

## George Bleecker

A life well spent, a character uprightly sustained, is no slight legacy to leave to one's children; and the useful influence which a right-hearted man of energy and industry may exercise cannot be better illustrated than by the career of George Bleecker, of Hubbleton, Wisconsin, who was born at Trenton, Township of Murray, Northumberland County, Canada, November 30, 1820. He was the son of John R. Bleecker, who was born July 17, 1789 in Upper Canada, 7th Township, District of Prince Edward, and Elizabeth (Richards) Bleecker, who was born October 14, 1795 on St. Ann's Island, commonly called Isle of Tanta, but neither of his parents ever came to Wisconsin, both having died in Canada, having had fourteen children, viz; Jane (dead) married Henry Bird Nugent; John R. married to Susan Burnham; James Connor (dead); Susan, married to Samuel Bryant; George, the subject of this sketch; William McKenzie (dead) married Maria Abbott; Rachel (dead); Jacob (dead); Thomas Howard, married Bell Young; Gilbert (dead) and twin girls who died in infancy.

George Bleecker made his home with an uncle and aunt from the time he was six years old until he was nine, remaining at home after that until February 1837, when he went into Western Canada and located on the St. Clair river, in the Township of Sombra, County of Kent, and being a poor boy he was counseled to work, and here it was that he laid the foundation for the comfortable fortune which he now enjoys. He began by chopping cordwood, and as wages at that time were not very high, he with true business instinct was constantly revolving in this mind how he was going to better his condition, so finally he built a dock and began supplying cordwood to the steamboats. This business having enabled him to lay by quite a snug sum for a boy, he concluded to come to the United States, so he disposed of what land he had previously purchased, sold out his dock and boarded a steamboat for Milwaukee, and from there he went by team to Watertown, where he purchased a compass and following the line dividing Dodge and Jefferson Counties, he reached the Crawfish river July 6, 1846. The way between Watertown and the Crawfish was a dense forest and there were but three log cabins the entire distance of about eight miles. Arriving at the Crawfish in order to get across, he gathered sticks and poles and built a raft, then traveled by foot to Portland, where he remained for a week prospecting for land, but not finding just what suited him he returned to the Crawfish and purchased eighty acres of the place he now lives on. Returning to Milwaukee he took a steamer to St. Clair, lived in Michigan a year, when accompanied by his wife and two children, made his way to his new home where he arrived July 6, 1847.

Mr. Bleecker was married at Cotterville, St. Clair County, Michigan, February 16, 1843 to Eliza Thankful Burnham, who was born near Concord, New Hampshire, April 18, 1825 and died at Hubbleton, Wisconsin, December 18, 1897. They had seven children born to them; William James, born March 20, 1844, died June 13, 1863; Jane, born January 13, 1846, died August 1, 1847; Mary Elizabeth, born February 10, 1849, married January 29, 1873 to Moses S. Kimball and had seven children, two dead; John R., born January 7, 1853, married November 28, 1877 to Elizabeth Wright and have five children; Harrie Otis, born July 6, 1860, married November 8, 1883 to May Wright, and died May 20, 1889,

having three children; Frank Gilbert, born August 22, 1863, married February 26, 1895 to Anna Isadora Austin, one child; Arthur Burnham, born July 16, 1866, married June 10, 1896 to Mary Phillips Seeber.

Whilst George Bleecker was more or less of a genius, he soon learned that it is not men of genius who move the world and take the lead in it, so much as men of steadfastness of purpose and indefatigable industry, and it was with this thought in view that he pushed his farming until his original purchase of eighty acres, grew into over eight hundred acres of as beautiful land as is to be found in Wisconsin, lying on both sides of the Crawfish, above and below the Village of Hubbleton. From this large tract of land, he set aside one hundred and ninety acres as a homestead, and situated on a beautiful knoll is the home from which one can see many miles in almost every direction. Aside from farming Mr. Bleecker engaged in the lumber business for three years, owning the steam mill at Hubbleton, at which mill all the logs were sawed from which the Plank road was constructed from Portland to Watertown.

Mr. Bleecker's religion is that of the Church of England, and in politics a staunch Republican. While he has never had time to seek office, he has always taken a deep interest in the success of his party. One fact should have been mentioned, and that is that Mr. Bleecker rarely allowed himself to get in debt, and in this as well as his perseverance upright life his example is worthy of emulation. It may be very fittingly said of Mr. Bleecker, that he is 80 years young, as his eyes retain their brightness and his step betokens but little of the feebleness of age, and his mind in a marvelous degree seems to hold its youthful vigor.

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Note in front of book: "George Bleecker presents to John R. Bleecker, my son, this book in my eighty first year of age" dated December First 1900.