

An excerpt from
The History of Stacyville, Iowa: 1856-2006¹
By Cheryl Mullenbach, 2006

Introduction: The Area That Would Become Stacyville

Native American tribes pre-dated the arrival of European settlers in the area that would become Stacyville. The Dakotas, also known as the Sioux, hunted in the area. Other tribes mentioned in historical accounts are the Sauk and the Fox. One story relates that friendly Indians of the Sauk tribe camped along the Cedar River near the early Stacyville settlers. According to the story, the Indians occasionally came to the homes of the settlers to ask for food and reportedly they were especially fond of pancakes and milk.

Page | 1

According to the 1918 *History of Mitchell and Worth Counties, Iowa*, “The only Indians seen in this county after white men settled here were the few roving bands of Winnebago and Tama City Indians, who used to make their annual hunting trips through this part of Iowa. They sometimes camped weeks at a time along the streams of this and adjoining counties, both in the fall and spring of the year. But these Indians were friendly to the whites and but little difficulty was ever experienced between the two races.”

In 1851 the Sioux signed over the area that would become Stacyville to the U.S. government. This treaty was significant because it was the last treaty in which Native Americans surrendered Iowa soil to the United States. Other areas of the state had been ceded in previous treaties.

After acquiring the land, the U.S. government surveyed the area and auctions were conducted. Government land offices were set up to accommodate the sale of government lands. In 1855 an office was opened in Decorah and in 1856 an office was opened in Osage as a branch of the Decorah operation.

Typically when the U.S. government acquired land from the Indians it was distributed in a variety of ways. The two most common methods were through sale to private individuals and through military bounties. Private individuals had to pay cash. Veterans who fought in wars or Indian skirmishes were often given land warrants with their discharges at the time of separation from the service. They could trade their warrants for land in the western territories. Some of the land around Stacyville was awarded to veterans for service during wars such as the U.S.-Mexican War (1846-48).

In 1851 when the Sisseton and Wahpeton bands of the Sioux tribe ceded the last of their lands in the area that would become Stacyville to the U.S. government, the families who would eventually arrive in the area to settle were living in other parts of the country. In 1851 Adam and Christina Blake lived in McHenry County, Illinois; Nicholas and Mary Hemann were farming in McHenry County; and in 1851 Homer Stacy was farming and operating a store and lumberyard in Dover, Illinois.

By 1855 the state of Iowa was only nine years old and these hardy entrepreneurs were looking westward toward opportunities in the northern part of the young state.

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