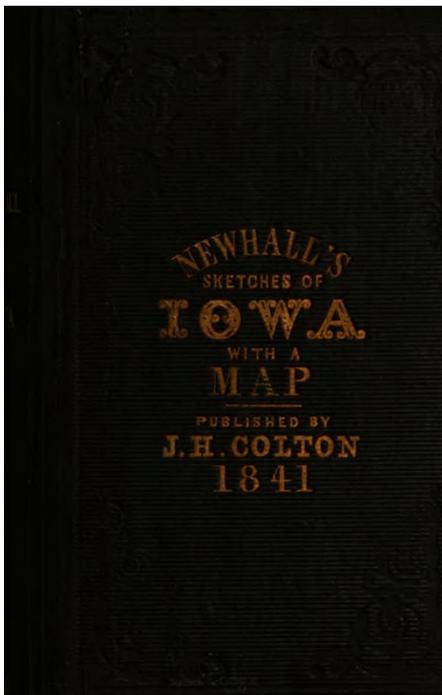


May 4, 2022

Pieces of Iowa's Past, published by the Iowa State Capitol Tour Guides weekly during the Legislative Session, features historical facts about Iowa, the Capitol, and the early workings of state government. All italicized text/block quotes in this document are taken directly from historical publications with the actual spelling, punctuation, and grammar retained.

Sketches of Iowa, the Emigrant's Guide



Cover photo of Newhall's "[Sketches of Iowa](#)"

John B. Newhall arrived in Burlington in 1834 and established a general store with Isaac Newhall and Joseph Newhall.

In fact, the first issue of the Wisconsin Territorial Gazette and Burlington Advertiser of July 27, 1837, included an advertisement for their establishment.

But that wasn't all John B. Newhall was interested in. He was a careful student of the new territory and was especially interested in the difficulties facing those early pioneers. He expressed that interest in writing three books on that very subject.

In 1841, Newhall wrote a 252-page volume, "Sketches of Iowa, or the Emigrant's Guide."

The book was dedicated to Augustus Caesar Dodge, a delegate to Congress from the territory of Iowa.

Three years later, he wrote a second volume, "The British Emigrants' Hand Book, and Guide to the New States of America, Particularly Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin." This 100-page book was published in London.

After Newhall went abroad on a lecture tour promoting his "Sketches of Iowa," he returned and immediately began writing his third book on the Iowa territory, "A Glimpse of Iowa in 1846."

But it was that first "Sketches of Iowa" that seemed to advertise the infinite advantages of immigrating to the new territory.

Let not the distant reader marvel, then, that the affections should cling to the land where we have enjoyed and suffered all the vicissitudes of fortune, where the kindlier affections of our nature have cemented the closest friendship, where the flowers bloom and fade over the earth that safely keeps our "cherubs;" in a word, where the grateful aspirations of the heart shall be peace, prosperity, and happiness to Iowa for ever.

J. B. NEWHALL.

New York, Feb. 2d, 1841.

Excerpt from the preface of "[Sketches of Iowa](#)"

Incorporated into that work was a map, which included a correct description of the agricultural and mineral resources as a result of much observation and travel over several years. It's considered one of the rarest early maps of Iowa and one of the earliest to focus on the Iowa territory.

SURVEYOR-GENERAL'S OFFICE. }
Dubuque, Iowa, August 4th, 1840. }

J. B. NEWHALL, ESQ.:
Dear Sir—Having examined your map of Iowa, and compared it with the official plats on file in this office, I take great pleasure in stating to you my conviction as to its general accuracy, so far as is embraced in the surveyed portions of the territory.

And from the character of your notes, accompanying the map, and from the general acquaintance and facilities you possess for obtaining accurate information respecting the unrivalled resources of our interesting young territory, I hesitate not to say that your work will be a valuable acquisition to the public, and worthy the patronage of all who desire to become better informed as to the character and resources of one of the most interesting portions of the union.

I am, very respectfully, sir,
Your obt. servant,
GEO. W. JONES,
Surveyor-general for Wisconsin and Iowa territories.

The map also showed the boundaries of counties, township lines, ranges, prairies, and timberlands, as well as the location of cities, towns, Native American villages, and post and steamboat routes.

Letter from the surveyor-general for the Wisconsin and Iowa territories praising Newhall for his map of Iowa.



Newhall's 1841 map of Iowa