

FUGITIVE SLAVE CASE WAS TRIED

Burlington Was Scene of Hearing and Negroes Had Been Transported on Underground Railroad.

SALEM WAS IMPORTANT

Missourians Wanted to Take Negroes Back With Them, But the Quakers Were Praying Otherwise.

The Salem (Iowa) News, in publishing reminiscences from its old files prints the proceedings of the fugitive slave case which was tried in Burlington in 1850. The article reads:

"A report of the trial proceeding of the 'Fugitive Slave Case' was being published, occupying considerable space each week for several months. The trial was held in Burlington in 1850. Buel Daggs, plaintiff, vs. Elihu Frazier, et al., defendants. The sum of \$10,000 damages was asked by plaintiff as compensation for the services of nine slaves who escaped from Missouri into Iowa and, it was claimed, were assisted to elude their owners by defendants. In this connection it will no doubt be of interest to the older residents to publish a report of an incident above referred to, taken from a family history written by Landsey Coppock, an uncle of Mrs. J. B. Bicksler, who at the time conducted a carding mill in the Edward Simpson house, north part of town. He says: 'In June, 1848, I had bought the carding machine, store and storehouse for \$4,000. I bought the tanyard and the property belonging to it, so I had my hands full. I ran the carding machine day and night, and had three hired men. Now I put in fulling works, as at this time the farmers made up most of the work in cloth. I was working one night in the mill, when a man rushed in, say-

ing the town was surrounded by Missourians. Nine negroes had run away and they had traced them to Salem and were hard after them.

Underground Railroad.

"At this time there was what was called 'the Underground Railroad'—men who passed negroes up into Canada. Now there was one man and a small boy who had got to Salem. The rest got out in the brush at Siveter's hill, one mile south of Salem, and went to Washington, thinking it was Salem. They were taken from there to Missouri, thinking they were on the way to Canada, but soon found themselves in the hands of their old masters. I looked out and saw a crowd gathering at the Quaker church, and as Father Baldwin was hurrying past my store to see what the crowd meant, I rushed out and overtook him. When we got there we found the two slaves in the center of a ring, with an old Quaker lady, Mrs. Thomas Frazier, praying that the good Lord would not let the Missourians take this boy and his father back to slavery. Father parted the ring around them and said in a loud voice, 'They will not take these negroes back to slavery unless they take them over my dead body.' Just then a school teacher named Reuben Dooland, spoke up and said we would take the negroes to a justice, and he did not want the Missourians to take them back. So he demanded of them their papers, and as they said they had none, he said to the slaves, 'I pronounce you both free.'

Passed Through Salem.

"When they got out of the house, there was a horse saddled at the door and the man got on and took the boy in front of him and started north, trotting his horse through Salem. I saw an old man named Way riding ahead, the negroes following. He lived six miles north of Salem and was acting as their guide. This man Way was an abolitionist and belonged to the 'Underground Railroad.' When the trial came off at Burlington they put Way on the witness stand and he said he was afraid of a negro, and he saw a couple coming behind him that day, and he was hurrying to get away. They let him off as they had no real evidence against him. The Missourians still had the town, but after the two negroes had escaped, one of the Missourians went back to Missouri and told that the abolitionists had killed one of their men. He came back with a mob of seventy-five men, armed and half drunk. They came across Clarkson Frazier out hunting about

three miles south of Salem and frightened him almost to death.

Afraid He Would be Killed.

"He came into town and thought he was going to be killed, sent word to his wife to have the baby's name changed to Clarkson, and the baby was a girl. A man named Jessep got through the lines and escaped the guards, dressed as a country woman. One man broke through the lines and ran screaming, 'Hell God,' not knowing how to swear, and was frightened almost to death. About 10 o'clock that night I came across a group of men and heard them plotting to run out of town the persons they had taken, fourteen of the best men in Salem, Father Baldwin being among the prisoners. They had both lawyers and the justice, so Salem had their hands tied. I went back and told Arnold to shut down the mill as they were going to take the prisoners to Missouri that night about 1 o'clock. I then went across the street to Ansaem Stanley's, a Quaker cousin of mine, to get his rifle. He first refused but finally let me have it. We went to the store, a brick house, where I assembled eighteen men and we kept watch all night. They did not attempt to move the prisoners that night.

Sheriff From Mt. Pleasant.

"The sheriff from Mt. Pleasant came along at daylight and gave the Missourians just 17 minutes to get out of town. They took him at his word, as they had begun to sober up. They got out in a hurry, and just as they were going out of town west, a company from Denmark came in from the east, twenty-five men well armed, ready to fight, with their bayonets in trim. In the trial held at Iowa City, Daggs was beaten, so he took it to Burlington and there got a judgment for \$2,900."