

## Autobiography of John Ingels

Written by himself for the sake of self-culture during leisure hours.

To all who may care to read it.

### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

For me to undertake to write a history or sketch of my life, seems rather absurd, from the fact that nothing of importance has ever occurred during my, thus far, spent life, that has any bearing upon my past history, that is, no great event, romantic adventure or love scrape has ever been lucky enough to cross my peaceful path.

Another thing which is against it is this; I am no writer, having never written a book of any kind, but nevertheless I deem it nothing more than right and proper, as it will never be made public anyway, to write some things which have occurred during my certain knowledge, which may be of some interest to the reader.

I also deem it a source of great improvement for any person to make a habit of writing upon some subject or other; so why not write a narrative of their own experience?

### PARENTAGE

I was born in Morgan County, Indiana, in the year 1847. My father, Thomas Ingels was the eldest son of my Grandfather John Ingels, after whom I was named. My grandmother is a descendent of the Gaar and Boone families, thus making me a distant relation of old Daniel Boone, the first settler of Kentucky. He lived for several months in the forests alone with no other source of living than that which his trusty rifle supplied. This seemed to be all his nature required.

I sometimes think, when I am out in the woods with *my* gun hunting turkeys or squirrels, that I have some of the old stock of Boone blood in me, for it has *always* been a source of pleasure for me to spend a day or two in the woods with a gun. I think I will some day go to a new country where I may have my satisfaction of hunting,

### EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

My father moved away from Morgan County when I was about four or five years old, therefore I can have but few recollections of anything that transpired while we were living there, but I can remember this much; the old hewed log house was situated upon a

hill and we children used to roll pumpkins down that hill and have “lots of fun” and that my father used to be a great lover of fishing and as we lived near the White River we used to have plenty of fish to eat.

I also remember that on one occasion Mother and us children all went down to a small stream running through our farm, to catch some fish. As I was not large enough to use enough to use a pole and line, I was left out on the bank nearby to “mind the fish as they caught them” and to keep them from flouncing back into the water . Well, after I had been minding a little fish for a few minutes, I found some difficulty in keeping it still, so I laid it on a stick of wood, laid another stick of wood on top of it and then sat down on top of them all, in order to hold fast to the fish.

After I had been sitting there ten or fifteen minutes, my mother asked me where my fish was.

“I am trying to hold it still,” said I.

She then looked at it and sure enough it was laying still and mashed as flat as pancakes,

#### OUR DEPARTURE FROM WAVERLY, IND.

As before stated, when I was about four or five years old, my father decided to sell his farm and leave for a new country. a small town by the name of Waverly, which was a very hard and wicked place, noted for its whiskey drinking, card playing and fighting, The thought of raising a family of children with free access to all such vices\* was more than my parents dared to think of, so they determined to try their fortunes in new and more thinly inhabited country. How grateful should we be, when we think of the many hardships and inconveniences which our parents have suffered for our welfare and happiness. Let us ever remember their kindness by leaving nothing undone which will add to their comfort and rest in their old age.

My father settled in what was then called tire Indian Reserve, in Howard County. A well-timbered country and good soil, but rather level and wet. This country was then a vast wilderness, deer and wild turkey were to be seen in great numbers, roaming through. The woods where but a few years before, the Indian had made his home^

Squirrels were in great abundance, scampering up a tree at the approach of a human being, they would chatter and bark for a few minutes and then gaily scale the

lofty trees in search of nuts or to find a more secure retreat. There were also a great variety of beautiful birds to enliven the dismal forest with their most enchanting songs. Oh! What a nature a man or a woman must have who cannot admire the songs of birds among the forest trees in the warm and pleasant days of summer.

If there ever is a time when we can think of the goodness of God, it must be when we are alone in the woods, among the beautiful flowers and under the soul reviving influence of the forest songsters.

I will next give you an account of some little events which occurred when I was a small boy, yet they have a very prominent place in my memory.

### BOYHOOD

My boyhood was one continued scene of childish joy. Living in a new and thinly settled country, I had but few associates and was thereby free from many of the vices and immoralities generally common to those living in villages or small towns.

### A PROPOSITION ACCEPTED

As I shall attempt to name only some of the most important events of my life and shall pass the others by, I shall now relate something that occurred when I was only about six or seven years old.

I was always an inquisitive kind of boy, always trying to learn something new or curious. When my father and other men were talking, I tried to be around where I could listen and learn anything new or interesting. Among other subjects I remembered hearing him speak about was one in regard to children leaving home to try their fortunes among strangers & company. He said that when any of his children got ready to leave home all that they needed to do was to let him know and he would help them off. Now I got it into my head by some means that I could do as well by leaving home as I could to stay. For then I would not have to work or do anything unless I desired to do so. I could go anywhere I pleased, play, fish or hunt as much as I pleased and in fact, do anything I pleased. Such were my thoughts upon this matter.

So I resolved to ask my father if I could go, as he had promised to help any of his children off when they desired to leave. So one day at noon-when we had all quit work and were at the house awaiting dinner, now thinks I:

“I’ll out with it and see what he will do.”

My father was sitting down on the grass in the backyard watching the bees at

work as they flew in and out of the hive, some of them heavy laden with their sweet cargo of honey. I walked up within ten or twelve feet of where he sat and said to him,

“Pap, ma’nt I go out and do for myself?”

“What?” says he.

“May I go out and do for myself?”

“You want to do what?”

“I want to go and work for myself”

“You want to leave, do you?”

“Yes.”

“Very well, just go in the house and tell your mother to do up your duds for you and put out.”

It makes me feel weak in the knees yet when I think of how I felt about this time. My father had become somewhat excited during our conversation and was talking rather loud, this attracted the attention of the rest of the family in the house and they all came out to see what was the matter. This added all the more to my unpleasant feelings. They all began to question me as to the cause of my wanting to leave, etc., etc. I saw very plainly that I was "sold" for once but resolved not to let: them make too much off of me so I got a little stubborn and mad together and would not give them much satisfaction about it. These are some of the things of my past life which I think I could do better, were I to live them over again.

I have just stated, this little incident to show what a great error parents commit when they allow their children to hear their conversation on such subjects. Although you may think they are paying no attention, never less they are always on the alert for something new and will often understand what you think they do not and may thereby get wrong impressions.

Another thing, a good child will always believe what its parents tell him, let that be what it may. Always talk before your children that which will be instructive to them.

#### EARLY EDUCATION

As I have stated, we lived in a new and thinly settled part of the country, therefore my facilities for obtaining an education were quite limited. School house of very inferior quality, usually an old log cabin that was not fit for anyone to live in. Sometimes there

was a log cut out of one side of the house and some glass put in for a window. No maps or charts then adorned the walls of schoolhouses as they do now. Teachers were also hard to get, I mean those you might call good teachers. My father had a great deal of work to do on his farm and being unable to hire all the necessary help, he generally kept his boys at home whenever there was anything they could do. However I went to school enough to learn to write a little and could read tolerable well and understood something of Rays Practical Arithmetic. This constituted my education until I was about nineteen years of age. I will stop here and relate the most saddest event of my boyhood.

### MY FATHER'S DEATH

My father had managed to save enough of what he made off his farm to enable him to go into the dry goods business. He bought a half interest in a store at Terre Hall, Indiana (later known as Hemlock) and went into partnership with a man named Spencer Latta.

Within a short time they purchased a lot in Tampico, erected a new building and began business on a larger scale.

After a few years Mr., Latta became tired of the business, sold his part to father and moved to Texas. Father continued the business alone for some time and was prospering very well when it became very apparent that the business was not agreeing very well with his health.

He began to have a very bad cold and was in general ill health, but he continued to conduct his business for several weeks, when he was suddenly taken to his bed with Typhoid Fever, from which he never recovered.

After about six weeks of all the suffering which sickness can bring, his spirit took its flight to that better world where sorrow, sickness, pain and death never enter. Although I was only eleven or twelve years old, yet well do I remember every feature of my dear father as he lay upon his dying bed, his features pale and wasted from long suffering and sickness. Altogether it made such an impression upon my mind it can never be taken away while reason shall remain.

Although I once had a sister to die, I was quite small then and did not feel the loss of her as I did that dear old father who had cared for and protected me from infancy. But death will ever sever the fondest of ties.

Another year has rolled around since I began this sketch of my life and with it has come many new scenes and changes of life. How soon one short year can roll around,

leaving us either better or worse than when it began.

I will now begin my courtship life, which I deem of next greatest importance.

### COURTSHIP (OR MY FIRST GO)

When I was a boy, say sixteen or seventeen, it was very fashionable to have small parties, such as wood choppings, quiltings, stable-raisings, etc., and of course have a play at night.

In those days it did not matter much what a young man wore, he was as respectable and as welcome then, dressed in homemade jeans as we would be now if dressed in Broadcloth.

I well remember my first "go" and as I only propose to write from memory I will state the whole matter as briefly as possible, it was something near as follows. One of our neighbors had a stable-raising and quilting and of course all the young folks were on hand with myself, all of us well dressed out in home-spun jeans. I well remember the style of my coat. It was cut from an ancient pattern and had been my Sunday coat for at least three years, and of course it had not grown any and I had grown considerably, so we did not exactly fit each other. The fact was, I was entirely too big for my clothes. This was not the only fault with me. I had the disease known as bashfulness most wretched bad and it was just about to take a relapse.

Well! The work was all done in handsome style, dinner and supper finally over and then came the fun I so much desired and yet dreaded to see come. The plays, I got along pretty well, thought I was having a splendid time--and so I was. We played "The Old Killer", "Weavely Wheat", "Old Grandpa Sanders" and other games, played and played, kissed and played until it was nearly morning,

When it all broke up and we started for home, it was customary in those days for young men to take the girls home from a party or church but never to take them to one, so now came the time for pitching in. But I had never even walked home with any of them, had scarcely ever spoken to one of them only when obliged to do so, but I thought there were plenty of girls and I knew all the other boys would go, so why not I. I had my mind set on one of them, but how to get started, how to ask her, was what perplexed my mind. The girls donned their wraps, started out and the boys began to hitch on, one by one, until I was the only one left and there were two girls without partners and one of them was the very girl I desired to go with. It was a very dark night with a slight rainfall and there was but one lantern in the crowds. This lantern was right up in front, so back

where I was it was very dark. I finally mustered up courage enough to walk up by the side of the girl and I says,

“Who is this?”

“It is me,” says she.

“We are all going the same road, why not go together?” says I, my voice trembling considerably.

She made no reply but took hold of my arm. I was alright then but what to say next I did not know, so we just walked on in silence for some time. Perhaps I did finally make some remark about the rain, the dark night, etc. Finally my girl stopped, said she had dropped something and could not find it. I yelled for the lantern bearer to stop and broke out to run around the company to get it (I forgot to say we were now in a large dense woods). I ran with all my force against a tree but the tree did not seem to budge at all. As soon as I could recover from the shock I stumbled on and the next thing I had staggered over some brush and fell full length. All this time the company was enjoying the fun hugely. I finally reached the fellow who had the lantern but he thought I wanted to play him some trick and would not let me have it until I had explained everything to him. I took the light and found the lost article; it contained a pair of lost gaiters. The girl had taken her gaiters along to wear while she was at the party and her leather shoes to wear while walking home.

This was my first go and it did me for some time. It was a long time before I heard the last of that gaiter story and it was the last time I ever attempted to keep company with that young lady. But to take the whole affair all around, I think it did me good, it was a good start toward wearing my bashfulness away. As long as any person is so very bashful he can never feel at ease with himself or anyone else. The greatest obstacle against the progress of young people is the great bugbear of bashfulness and until that is overcome they never can succeed.

(TO THE READER: Father wrote this when a very young farm lad, times have certainly changed since then. What has become of the blushes and bashfulness?) G.F.I.

## COLLEGE

The next important event after my courtship scrape was my school days. When I was near eighteen years of age, my uncle James Ingels came out from Illinois and said one of us boys must go to Illinois and attend school with our cousin who was attending school

there at that time,

As my brother Marion was older than me, of course I did not get to go. Marion went to college and spent one year, then coming home and holding up his head considerably. Well, he went another year and I stayed at home and kept the farm going another year with the fond hope that the time would soon come when it would be my turn to go.

The long wished-for time came at last and everything was in readiness to start from home to spend the greater part of a year, which would be longer than I had ever remained away from home before.

My clothes were all in good repair, a new suit on hand and a little pocket money, so off I started, It would be difficult to describe my feelings as the train started and I knew I was on my journey, leaving home to live among strangers. However I was not entirely alone. I met an acquaintance at Kokomo who introduced me to his brother who was going to Illinois and would be company for me and I for him. In a few days we were safe at the end of our journey and found everybody lively and enjoying good health.

After spending a week looking at the country and visiting around, I again took the train and soon reached the college at Abington, Illinois, went to my boarding place and wrote a few letters to relatives and friends at home.

Now came hard study at which I applied myself for about one and a half years. The principle expenses of the first year were paid by my kind and benevolent uncle James Ingels. The other expenses I paid myself. All I have to say in regard to time and money spent in school, those eighteen months spent at college are worth more to me than any other four years of my life. And why? Because I learned more during that time which will be of use to me the rest of me life

I might stop here and state that during my time in college I was corresponding with a young lady back in Howard County by the name of Henrietta Costlow and we were engaged to be married at the end of my school course. I came home and immediately went to work to build a house in which to keep my young wife as soon as we were married. On the twenty-fifth day of August 1868, we were united in the Holy Bonds of Matrimony and ever since we have been trotting down life's troubled path in double harness.

I will not attempt to describe our happiness, as a young couple just starting out in life, their happiness is something that must be experienced to be appreciated.

We settled on my 80 acres of land left me by my father and began clearing the timber and trying to make a farm.



On the 16th of June 1869 our marriage was blessed with a fine large boy and we called him Offa M.

Now I have run one chain of events through, I will stop and go back and tell what I have been following all this time,

February, 1871 and nothing more written yet. What a poor habit I have of commencing so many things and never finishing.

March 10th, 1871. It has been very near two years since last I wrote; I shall now describe a few incidents which have occurred during the past three years.

On the following winter after we were married I taught a common school in District No. 5, Taylor Tp., it having been commenced by a young lady and then given up. This being my first school, of course it was not very well done, yet it gave general satisfaction. This school was taught in the same old school house where I went to school several winters myself.

On the following winter I again taught school in the same house and I would state right here that this school was just as quiet as the former, with one exception and that was this: I had a young man coming to school by the name of Elza Bower. Well, this chap seemed to think he was big enough to be his own boss and would not come down to my authority. So after he had violated what I will call the rules of morality, I just drew down my switch and gave him a small dressing, which brought him to time according to common meter.

During the winter of 1870 and 71, I taught school in District No. 9, Union Tp. This was as quiet and as fine school as one would wish to see. We closed with a fine dinner and had a good time,

School teaching has thus far been a very pleasant and profitable business for the following reasons:

- 1) It is inclined to make a person study more than he would otherwise
- 2) It makes him more thorough in what he does study.
- 3) It is something that will pay better during the winter than anything else a farmer boy can do.

I would also state right here that there is more to be learned in teaching school than would at first be supposed. We learn not only from the books but there is good opportunity to study character.

Although a schoolteacher has many trials to pass through that will be unpleasant, his influence for good or bad will be felt long after he has gone.

One object in the writing of this sketch of my life is that I may leave, if possible, some record which may prove beneficial to posterity, for it is my expectations that these page will be read when I am dead and I might say forgotten, then when you read this book please remember one thing which I have said, and that is this: An education is one of the main objects to be attained in this life. The obtaining of wealth should be secondary when compared with education.

What is the main object of this life, is it wealth or is it fame or honor, or what is it? Would answer, it is to do all the good we can and one of the best things we can do it to advance the cause of education as much as possible.

To continue with my story, in the winter of 1871 and 72 I taught another school in the same house in Union Tp. Howard County, Indiana and had a very satisfactory term of school. In the spring of 72, I taught a four months term of school at Tampico. This was one of the successes of my life, the Tampico school always being considered a very hard school to manage. Many teachers had avoided it on this account; several teachers had taken it and given it up. So I took the school and taught it through without a switch in the room. In that respect, at least, I considered the term quite a success.

In 1871 I bought some law books with the intention of commencing the study of law but have been too busy during the past year to make much progress,

MAY 30, 1874

I find in looking over my notes that my last writing was made in 1871, now near three years ago, I find that my personal history has been only an ordinary one and perhaps would be of no interest to any one even if well written, but when I think that perhaps I may live to a good old age and my memorandum would then be of interest to look over and see when certain things occurred that might have escaped my memory and my children may be pleased when I am gone to know how I spent my time in my young days.

I again taught school in 1872 and 73 in my own district where I had gone to school myself, never had a red in the schoolhouse, received the same wages as before \$50.00 per month. On the last day we had a big dinner in the school house and had a very good time generally,

## JOINS THE F. AND A.M. LODGE

I have neglected so far to state that I have joined the society known as Free and Accepted Masons. I joined Naphthali Lodge No 389 sometime in 1872. I find nothing in the order to make me regret I joined it. There might be one objection a poor man might use, that is the amount of money it takes as an initiation fee, but that is so small an objection that it need not be urged as such.

During the summer of 1873 I got out some buggy spokes and staves, sold them and made preparations for studying law, which I had commenced to some extent. I received \$8.00 per M. for the spokes and \$18.00 for the slaves. In the fall of 1873 I went to Bloomington to attend Law School. My family came down at Christmas time and remained until spring when we returned to the farm, this was in May 1874. Later we moved to Kokomo, Indiana from which place I am now writing. We now live in a small house, new with four rooms. We pay \$8.1/3 per month. The house belongs to Dr. W.R. Mavity. I am now studying Mr. Garrigus in his law office under this kind of agreement. He is to pay me just as much each month as my house rent may amount to, which is now eight and 1/3 dollars per month. We are to try it together for three or four months and if we succeed well and are pleased with each other we may form a partnership--if not, of course we can easily quit and go our way in peace.

## IMPROVEMENTS IN KOKOMO

Kokomo is improving very fast now, much speculation in lots, town growing toward the N.W.A. new barrel factory now going up in north part of town. New railroad just now being finished from Frankfort to Kokomo. A new gravel road under headway from Kokomo, north to near Peru. Improvements generally going on. Schools in very good condition, running nine months now under Supt. Cox from Logansport.

I was admitted as Attorney at Law during this term of court. With my limited study of law so far, I am pleased with it. It is a very honorable profession, requires much training but pays well for the work when well done.

August 10th, 1874, Sunday night, just about dark. We have had a very warm summer so far but the prospect for a big crop of corn is very good. Wheat about all threshed and in the granary. Price 95 cents to \$1.00 per bushel. Hogs at Indianapolis \$5.98.

## POLITICAL

During last winter (1874) the Grange became thoroughly organized and has by concentrating trade at a few stores and with the panic of last fall, made trade more dull in

Kokomo than it would otherwise have been.

### INDEPENDENTS

From the Grange sprang up this new party calling themselves Farmer's Party or Independents --made their nominations of officers as follows:

County Auditor	D.P. Davis
Assessor	M.M. Trabue
County Clerk	J.T. Dyar
Representative	Charles Norton
County Recorder	-----
Treasurer	Luke Fry
Co. Commissioner	Yeager and Rogers

The Republicans nominated by primary election on the 8th day of August 1874, the following ticket:

Clerk	John Cooper
Auditor	Mr. Moreland
Sheriff	J.H. Terrell
Representative	Dr. Darnell
Recorder	---- Edwards
Treasurer	Dr. Johnson

This is counted a very strong ticket but thought to be too many candidates in town to suit the country people, yet all but one was really nominated in town if Center Tp. had not voted at all, so none but the country people are to be blamed for it,

Memo, Aug. 17<sup>th</sup> 1874

On last Saturday Mr. Garrigus and I came to terms as follows: Our partnership to continue one year. I have to have 1/2 of profits and get and furnish 1/2 of the expenses of the office, to go into effect on September 1st, 1874.

Today I went out home and made the survey of a ditch to be cut from my place to

that of Mr. Currens.

August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1874

Today the Independents held a convention at Kokomo and nominated Mr. Youngblood for joint-representative for Howard and Cass Counties, which he accepted. 'Tis very dry weather now and very dusty, the roads are a very cloud of dust.

Today have been studying up the subject of R.R.s killing stock.

September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1874

All lawyers, I suppose remember well all about their first case and how they got through with it and about their feelings on the subject, well I have had my first "case" and for fear I shall forget the main features of the case I will make a note of it, although there is nothing in it worthy of notice,

A sold B a clock and warranted it to run for five years, with a written warranty. B giving his note for the clock due ten months after date. The clock failed to run and when the note became due the plaintiff brought suit depended on the breach of warranty and no consideration. We did not have a jury and got beat. I thought I had the law and evidence on my side although I lost it I was well pleased with my first effort.

This has been a very sickly fall, much ague and fever; nearly everyone has to take Quinine all the time to keep going at all. Had a fine peach crop, have just about finished with ours.

October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1874

I see from the above item that there has been much sickness this season. Now health is much better but weather remains very dry.

Our October term of court is just now closing, had a very busy term, we had several cases tried. Among the last tried were two whiskey cases, appealed from the County Commissioners. In both of these cases we were for the remonstrators and in both cases got defeated, permits granted in both cases. John W. Kern and Hackney for petitioners. Garrigus, O'Brien and Vaile for defendants.

November 15<sup>th</sup>, 1878

Four years have come and gone since I last wrote in this book. During that four years several things have happened— one of which is that I have been too busy to write in this book.