

APPENDIX A

TWO LETTERS BY JOSEPH SULLIVAN, SR.

"Early Shullsburg", a letter to the Shullsburg Pick & Gad
by
Joseph Sullivan,
printed in the issue of Oct. 5, 1899.

Mr. Editor:

Seeing an article in the Local some time ago, from the pen of Miss Ivy Doyle about "Old Shullsburg", I thought I would jot down a few remeberances and happenings about "Old Dublin" and its surroundings. I will first state that I was born in Wayne County, Illinois, on the twenty first day of January 1824. My father moved to this part of Wisconsin in the spring of 1828. We were three weeks coming and we did not camp two nights in one place until we got to what was then called the "Dry Groves" which afterwards became the property of the late John Ryan. Here we camped for one week, to let our oxen rest. Mother washed up all our bedding and clothing and in the meantime father heard that there was a demand for teams at Blue Mounds, so we loaded up again and started for the Mounds and were fortunate enough to find an empty house on the southside of the Mound, where there was a good spring. In this house we - when I say we, I mean father and mother and all of us - stayed until September. Father had plenty of hauling to do up to that time. I do not recollect what the freight he hauled was but think it lead from some furnace. We then mowed back to "Old Dublin", the trip requiring three days. We got an empty cabin about thirty rods north of the present residence of Richard Simmons, near the Shullsburg depot. We had time to put up plenty of hay for our three yoke of cattle and we stayed in this cabin during the winter of 1828-29. My brother John was born there in the month of Februrary 1829, and was the first white child born within the limits of what is now LaFayette County. In the spring we moved into a cabin vacated by James Monihan in the west end of Dublin which then contained about fourteen houses. Masch house had a small garden in which quite

a lot of vegetables were raised. Among the residents of "Dublin" at that time were my father and family, James Findley and family, John Knouze and family, Louis Duebert and family, Michael Farrel and wife, and James Hanlon and wife. Among the bachelors were Michael Fox, Hugh Ward, Adam Collins, John Cody, John Dempsey, Peter Curran, Patrick Doyle, Dennis O'Neill, John Ryan, Michael Slavin, James McQuade, Nicholas Walsh, John McNulty and others whose names I have now forgotten. The last seven names above mentioned will be remembered by the old settlers now living in the neighborhood. John McNulty and Adam Collier kept a butcher shop on the left side of the road near the foot of the hill near the present residence of William Deppe. They bought their beef cattle from drovers who came up from near Chicago every summer. The drovers would stay as long in one place as they could sell any cattle and then they would move on to other camps until their stock was all sold.

Those who died while we lived in Dublin were Mrs. Demehert and child, who were buried where the new Catholic cemetery is now located. Her grave was marked by a large pile of rocks which remained there for over forty years and may be remembered yet by some of the old Shullsburgers. The next was John Dempsey, who died in our house. Where he is buried I know not. The graveyard which was afterwards in Townsend's Grove was not started then. This was in 1829. The next to die was John Cody, in the spring 1831. He had planted his garden with potatoes upon the site now occupied by the Shullsburg brewery and he was poisoned by eating wild parsnips. I think he was buried in Townsend's grove as that graveyard was commenced about that time.

We stayed in the Monahan house until the fall 1830 and then moved into a house vacated by one John Fleming. This house had two rooms and a hall between. In this house my brother Patrick was born on the 7th of March, 1831, and he was prob-

ably the second white child born in LaFayette County. Right here I will relate a funny incident that occurred. Nick Walsh was then a "greenhorn" just over from Ireland and he had never seen a rabbit. A house vacated by one Tim Burton, was used by some of the miners for storing the grain they raised for their cows, and a wild cat used to come down the old chimney and sleep on the corn. Chimneys in those days were built of split sticks and plastered with mud mixed with chopped hay. The mud had fallen off and made it easy for the wild cat to climb up and down. The owners of the corn told Nick that a fine large rabbit slept on the corn and that if he was cautious he could catch it. Next morning Nick went to the house and found the cat asleep and made a grab for it. The cat tried to get up the chimney but Nick held on to it. The cat finally twisted around and scratched Nick's arm and breast and tore his shirt into ribbons and he had to let go. He however brought a couple of handfull of the animal's hair as a trophy, to show how near he came to catching the "rabbit". When they told him it was a wildcat his profanity was such that an odor of sulphur pervaded the atmosphere of that neighborhood for weeks. At the end of that time his scratches healed and mother washed and mended his clothes, but poor Nick never wanted to hunt any more rabbits.

During the time we lived in Dublin father got plenty of work with his teams hauling lead to Galena and barrels of pork and flour back to the miners.

Pork was then thirty six dollars a barrel and flour sixteen dollars a barrel. It had to be brought from St. Louis, as there was no wheat raised in LaFayette county then and had there been there was no mill to grind it, until the Murphy Brothers built one in Benton where Cottingham's mill now stands. There was no meeting house in Dublin while we lived there. A Catholic priest named Francis Dearhousne came up from St. Louis and stayed one week in Dublin. All the people in Dublin at that time, excepting three, were Catholics. I will now bid

good bye to poor old Dublin and follow on our track for a few years more.

In the Spring of 1831 we moved to a vacant house left by one Matthew Fawcett on the identical spot where Sam DeRocher now lives. We got a chance to rent a small field of five acres from David O'Keefe. It was on the side hill north of where the late Fanny Kilcoyne used to live. We worked that field in the summers of 1831 and 1832 and were living in the Fawcett house when the Blackhawk war broke out. I remember well when mother and I were picking mineral on the Patrick Doyle lot, on the Irish Diggings, there came six men on horseback, running as if Old Nick was after them and warning all the people to get to Galena where there was a fort. They said the Indians would be here and kill us all before tomorrow, but mother was not a bit scared, so we stayed awhile longer and then went home. In the meantime the miners were getting together to consult on what was best to do and finally all agreed to go to Galena. We loaded up our wagon with provisions and other necessaries and started about night. Some had teams and more had horses only, while many went on foot. We all got in safe next morning after traveling all night. Col. Hamilton got up a company of volunteers composed nearly all of Dublin men and they were sent back to Dublin to build a fort, which they did in a few days. The fort stood in old Shullsburg, just ten rods west of the northwest corner of the present City limits. It was built of split logs fitted closely together and standing endwise in a trench about three feet deep, and was about ten feet high. It enclosed about twelve square rods and the wagons and a few small tents were placed inside and in those the families stayed. The single men mostly stayed in their cabins in the day time but at night would come to the fort. In this fort my brother William was born on the 15th of August 1832. Finally Blackhawk was captured and the war ended. The fort was vacated after about three weeks and all went about their business. Peter Curran was more fearless

than the others and when all went to Galena in a hurry he stayed for a day or two and gathered up all of the miners tools and buried them for safe keeping until the war was over. He died in Galena and when dying he told some of the men where the tools were buried but nobody was ever able to find them and they remain buried to this day. The company of volunteers was now disbanded but were allowed to retain their fire arms for home protection. The arms consisted of flint-lock muskets, with bayonets about fifteen inches long which fitted onto the muzzle of the guns and they will be yet remembered by many of the old settlers.

Lafayette County was not then surveyed but in the fall of 1832 it was surveyed by a man named Lucius Lyons who stopped with us two nights while surveying in our neighborhood. Then the people of Dublin and vicinity began to scatter out and take up farms. The land was not yet in market, so they had to take out what was called a "pre-emption rights" which entitled them to the first chance to buy when the lands came into market, which I think was in 1835.

I will now relate a tragic incident which occurred at about this time. Two miners named Daniel O'Connell and George O'Keefe, a brother to the man we rented the five acres from, were partners in mining somewhere about the Drybone. O'Keefe used to come to our house to buy butter and eggs and he was a man fully six feet high and stout in proportion. O'Connell was a man about five feet ten and had a wooden leg. I saw him but once, and that was in a fort at Galena. They quarreled about something and O'Keefe left the cabin and went out among the miners and when he returned O'Connell had the door barred. He told O'Keefe to wait awhile and he would open it and in the meantime O'Connell loaded his musket and seeing O'Keefe through a crack in the door he raised his gun and shot him dead. Some of the miners hearing the discharge of the gun, went to the

cabin and found O'Keefe dead. O'Connell did not deny that he killed him intentionally, so they took him to Galena to put him in jail but the jail building was so poor that they took him to Dubuque and put him in jail there. At the next term of the court he was tried for murder, found guilty and sentenced to be hung and the sentence was carried out in less than two months. It may be remembered that in digging the foundation for the new court house in Dubuque the remains of the coffin in which O'Connell was buried were discovered. The lettering on the coffin plate was still legible and it contained the name of O'Connell and those of the twelve jurymen who convicted him.

In the fall of 1832 my father and Dennis O'Neill took out pre-emption rights and began making improvements by breaking small patches of prairie among the thickets of brush. Dennis O'Neill and father used to join teams in breaking and helping each other in every way. Dennis was then a bachelor but in 1833 he married Mrs. Pacquette, mother of the late Louis Pacquette. My mother (ILLEGIBLE) their wedding (ILLEGIBLE). They were for a couple of years our nearest neighbors and good neighbors they were too.

Patrick Doyle took up a claim before the land was surveyed and built a log cabin on it, but he did not go live in it, but let us go there to live. It is now the property of Edward Field and the remains of the foundation of the old house may yet be seen. It is needless to say that we suffered many hardships all this time, so in the spring of 1833, we bid good bye to the Fawcett place and moved to the Doyle house. Here we got a chance to rent another five acre field from one Matthew Cullen, the land now owned by Geo. Shaffer. In the fall of this year we managed to build a log house on one claim, but we did not move into it until the spring of 1834. Then the land came into market we were able to enter 160 acres a \$1.25 per acre, the land office then being at Mineral Point.

I don't think it is necessary for me to say much more, for times after this have been discussed at several old settlers meetings. I will say however that we never lived in old Shullsburg, excepting while we were in the fort, but was familiar with all the people who lived there afterwards. I remember well, Jesse Shull and wife, Jacob Cheval, said to be an Indian trader, and Adam Plank, who was afterward killed by lightning, and who was buried where the Catholic cemetery is now but whose grave was unmarked. I am now the only man living who ever lived in Dublin, with the exception of my brother Patrick, who was born there.

Wild Game was plenty in 1835 and wild turkeys in large flocks were numerous. There were lynx, panthers, wildcats and coons, also black wolves which were as tall as a St. Bernard dog and said to be dangerous when pressed by hunger. Grey wolves infested the praries, which abounded in deer. It was not an unusual sight to see twelve or more deer together when hunting our oxen. One bear was seen in the neighborhood but nobody captured it. In coming home one day from a neighbor's I caught a young fawn doe which made a great pet. We put a bell on it and it would follow us everywhere and wander among the wild deer. The wild deer would often follow it home and sometimes when I heard its bell in the morning I would take my rifle and hide in a fence corner and in this way I was able to shoot four fine fat bucks. Our pet finally followed someone away. We heard of it near Galena but could never find it.

I will conclude this article with a snake story. Three of us boys went into the woods to cut up a fallen tree and when we got onto it we heard a noise that we all knew well. We looked under the tree and there saw one of the largest snakes we had ever seen. We had killed many snakes and were not afraid of them. The large ones were not so dangerous as the small black devils that infested the praries and swamps, for their

motions were not as quick. We cut a hickory pole about ten feet long and peeled off the bark with which we made a running noose and slipped it over his snakeship's head and thus dragged him to the house and placed him in an empty flour barrel. His reattling was so loud it could be heard thirty rods away. When we had tired of its rattling we killed it and it measured one ince less than twelve feet and it had twenty two rattles and a button. Its body was as much as four inches in diameter in the largest place and its head was as broad as an ordinary man's hand. This story may sound somewhat "snaky" but it is literally true. These snakes were called "yellow hammers" by the old settlers.

What I have written may be interesting to some of the old settlers, to remind them of old times and to awaken memories of perhaps long forgotten events. It may also serve to show those of the present day that the paths of the early settlers were not entirely strewn with roses, but that there were many thorns, and when they remember the sufferings and privations of the pioneers of LaFayette County they may more fully appreciate the comforts and luxuries with which they are now surrounded.

Good Bye,
Joseph Sullivan.

"From an Old Settler", a letter to the Shullsburg, Pick & Gad.

by

Joseph Sullivan.

Seymour, Wisconsin, April 14, 1888.

Editors, Pick and Gad:

A brief notice recently published and contributed no doubt by some friend, stated that I was quite "a remarkable man". To rectify all errors I give you the following correct statement: I was born in the winter of 1824 in Wayne County, Illinois, and am the third oldest of a family of eleven Children. My parents moved to LaFayette County Wisconsin in the spring of 1828, and though it may seem incredible, I still remember the long and tedious journey in an ox-wagon. We landed in Dublin in the spring of 1828. Dublin was then a small village consisting of about a dozen miner's cabins, situated about eighty rods west of the present site of Schulte's brewery near Shullsburg on the same hillside. I have never resided more than six miles from that place since. I have voted in ten presidential elections. I have never lost a vote at any election and have never cast an illegal ballot. I have lived twenty years under territorial government, and forty years under state government of Wisconsin. In all my business transaction, and they have been many, I have never had occasion to sue anyone, and no one has ever had occasion to sue me. I have never had the slightest personal quarrel with anyone, and have never required the professional services of a doctor for myself. I have never used tobacco in any shape or manner. I have never been shaved by a barber nor had my hair trimmed by one. I never wore an overshoe. I am now in my sixty-fifth year and though not as supple as I was forty years ago I think I could beat the senior editor of the Pick & Gad in a short foot race, say about five miles, but some old men have queer notions you know. Now if there is another man in this county who can truthfully say what I have said, and there are some old settlers yet left who can verify my statements, I would like to hear from them through the columns of the people's favorite paper, the Pick & Gad.

yours truly,

Joseph Sullivan.