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Miss S. E. Lathrop

S. E. LATHROP RECALLS AN EARLY PILGRIMAGE WHICH HE MADE TO PORTAGE AS A PAROLED PRISONER ON FOOT WELL ON TO SIXTY YEARS AGO

"I see there is to be an historic pilgrimage to Fort Winnebago on September 2," remarked S. E. Lathrop, retired clergyman, veteran printer, fine old patriot of the civil war. "But I made an early pilgrimage there myself—not in an automobile or street car for there was none of the first in existence then and no railway to Portage by the road I took.

"You see, it was in mid October, 1862. I had been a prisoner of war in Arkansas, paroled and sent to St. Louis from Little Rock, on 'Shank's horses.' All Wisconsin paroled prisoners were sent via Mississippi steamer to old Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien, where some of us were furloughed and sent home. I had railroad transportation to Madison, where I decided to make a bee line across country to my old home at Westfield, 60 miles north. I started northward on foot, carrying knapsack, overcoat and blanket. Weakened by strenuous campaigning, imprisonment, poor food, chills and fever, I made slow progress, and the miles seemed very long. At last I reached Token Creek, ten miles north, utter-

ly exhausted. Having had no pay for six months I was penniless. Telling my story to the kind-hearted Token Creek landlord of a little tavern, he was very sympathetic—fed me on the (chicken) fat of the land, and put me in the best bed, where I slept most refreshingly. Starting out next morning with the landlord's breakfast and blessing, I resumed the homeward march. I cannot remember the landlord's name, but I heard later that he raised a company and went to the war. Traveling in the teeth of a sharp, cold north wind, I trudged on mile after mile, getting a ride for several miles with an old farmer whose son was in the war down south. There was no railroad to Portage then. Late that night I reached Portage, where another patriotic landlord gave bed and board, refusing my offer to pay him when I arrived home. I shall always remember my first pilgrimage to the historic city of Portage, and I should greatly like to go on this later one. How full of interest and reminiscence must be the old fort Winnebago and the famous Portage of other days between the Fox and Wisconsin rivers."

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