Richland township. Here they were hospitably received by Jeremiah Johnson, also a Quaker, at his home near Lynnvillle. He was the father of Albert, Henry and Charles Johnson, all of them well known in this locality and two of whom, Henry and Albert, were pall bearers at Mr. Martin's funeral last Wednesday. Mr. Johnson received the travelers most hospitably, not only entertaining them free of charge but taking his horses and driving them wherever they wanted to go. Mr. Martin chose his farm and entered it. At that time the nearest family was 2 1/2 miles away from him, to the south. In all other directions there were no neighbors nearer than 5 or 6 miles. It was a vast expanse of virgin prairie, thickly grown up with wild grass.

After entering the land, Mr. Martin returned to Michigan where he spent the winter settling his business affairs and preparing for his new life, and moved to his farm the following spring, March 1854. He commenced at once the task of developing his farm, a very hard task, for his means were limited and timber was very scarce in that prairie country, being found only along the streams. At that time, timberland was valued as high as \$125 per acre. However, Mr. Martin succeeded in building a log cabin, one story high and 12 by 14 feet in dimensions, very crude, but answering the purpose of a home.

hardships and the trials of this pioneer existence. There was no railroad in Iowa at that time, the Rock-Island not having advanced beyond Davenport. It was necessary to go a long way in order to market the farm produce. Mr. Martin freighted wheat by team to Keokuk and sold it at 45 cents per bushel, returning with a load of merchandise for Charles Spencer's general store in Grinnell. The best that he could net by such a long, arduous trip, was \$12.50. It required at least 12 days, often longer, when he was caught in storms. At one time he was lost on the prairie near the Blakely farm just south of Grinnell and spent the night exposed to a driving rain. In the morning his clothing was sheeted with ice. These are a few instances of the trials and hardships of those early days. In addition, there were the blizzards of the winter and the ever present danger of the prairie fires in summer and fall. More than once, Mr. Martin and his sons fought for hours to save their little farm from the great walls of fire which swept down upon it.

Mr. Martin witnessed the building of all the nine school houses in Richland township. He contributed to the building of Bethel church which was erected in 1876, near his farm. There is but one of his old associates now living: W. J. Adams, of Richland township, who was a boy when Mr. Martin moved into the neighborhood. The pall bearers, who said him to rest, with the exception of Judge J. P. Lyman, were sons of the generation following his. Their fathers had been his friends. They were: Judge J. P. Lyman, of Grinnell; Henry Johnson, of Grinnell; Albert Johnson, David Stanley and Wilfred Williams all of Lynnvillle and W. J. Adams, of Richland township.

By careful economy Mr. Martin accumulated a comfortable amount of this world's goods. His last days were days of peace and plenty. Quiet, and unassuming he lived his life. He was a firm believer in education and gave his children the best advantages. He was one of the men who have made Iowa what it is.

Obituary.

Mr. Collin Martin Sr., was born in County Down, Ireland Aug. 24, 1828, and passed away Dec. 19, 1910, at the home of his son and daughter Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Fritz in Richland township, Jasper county, Iowa, aged 82, years, 3 months and 25 days.

The funeral services were held in the Bethel M. E. church, Dec. 21, 1910, Rev. F. E. Pfontz officiating. The interment took place in the Bethel cemetery.

Mr. Martin's parents were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians and reared their children in the good old way. Therefore he became a follower of the Lowly Nazarene and united with the church in early life. Notwithstanding the fact, that after coming to Iowa, he was not permitted to affiliate with the church of his choice, and yet its teachings and doctrines were dear to him. He enjoyed meeting with people of other persuasions. And it was not until his hearing was such that he could not follow the minister in the delivery of his sermon and his infirmities were such that it was not possible for him to be in attendance, that he stopped attending services at Bethel church.

On March 17, 1848, Mr. Martin was married to Miss Harriet Alexander. Immediately Mr. and Mrs. Martin sailed for America and located on a timbered farm in the vicinity of Detroit, Michigan. At the end of three and one half years, their happy home was broken and the beloved Christian wife and mother was

not, for God had taken her.

Although this affliction was very great and the burden of caring for his young sons viz: Samuel Alexander and Thomas Rice, was very heavy nevertheless Mr. Martin continued to put forth most strenuous efforts to make a success.

In 1858 Mr. Martin, in company with Jeremiah Austin, of Maine, came to Iowa and entered the land which has proven to be not only his pioneer but his permanent farm.

On Oct. 25, 1856, he was married to Miss Margaret Alondy. This union was blessed with four children, viz: John, William, Ellen B., and Sarah V. William and Ellen were accompanied away to join the heavenly company of the redeemed in early childhood. Thus the lights and shadows crossed the path way of life.

On their pioneer farm, Mr. and Mrs. Martin spent many years of the most strenuous toil in subduing the virgin soil and overcoming the numerous difficulties that are always encountered by the first settlers of a new country. In order to accumulate a sufficiency of this world's goods to maintain and educate their children and thereby make the path way of life smoother and the journey of life pleasanter for them.

In due time the infirmities of age took hold upon Mrs. Martin and during the last years of life, she had poor health. Finally the time came when the master said, to her "Well done" and she was taken to be with the redeemed in glory.

Therefore for the last 15 years Mr. Martin has been deprived of the comfort and consolation of a companion. But he has been tertiary and lovingly cared for by his son and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Fritz, until the time came for him to be summoned from works to rewards.

Mr. Martin's last sickness was of so short duration, that his sons, Rev. S. A. Martin of Davenport, Neb., and Mr. T. R. Martin of Pontiac, Mich., could not reach his bedside before the end came, but John Martin of Grinnell, and Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Fritz and family were in constant attendance at his bedside and ministered to his every want.

His work well run, life's race well run, life's victory won, now cometh rest.