

**The Childhood of Anson Burlingame —  
Personal Recollections of General W.  
H. Gibson.**

*From the Toledo (Ohio) Commercial.*

As the playmate of his childhood, I wish to speak of ANSON BURLINGAME as a child. In 1823, JOEL BURLINGAME, his father, removed to Seneca County, Ohio, locating on an eighty acre lot near Melmore. The father was a generous, kindly-natured man, with advantages for education and culture above the average pioneers. In disposition he was happy, and he was a devout Methodist and earnest Free Mason. He taught school, and had an ambition for business, but was, in fact, impracticable and unthrifty. He spent his time attending "two days meetings," "quarterly meetings," and "camp meetings," and had little love for the hard work required to improve a farm in the wilderness. He was a man of fine personal appearance, and his general knowledge and fine conversational powers gave him favor in every cabin; while his vehement prayers and eloquent exhortations gave him notoriety among the pioneer Christians. The forest suffered little at his hands, and the half-cleared patches around his rude cabin were not indicative of thrift. I think he was instrumental in building the first schoolhouse, as I know he was active in the erection of the first church in Seneca County.

Mrs. BURLINGAME was religiously devout, but homely and in poor health. I remember her as cross and rather violent in disposition. I may be in error, but the scoldings and cuffings of ANSON and his little sister are not forgotten.

ANSON was handsome, jolly and lovable by childhood, as he was earnest, energetic and devoted in manhood. The first ten years of life generally determines future character. ANSON BURLINGAME during these years was a poor boy, surrounded by Christian influences, and guided by the spirit of a father full of love towards God and all men. He was a promising boy. Though a little older than myself, we were associated as children, sitting in the same log schoolhouse, with its grease-soaked paper for window lights, and upon the same backless bench, to study the same monosyllables. We romped and sported in the shadow of the same forest, and were "child friends."

In recurring to those days I am unable to recall a single act of meanness, unkindness or cruelty on the part of little ANSON. Gentle, sweet and amiable in disposition, he was a favorite with the "little folks." Like myself, he was a Sabbath school scholar. In fact, we were generous rivals for scholastic and theological distinction. Then libraries were unknown in Sabbath schools, and the memorizing of Scripture was the chief business of the scholars. I well remember a lively contest maintained between ANSON and myself for weeks, and how I "threw up the sponge" when, one August Sabbath, he repeated a whole chapter of thirty-six verses, when I reached only twenty-seven. From that moment I entertained a boyish dislike to his father, who was superintendent, and who, by smiles and words, appeared to glory in the victory of his son. ANSON, in recent years, recurred with interest to "the days of our childhood," and he never failed to inquire after the old pioneers who had visited his father's cabin in Ohio.

After leaving Seneca County I never met him again until I went to his law office, in the "Old State House," in Boston, and renewed the friendship of childhood. The generous, ambitious, kind boy grew to a noble manhood, and his career of goodness and usefulness was assured by infant training and early Christian impressions.

W. H. G.

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