



**History of Mills County, Iowa: Containing a
History of the County, Its Cities, Towns, Etc;; A
Biographical Directory of Many of Its Leading
Citizens, ... and Local Statistics, Portraits of Early
Sett**

Iowa Historical Company

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Excerpt from History of Mills County, Iowa: Containing a History of the County, Its Cities, Towns, Etc;; A Biographical Directory of Many of Its Leading Citizens, War Record of Its Volunteers in the Late Rebellion, General and Local Statistics, Portraits of Early Settlers and Prominent Men, History

There is no proper place in history for the element of fiction. In the correct delineation of a landscape the artist judiciously employs both lights and shades; so the historian must need contrast the true and the false, that the eternal beauty and symmetry of truth appear, but draw upon the imagination, he may never. As in the landscape, the true outline of objects is obscured in the shadows, requiring the full blaze of day to bring them into proper view, so history brings out the facts partially obscured in the haze of tradition - itself never history.

The history of the growth of any branch of knowledge has a double interest; that which comes to it from the knowledge itself, and that which comes from its relations to the history of the operation of the human mind. Men think under the limitations of their times; they reason on such material as they have; they form their estimate of changes from the facts immediately known to them. What Matthew Arnold has written of man's thoughts as he floats adown the "River of Time," is most true. Says he:

"As is the world on the banks,
So is the mind of man.
Only the track where he sails
He wots of: only the thoughts
Raised by the objects he passes, are his."

Impressions thus received the mind will modify and work upon, transmitting the products to other minds in shapes that often seem new, strange and arbitrary, but which yet result from processes familiar to our experience, and to be found at work in our own individual consciousness. And this is the necessity that renders history, as entirely distinct from tradition, imperative. Here the province of the historian begins. It is imperative on him that he record facts as they are, freed from the gloss given them by verbal transmissions.

We know the present status of Mills county; know that it ranks among the first in political influence, and is not a whit behind in the intelligence of its people and its jealous regard for education; know that its material resources are practically unlimited, and the promise for its future ever brightening. Now, to clearly understand this happy present, its glories and its greatness, its opportunities and its wonders, it is our duty to look back to their sources.

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