

THRILLING STORY.

Mr. F. Heintz tells how Henry Miller Froze to Death.

A NARROW ESCAPE FOR HIMSELF

Terrible Adventure in a Trip Home from Peru to Hall Township on the Night of Nov. 23, 1839, in a Driving Storm.

Mr. Fred Heintz, of Hollowayville, was a visitor to the REPUBLICAN office, last week, to renew his subscription for himself and a daughter in Chicago, and while here he exhibited a receipt for the first number of the REPUBLICAN after its consolidation January 1, 1858, the receipt reads as follows:

BUREAU COUNTY REPUBLICAN OFFICE.
PRINCETON, ILL., Jan. 21, 1858.
Received of F. Heintz one dollar and forty cents, in full to subscription from No. 1, vol. 1, to No. 1, vol. 2, being one year.
HEWITT & BATES, proprietors."

Mr. Heintz had with him all the receipts for the REPUBLICAN issued from that date to the present time, all properly scheduled and filed, showing his methodical manner of keeping his accounts. We have had a pleasant acquaintance with Mr. Heintz for the past thirty-six years, and he is always a welcome visitor to this office. He has continued to reside upon the same farm upon which he entered into business for himself nearly sixty years ago, and he belongs to that class of republicans ever to be found ready to discharge the political duties properly belonging to American citizens, whether native or adopted.

Mr. Heintz has prepared an account of that famous night of freezing weather of some sixty years ago, heretofore referred to by the REPUBLICAN, when he ventured with two others, to make the journey back to the farm on which he was employed, from Peru to Hall township, on foot. He arrived in Bureau county Aug. 14, 1830, coming to this country with Henry Miller, and the family of Jacob Croissant from Germany. Nine days later he made the acquaintance of Henry Hassler, of Selby township, who had been living in this country about four years. At that time the country looked lonesome and wild, and Mr. Heintz more than once wished himself back in Germany. He remained a week at the home of Mr. Hassler, assisting him about the farm, when he told him he would like to get a situation with English speaking people, so he could learn to speak the English language; thereupon Mr. Hassler went with him to the home of Robert Scott in Hall township, and the result was that Mr. Scott gave him employment on the farm for one year for \$150.

On Saturday morning, Nov. 23, 1839, several inches of snow fell, and the indications were for the advent of winter, but on Sunday morning the sun came out bright and comparatively pleasant. After breakfast Sunday morning, he began the study of his German Bible, which was the only book he had for many years after coming to this country. While thus engaged, two of Mr. Scott's daughters, one after another, suggested that the day was pleasant enough to be out of doors, and the thought struck him that perhaps the family were expecting company. Taking this view of the matter, he went over to the residence of Ed. Hall, about a mile north west from the home of Mr. Scott, where Henry Miller was employed. These two were later joined by another farm hand named George Pifer. Miller and Pifer suggested that they visit Peru, and asked Mr. Heintz to go with them, which after some persuasion he consented to do, Miller volunteering to let him ride his horse, while he and Pifer walked.

They reached Peru about one o'clock in the afternoon; went to a French boarding house and got their dinners. Pifer and Miller later went to a store and bought some goods to take home with them, and about four o'clock they started in that direction. On reaching the big hill east of Spring Valley, a strong wind and driving snow set in, and the weather began to grow bitterly cold. There was a log house standing up the valley, and when they reached it they discovered a big blaze in the fireplace within, and went in and by permission got warm. Miller wanted

the party to stay there for the night, but Mr. Heintz said he preferred to go home. So Pifer was allowed to ride the horse from that point and Miller and Heintz started on afoot. Passing on they came to a dead tree a short distance from the road, which was on fire, and Miller wanted to go to the tree and get warm again, but Mr. Heintz insisted that they push along and get home before freezing to death. They kept on until they came to the point where Miller was to leave Heintz, and go to his home at Hall's. When they separated, the snow had almost blinded the pedestrians. From Mr. Hall's place on the Princeton and Peru road there were no houses.

Mr. Heintz had to take the road to go south, which was not traveled much, and he had been along that way only once before. It was fast growing dark, and he lost his way. He had a handkerchief tied over his head and ears to protect them from freezing, but the melting of the snow which drifted under it made it of little protection. Some of the snow was melted by his warm breath, just enough to settle on his eyebrows and about his ears. It seemed he kept on walking, not really knowing which way he was going, when he stepped on an icy pond, and broke through, getting himself wet up to his body. He got out of the water as quickly as possible, and continued on his way, every little while calling on the Lord to save him from perishing on the wild prairie, by the freezing blast.

Having faced the wind as long as he could stand it, he turned about and went with the wind, and kept traveling until he ran up against a fence. His eyes were almost frozen shut so he could scarcely see. A little further on he came up against some grain stacks. He got behind one of these stacks, rubbed his eyes with his frozen fingers and tried to get a survey of his surroundings. He smelled smoke, and looking a little distance from the stack he saw a light. He then started in that direction and came to a window, and soon found the door. He knocked and was admitted. When he knocked, some one asked him if he wanted the doctor. He could not talk, but went in.

In the next room there was a good fire and a light, where a man sat reading. It was then about nine o'clock. He took the handkerchief from about his head, but he was not in the room long when he discovered that his ears were badly frozen, and became very painful. His fingers were also frozen clear up to his hands. The man who sat reading by the light, paid no attention to Mr. Heintz. Finally he asked for a basin of water, which the man got for him. This he took and put his hands in to remove the frost and stop the pain if possible; and as his frozen clothing began to thaw, and the water dripped down, Mr. Heintz felt he was indeed in a pitiable condition. Then

Mr. Heintz went to the fire to thaw out but it was some time before he could get his boots off. He asked the man to kindly give him a cup of coffee, but received instead a cup of hot tea.

The man then asked him if he would like to lie down, and Mr. Heintz replied that he would, and was taken to another room, a lean-to to the house, without any flooring, and wrapped up in a buffalo robe and left. Mr. Heintz found his clothing was again beginning to freeze, so he got up and went back to the fire; and as there was a sufficient amount of wood, he kept up the fire and sat there all night.

At daylight a man came down stairs, and he told him he had lost his way and had been there all night; that he was working for Robert Scott, and asked him if he would be kind enough to point out the way to his place; this the man did. It was about two miles and a half distant. The morning was as cold as ever, but he put out for the Scott place. When he arrived, Mr. Scott asked him where Miller was, as Mr. Hall's horse, which Mr. Miller had taken to Peru was there in his yard, and came from the east that morning, but after awhile the horse returned to Mr. Hall's place.

The return of the horse awakened inquiry at the Hall home, and they sent over to see if Mr. Heintz had got home. Finding he had, an investigation was commenced for Henry Miller, and they went to the home of Wm. Miller to find if he had stopped there. While there, an Irishman named Delano, came in from Peru, and told them there was a man frozen to death by the burning tree which Mr. Heintz mentioned before. There they found Henry Miller frozen to death. The men took the remains to the home of Mr. Hall, made a box and laid them away to rest in the Miller cemetery in Hall township. The indications were that Miller after leaving Mr. Heintz, had turned back to the tree, which was on fire, to warm himself, and there was frozen.

The house where Mr. Heintz spent the previous night, was that of Dr. Whitehead, and to this accident he owed his life, but it was some time afterwards that he learned his name. His frosted ears and trouble with his eyes made him an invalid for some weeks, besides his hands were almost useless, the skin and finger nails all coming off. To this day Mr. Heintz's ears are almost as hard as bone. That was the most dreadful visitation in the life of Mr. Heintz, and possibly as severe, if not more so than that experienced by any of the early settlers of Bureau county.



MR. FRED HEINTZ.