

*Hist. Soc. Woodbury House
File # 4*

1858

The following is a copy of a talk written out by my mother in the late 1920's for presentation to either the D. A. R., or Daughters of the American Colonists. My mother was born 2 October 1858; her Anoka home was in the Woodbury House at 1632 Ferry Street South, Anoka, Minnesota. Dwight Woodbury Caswell, Tavernier, Florida, 28 April 1977. My comments are in ().

REMINISCENCES

by

Mary Woodbury Caswell
(Mrs. Irving A. Caswell)

The subject on which I have been asked to talk is a wide one if we are to consider it as reminiscences, and a very narrow one if it were to be only my personal recollections, so that I shall begin with my early impressions, which are naturally ~~xxxx~~ rather chaotic, and save more important incidents, of which I know only through others, and which may be described as really historical, to finish with.

Perhaps the first thing that would really savor of frontier experiences was the long line of Red River Carts that so interested my brother and me. (My brother was John Spurr Woodbury born 22 February 1862. The carts operated on the Red River Trail from Pembia on the Red River near Canada to St. Paul, carrying pelts and furs. As many as 150 carts run by half-breed French-Pembia Indians were run under the command of one captain.)

Perched upon on rail fence that adorned our yard, we eagerly awaited for the procession, which, heralded by the shrieking complaints of the solid wooden wheels turning on their ungreased wooden axles. (Two-wheeled carts, drawn by with an ox or a pony.)

I verily believe this pandemonium could be heard for ~~xxx~~ miles. All the town's children flocked to the spectacle of the howling carts, sweating animals, and cursing half-breeds parading down ~~the~~ dusty South Ferry Street.

Just like Woodbury House #46

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meeting, many were the expedients devised to evade that rule. At one time, it was the privilege of one of these parties to post the notice, an agile youth was employed to tack it as far up the Square's flagpole as he could climb, where it naturally was not univerally seen, so that the caucus was held ^{and} delegates chosen to the discomfiture of the opposing forces. But the following year the other party selected the date, and then the notice was tacked on one of the bridge piers, under the ~~the~~ roadway abutting the Square -- which evened matters to some extent.

At this late day it will hurt no one's feelings if I mention one of Mr. Benson's electioneering methods, which was to begin a regular attendance at church shortly before an election -- that is, he attended church regularly, but not the same church! He made the rounds of all the churches, *a different* one each Sunday, putting a five-dollar bill in every contribution plate, and this was almost a yearly custom, for he ran for the Legislature practically every year, and often was elected. At one time he was Speaker of The House.

The Democratic Party was not so divided, possibly because it was so much smaller that its candidate had but little ~~possibility~~ chance of being elected, though there was one notable exception to this rule. Mr. James Frost, the father of Mrs. L. J. Greenwald, could, on account of his great popularity, have an overwhelming majority of the votes of both parties, at any time he chose to permit himself to be nominated. He had a most kindly and genial nature, and the number of his friends was only limited by the number of his acquaintances.

It is impossible to speak of the early days here without alluding to the time of the ¹⁸⁶² Indian massacres. ((1862 Little Crow.)) My mother told me of her making up beds for twenty refugees, on the floor of our living room. ((Parlor.)) She said that even then she was unable to realize any danger, notwithstanding that the men of the town were patrolling it regularly. She was saved much anxiety by that attitude, for there was much terror and panic among the settlers. One good lady decided that

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that the most effective weapon of defence she could muster would be boiling water, so kept a boiler full on the stove, and sat beside it with a dipper all night, ready to repel any savage invaders

There was one outstanding instance of real heroism at that time, that my father used to love to relate, and concerning which I recently refreshed my memory by inquiring the particulars of ~~my~~ my cousin, Miss Katherine King. Her father, Mr. Daniel King, had gone to a northern town with a crew of men, to install some machinery in a mill. As the terror stricken settlers from that direction began to arrive in town, information of Mr. King and his party was eagerly sought from them, and all that could be obtained was entirely discouraging. No horses were left in the country, and the men shrely must have been cut off from help, and had undoubtedly been killed. Nothing daunted, Mrs. King, who I am very proud to ~~own~~ claim as a cousin, and who had a particularly quiet and gentle manner, said that she would drive up and try to find him.

All her friends and relatives tried to dissuade her, her husband's father, even, assuring her that it was a hopeless quest, although when he found that she was determined to go, he wished to go with her, which she would not allow. They had a very beautiful and spirited black mare, that only Mr. and Mrs. King were able to harness and drive, and she put a few things in the buggy and drove off. Dr. Whiteman, a ~~the~~ pioneer physician, had said to her: "Now, Emmeline, watch your horses ears. She will know if there are Indians near, much sooner than you can, and if they quiver persistently, you can tell that there is danger."

After she got above Sauk Center she passed through country where there were many signs that the Indians had been there before her, and probably owed her safety to the fact that they had devastated the region so recently. At last she met her husband, who had escaped, and they with the other members of the party, at last reached home.