

STATE HISTORICAL
SOCIETY OF IOWA

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Annals of Iowa

Volume 10 | Number 2 (1911)

pps. 147-148

A Reminiscence of the Iowa Bar

D. C. Beaman

ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

Beaman, D. C. "A Reminiscence of the Iowa Bar." *The Annals of Iowa* 10 (1911), 147-148.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.3703>

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While I was in Colorado my father, G. W. Pugsley, and a neighbor, ran across a buffalo in the south part of Boyer township, Harrison county. The neighbor, being on foot, dropped out of the chase. Father had a good horse. He drove the buffalo in a northeasterly direction, past the house of Joseph Harry, in Douglas township, and that of Matthew Hall. He had just passed the home of Mr. Mefferd when he met the Mefferd boys coming in with a load of hay. They unhitched, mounted their horses and hurried home for guns. After crossing Picayune Creek, he turned the beast to a southeasterly course, passing our own place on Section 22. Here our dog joined in the chase, and about half a mile east, on Section 23, the buffalo came to a halt after being chased over six miles. The Mefferds soon came with guns, and after about a dozen shots he fell. The meat was distributed among the neighbors, one family coming fifteen miles just to be able to say they had eaten buffalo meat. This is the only buffalo ever known to have been killed in Harrison county.

A REMINISCENCE OF THE IOWA BAR.

BY D. C. BEAMAN.

I think it was in 1874 when Tom Mulvany was indicted for selling whisky at Eldon, in Wapello county.

The prohibitory law was not popular in the railroad and river towns. His trial was in Ottumwa, where the law was then seldom enforced, the juries being disposed to acquit if any excuse was afforded for so doing.

Morris J. Williams was judge, M. H. Jones of Bloomfield was district attorney, and H. H. Trimble and E. L. Burton were Mulvany's attorneys.

An old farmer named Solomon Wilson Hamilton Leger Hearn, who lived near Eldon, was the State's only witness. Sol Hearn, as he was called for short, was frequently engaged in litigation, indeed, he said that he had so little confidence

in his own judgment that he never felt safe in paying a debt until a jury of his neighbors had said it was just.

His reputation for truth and veracity had been impeached over and over again in numerous lawsuits.

When Mulvany's trial came on, Trimble and Burton had a half dozen of Hearn's neighbors in attendance to impeach him, and this they assumed would furnish the jury a good excuse to acquit, a result which seemed to be a dead sure thing.

District Attorney Jones put Hearn on the witness stand and proved the purchase by him of whiskey at Mulvany's saloon. He then proceeded with the examination as follows:

"Solomon, how long have you lived in Eldon township?"

"About seventeen years," said Solomon.

"Your neighbors all know you well?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now, Solomon, what is your reputation for truth and veracity in that community?"

"Well, sir," said Solomon, "if my neighbors are to be believed, it's bad."

The wind was thus suddenly taken from the sails of the defense and of course there was no use for the impeaching witnesses. The case proceeded to argument, and Jones merely said to the jury that he did not expect to prove a case of that kind by ministers of the gospel or professors of religion; that he had produced the only evidence available for both sides, had saved time of the court and jury in the trial of the case, had done his whole duty, and it was the part of the jury to do theirs.

Trimble and Burton did the best they could in the argument, but the joke was too good, and the jury fully appreciating it, rendered a verdict of guilty without leaving the box.

This was one of the few convictions in Wapello County for liquor selling in those years.

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