

"A Short Interview" with John Deere, ca. 1886

The Sioux City Daily

A Short Interview.

Points of Interest Given a Journal Reporter By W. L. Wilkins - His Experience With John Deere - California the Place to Live.

In conversation with a Journal reporter yesterday W.L. Wilkins remarks that he made his recent trip to California in company with the late John Deere, of Moline, Illinois, getting acquainted with the great plow manufacturer on the train en route. Mr. Deere was on a pleasure trip, accompanied by his daughter and grandchild. Mr. Wilkins says that although a very old man, Mr. Deere was the most interesting and entertaining companion he ever met, and all his conversation saying nothing but from which some information could be derived. As an illustration of the wonderful and fascinating powers of the man, Mr. Wilkins said it is a fact that while engaged in conversation with him the most wonderful scenery would be passed by unnoticed, so wrapped up would the listener become in the speaker's words. Mr. Deere told the whole story of his life. How he came to Illinois from Vermont with only a few dollars in cash in his pocket, and how, prior to leaving his old home, he had signed a note with a friend amounting to several hundred dollars, which amount he earned with his hammer after his arrival in the west, the friend failing to meet the obligation. In fact, while he had about \$37 when he came west he was several hundred dollars in debt through the dishonesty or inability of his friend to pay the note. Mr. Deere said that during all his long life it had been a great source of consolation to him to know that he had never willfully wronged any man and never put on the market a poorly made article.

In speaking of the weather of yesterday Mr. Wilkins said that the temperature at 8 in the morning, when there was a cool, refreshing breeze blowing, was a fair sample of what he enjoyed in Southern California during the months of January and February last. Residents of this section will remember those two months, not by the balmy breezes, but by the regular old-fashioned stem-winding blizzards that chased each other in quick succession down from the north.

Mr. Wilkins further said that while he came to Sioux City with but a few dollars in his pocket, that while he had been reasonably successful in building up a business by hard work, as the fruits of his labors would show to everyone, if he had the cash for his property in his pocket, he would at once go to Southern California, and he believed that he could make more money, and make it

easier in one year there than five here. As an illustration he stated that on his arrival at Santiago, along in the winter he met J.P. Dennis, who had preceded him, and that same evening the two bought 44 Lots paying \$25 each for them for some time past he has had a standing offer of \$200 each for the same lots, and refuses to take it, firmly believing that they will materially increase in value.