



1860

AMERICA MOVES TOWARDS WAR

MICHAEL J. DEEB

1860

Copyright 2012 Michael J. Deeb

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping or by an information storage retrieval system without the written permission of the author except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Certain characters in this work are historical figures, and certain events portrayed did take place. However, this is a work of fiction. All of the characters, names, incidents, organizations and dialogue in this novel are either the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously.

ISBN-13: 9781468146974

ePUB ISBN: 978-1-5457-5109-1

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

Introduction

The Fishing Hole

Lowell, Michigan

In Town

Home

Dinner Time

The Facts of Life

Lowell School

The Harvey Bacon Home

Lowell School

The Drieborg Home

The Bacon Home

Lowell Bank

The Harvest Dance

Fall Hunting

October Election Parade

The Ride Home

The Election

South Carolina Leaves the United States

Christmas Celebration

Christmas Day

The New Year

Lowell School

The Confederate States of America

The Drieborg Dinner Table

Behind the School House

Conversation at Church

Competition Not War Will Change the South

Jacob's Toothache

Lincoln Calls for Volunteers in April 1861

War Talk at Home

The Fishing Hole

June 1861 Disaster

The Center of Attention

A Promise Kept

Lost Friends

Lowell

Michael's Decision

Leaving the Farm

Afterword

Duty and Honor

Duty Accomplished

Honor Restored

The Lincoln Assassination

Sources

Characters

Introduction

The male voters in the United States were about to elect the sixteenth president in the nation's history. It was feared by many that this November 1860 election might prove to be the last the voters would cast as citizens in the thirty-three states that made up the United States of America.

The students attending the Lowell, Michigan primary school discussed the issues of that day; the upcoming presidential election, slavery, secession and the war which might follow. Such issues were also of concern to their parents at home.

This story will explore the concerns of young and old alike in that Michigan community, their effort to understand the issues at stake in 1860 and their reaction to the break-up of the Union.

United States of America: 1860



The Fishing Hole

Located on a tract of land near the Drieborg farm was a good-sized pond. Some would call it a lake. During the hot summer members of the nearby families would use it to cool off with a swim, or maybe use poles and hooks to catch fish.

Michael Drieborg and his teenaged friends, Willie Turbush and Ethan Schock, would meet there to fish and talk whenever they could get away from farm chores and weren't in school.

Today, they were seeking relief from harvesting corn on their parents' farms. Every farm in the Lowell, Michigan area grew that crop and it was time for the fall harvest. School was closed, so the boys and girls could help out at home. By Friday noon most of the fields had been cleared and the corn cribs were full.

So their parents had given the boys the afternoon off. They headed to the pond. In late October, it was too chilly to swim but still perfect for fishing.

Willie and Ethan were already sitting on the bank with their fishing lines in the water.

"What do you think is keeping Drieborg?" Willie wondered aloud.

"Who knows?" Ethan responded. "His papa is a tough one if you ask me. He probably had one more chore for Mike."

It wasn't long before they heard someone coming through the woods that surrounded the pond. It was the missing teenager of their group, Michael Drieborg.

“Good thing you weren’t trying to sneak up on us, Drieborg. I could hear you coming a mile away,” Willie said, making fun of his friend.

Ethan joined in the fun. “All that noise you were making, no wonder we haven’t gotten any bites. The fish could hear you tramping through the wood, for sure.”

“That’s very funny, you two,” Michael responded. “How many times have we fished here this year? And, how many keepers have either of you caught? I’ll tell you how many. I can count them on the fingers of one hand. That’s how many. So, don’t give me that guff about noise.”

Mike nudged Willie. “Move over, Turbush. Give me some room here.”

“What are you using for bait today, Ethan?”

“What else, worms of course.”

“I brought along some stale bread my momma was going to give to the pigs. Want to try some of that for bait?”

“Who ever heard of using bread?” Willie exclaimed. “Fish in this pond are partial to worms. You can keep your stale bread.”

“All right, you two,” Michael said, “tell you what. Whoever catches the most keepers gets all the fish to take home. It will be my bread against your worms. How about it; is it a bet?”

“No contest, Drieborg. Kiss your catch goodbye. Right, Ethan?”

The boys were silent for a while. Each one was hoping to be the first to catch a keeper.

“Hey, you guys,” Willie suddenly asked, are you two going to join up when the war starts?”

“What war?” Drieborg asked.

“You must have been absent from school when Clingman told us about the war, Mike.”

“Will you tell me what war you’re talking about?”

“He said he has been getting letters from relatives down south saying that if Lincoln is elected, a whole bunch of the cotton states will leave the Union. Then there will be a war.”

Michael still had questions. “Did he say why there would be a war?”

“He didn’t get into that much except that his relatives figured Lincoln would try to stop those states from leaving the Union by using force. That’s why he said there would be a war.”

“I’d join up in a minute,” Ethan said. “Anything to get off the farm; ‘sides, it would be great fun.”

“You could get killed, Schock,” Mike warned him.

“Are you scared, Mike?” Willie taunted.

“Maybe I am,” Mike snapped back. “Just seems to me that war means battles and battles mean killing. I don’t see much fun in that. Besides, why does anyone care if the Slave States leave the Union?”

Schock answered. “Now that you mention it, Mike, I don’t rightly know.”

Willie added, “Must be pretty important though if our teacher, Mr. Clingman, says there’ll be a war. He’s a pretty smart guy.”

“Hey! I got a bite,” Willie shouted pulling up on his pole. Sure enough, he had. The boys saw a good-sized fish break the surface of the lake attached to his line by a hook.

“How about that, Drieborg?” he bragged. “My worm did the trick.”

Ethan laughed, too. “Want to use some of my worms, Mike?”

“I don’t see you catching any keepers, Ethan,” Mike taunted.

Then the boys settled down to some serious fishing.

Ethan Schock was the first to break the silence.

“Hey, Mike. How’d you like it when you were with Louise in the barn?”

“That’s sort of private, don’t you think?”

Willie laughed out loud. “Crying out loud, Drieborg, don’t be so touchy. Ethan and I have been with her, too. In fact every one of the boys at school older than your twelve-year-old brother Jacob has been to the barn with Louise. And it’s never a secret either. ‘Cause afterwards, Louise brags about it to all the girls at school. I’m sure she told your sisters. My sister knows about you spending some time with Louise.”

“Oh my gosh,” Mike exclaimed. “If either of my sisters ever tells my parents, I’m in real trouble.”

Willie had two older sisters still at home. “If I know sisters, Mike. And oh, yes, do I know sisters. They’ll wait for just the right moment to tell your parents how evil their little son is. They might do it to get even for something you said or because you wouldn’t do something they asked of you. Or maybe it’s just that time of the month when girls seem most irritable. Just you wait, Mike. But you can count on it. One of them will tell.”

Mike fell back on the grass. “You sure know how to ruin a guy’s afternoon, Willie,” Mike moaned. “What happened to you when your father found out?”

“Out in our barn, he took a strap to me. All the while he was whipping me he told me how stupid I had been. Believe me, outside the classroom, I haven’t been within a mile of Louise or her barn since. And I won’t be, either.”

“What an afternoon this has turned out to be,” Mike complained. “The fish are ignoring my stale bread bait. Ethan tells me our country will be at war soon and Willie tells me I’m probably going to get a whipping from my father for going to the barn with Louise. Thanks a lot, you two.”

Willie wasn’t finished funnin’ with his friend. “It could be worse, Mike.”

“How could it be worse?”

“There could be a war and you joined the army.”

“I suppose that could be worse,” Mike agreed.

Ethan jumped into the kidding around and said, “There’s something a lot worse than that.”

“What could be worse than going off to fight in a war?” Willie asked.

“One of us would have to marry Louise. That’s what.”

“Oh my gosh,” Mike exclaimed in alarm, “that would be worse”

No one spoke after that. Mike even ignored the fish pulling at the bait on his hook.

Lowell, Michigan

It was a beautiful October day in Michigan. The sun was up and the color of the leaves on the maple and oak trees had begun to change from summer green to the gold and reds of fall. It would be a fine day for squirrel hunting. But the two teenage Drieborg boys were not in the woods. Instead, they were cleaning the family barn of animal droppings.

Mike, the eldest of the Drieborg children at sixteen, was at least six feet tall. His twelve-year-old brother Jacob couldn't quite look his older brother in the eye, but he was catching up rapidly. Their Dutch heritage was evident in their blond hair, blue eyes and fair skin. They looked remarkably like their papa, Jake. And, like most farm boys, they had chores. Every day they had chores to do. Today, it was cleaning the barn.

"Do animals really care if the barn floor is clean of poop and covered with fresh hay?"

"That has nothing to do with it," Michael told his younger brother. "We're Dutch, remember. And the Dutch will have a barn that is clean as a whistle."

"What does that mean, anyway, Michael, 'clean as a whistle'?" Jacob asked.

"It means that we had better have this place cleaned up before Papa gets home. That's what."

"Why can't I ever go to town on Saturday morning with papa?" the twelve-year-old Jacob complained.

Mike chuckled. "Because you are not yet thirteen, Jacob; you know the family rule. Next year you can take a turn with us. Not till then."

"It's a dumb rule, if you ask me."

"Nobody asked you, little brother." Michael was a loving brother, but he loved to kid Jacob.

"You know, Mike," Jacob snapped back. "I'm not so little anymore." Actually Jacob could look his over six-foot-tall brother in the eyes.

"That's true, Jacob. Sorry," Mike responded, suddenly aware that he had hurt his brother's feelings. "I'll try to remember that."

Jacob wasn't finished sharing the complaints of the youngest in the family.

"And why do we boys have to shovel out the manure from the barn stalls and empty the pots in the water closet every morning and night? Why can't the girls do some of this stuff?"

"You got me on that one, for sure, Jacob. I suppose it's as simple as this. The Momma and the girls take care of the house, the chickens and the garden, and do all the cooking. The papa and the boys take care of planting, harvesting, milking cows, chopping wood, slaughtering pigs, cleaning up the manure in the barn, and all the other dirty jobs on a farm."

Jacob lifted the handles on the wheelbarrow. But before he pushed it toward the manure pit he declared, "That does it. I've decided, Michael. You're lookin at one fella who's not going ta do this the rest of his life. No sir! As soon as I can, I'm off."

"I suppose you will, Jacob. But, for now, I suggest you get a move on. Papa left for town early this morning. You don't want to be around if he gets back before we finish."

You've Just Finished your Free Sample

Enjoyed the preview?

Buy: <http://www.ebooks2go.com>