

***Anderson, Snodgrass and Betebenner
Family migration
from Ohio to Iowa in 1856****

**by Charles E. Snodgrass
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The Wm. Anderson, John Snodgrass and John Betebenner families [*came*] from Greene County, Ohio, to Greene County, Iowa in three covered wagons. They started October 7th, 1856, the day that I was three years old, for Greene County, Iowa, arriving three and one half miles South East of Jefferson, November 11th. Grandfather drove a big four horse wagon and had bells on all the horses.

These bells were of different sized so they had different tones and were quite musical. Uncle Joe said that they attracted people's attention and they would gather on the streets of the towns and every little while some one would hollar out "Hurrah for the Pennsylvania Dutch." On account of grandfather's wagon they took us to be from Pennsylvania. The box on this wagon was so long and the ends flared out so the bottom was lower in the center than at the end. Don't think a person could stand in the bottom of the box and see the wheels.

There were two horses next to the wagon and grandfather had to ride one and drive the leader with one line. There were ten in grandfather's family, four of us, three of the Betebenners. John Betebenner drove one of grandfather's teams. Those days they did not have much of the road graded. There was one road though part of which was graded they called the turnpike road, and you had to pay to drive on it. They had gates across the road every few miles called toll gates and when you came to one of them you had to pay the toll before they would open the gates. Don't know where we traveled any of that road or not.

We crossed the Mississippi River on a ferry boat, but all rivers that were not too deep they had to ford and some time the horses had to swim. The sloughs and swamps, however, gave them more trouble than the rivers. My mother said that some of the outfit go[t] mired down most every day and that they had to double teams and sometimes unload to get out.

My father told me once about grandfather getting stuck in a river. Father said that he was in the lead that day and came to a river and stopped and grandfather drove up behind and asked what was the matter. Father told him that he did not like the looks of it. Grandfathe[r] rode up the side of him astride an old horse named Mike and told father to get out of the road and he could go through. Father claimed he could drive four horses where he could not drive two.

The band [*bank*] was quite steep, and steeper going out on the other side but grandfather plunged in and the more than midsides to the horses. He got over until the leaders were part way out of the water and it was so muddy and slippery that he could not get any farther, so he threw his lead up over the saddle and slid down in the water which was more than waist deep to him, then he hollared to my father and John Betebenner to come over and help him unload, and he said that I happened to be in the wagon at that time and thats how he came to tell me about it, and we could raise up the wagon cover they sid that I was just ready to let loost and drop down in the water when John Betebenner happened to see me and came and carred me

over, and they had to carry all the rest of them over, and of course Joe was in there too for we were generally together.

Grandmother, as you know, was quite [quite] large, out weighting grandfather at that time, she managed to get out on one of the wheels and grandfather had to take her on his back. They had to carry out part of the other stuff, then bring over another team and hitched on ahead of the four and finally pulled the wagon out, then took all the horses back and hitched four on each of the other two wagons and managed to get through with them without getting stuck, but it took them the best part of a half day. And that is just one time out of a dozen of such punctures and blow outs the had in those days.

Mother said that they always had so much trouble getting places to stay all night. They generally stopped early in the evening and inquired about the distance to the nearest town, but could hardly ever get from one town to the other in a single day, so had to depend on stopping at farm houses and it was very seldom that they could get and [any?] room in them. Even the small towns sometimes did not have rooms even if they had a taverns (they did not call them hotels in those days but called them taverns).

They only aimed to get the rooms inside for the women and small children, but lots of times they could not even do that and would travel on until dark and then all have to roost in the wagons. She said grandfather pledged himself if they ever got through to their stopping place he would never turn anyone away but would accommodate them the best he could and if they could put up with accommodations they were welcome to stay, and I guess that he he kept his word his word (sic) as long as he lived, for I never heard of his turning any one away.

Mother said that they got almost discouraged before we got here and tried to get them to turn around and go back. Even after we got here and she had seen the place where we had to live she tried to get him not to unload only what they had to and hitch up the next day and start back. She said that she would have been willing to have taken the trip all over again if they would have faced about and started back the next (sic) day and start back. She said that SHE would have taken the trip all over again if they would have faced about and started back the next day. She said that there was always some one stopping wanting to stay all night and of course grandfather had promised he would never turn anyone away. He did one night because they had twenty three. Some nights if they didn't have room enough in the floor or the beds some of them would come over to our house and take mine and my brother Will's beds, for it was only about 25 feet from our front door (the only door we had) to grandfather's back door. There were generally some women and small children and small children and my mother would take us over to grandfather's and put us in the trundle bed with the other kids. They would put six of us into it. It was generally Emma, Ella, Rhoda at one end of the bed, Dan, Will and myself at the other end. As the fellow said they couldn't tell heads from tails. Some would be in bed, some on the floor and probably under the beds. Rhoda had habit of getting up in the night and getting in at the foot of grandfather's and grandmother's be[d].

Uncle Joe told me about one evening when three men stopped all night, guess they must have been kind of high up people with fried shirts and paper collars and grandfather did not like to put them on the floor, so gave them his and grandmother's bed and made a bed for themselves on the floor, and Rhonda, of course, got up in the night as usual and cracted up at the foot of the bed and was trying to get under the covers. One of the men said next morning that he thought it was a dog and tried to it off, said he gave it quite a kick once and Rhoda

gave quite a grunt and he saw that it was not dog so let her crawl down under the covers and that is where grandma found her the next morning when she got up.

Uncle Joe told me about another time when they had some folks stopping over night who had quite a family of children. It was getting quite late and the children were getting sleepy. She asked grandfather where to put them to sleep and he said you see all those pegs around there, when they go to sleep just hang them up. At that time there would be just two beds in sight, of course and she could not see what was under the beds. She had a little girl about five or six years old and she was so sleepy she could hardly hold her eyes open. Her mother tried to get her to lay her head down on her lap and go to sleep, but she would not and began to cry and her mother [could] not get her to tell what was the matter for quite a while. Finally she said she didn't want to hang on any of the pegs, then grandfather had to tell her that he was just joking. Said we have beds for all of us and pulled the trundle from under one of the beds and a straw tick from the other. There is probably some of the young folks that have never seen or heard of a trundle bed. This was a low down bed, low enough to slide under another bed. Grandfather made this and it had wheels on it so could roll under and out easy. The beds were made higher up from the floor those days than they are now, as much as twice as high. About the pegs on which grandfather said he hung the children. Those days they did not have clothes hooks to hang [*hang*] things on and brackets to make shelves as we have now. The houses being made out of logs, all they wanted shelf just drive up a couple of pegs on the level and lay on a board or two on them as long as they wanted the shelf, and they generally had several of these pegs over the back of the bed. That is where the women generally hung up their clothes, such as the silks, satins, hoop skirts, and all such things, and have a sheet hung over them. It was many years before I saw a house with a clothes closet in it. Some folks had beds with posts that reached up near the ceiling, but ours and grandmother's weren't more than five feet high, and the high ones had curtains hung from the top to the floor, and this where the women would go to do their dressing, painting, powder etc., and that the way they did in those days.

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This story appears in **The Anderson Story on page 42-43 of the digitized version. The introduction is slightly different and*