

## Letter From Sergt. Harry Hoover

H. Hoover

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low-creatures from the scalping-knife and tomahawk of the Indians. I hope the occasion may result in suggesting to the General Assembly of Iowa, whether some public recognition is not alike due to mark the spot which is consecrated to civilization by the blood of the brave and true-hearted settlers who fell victims to the vengeance of the savages on the shores of these far-famed beautiful Lakes.

ABBIE GARDNER SHARP.

LETTER FROM SERGT. HARRY HOOVER.

86 DIAMOND STREET, PITTSBURG, PA., August 5, 1887.

*Gentlemen:*

I learn from a friend in Florida that a "memorial tablet" is about to be erected to the volunteers who formed the Expedition that left Webster City for Spirit Lake, March 23, 1857. It was my fortune to be "one of the boys," and although many and important events have transpired since then—many joys and sorrows intervened—still

Fond Memory brings the light  
Of other days around me,

and looking back over the vista of thirty years I see the details of that memorable march with a panoramic distinctness that annihilates time and space. Almost forgotten forms and faces crowd around me. Old friendships are renewed and experiences duplicated. Again I see the light that gleamed in J. C. Johnson's eyes as he listened to the recital of Mr. White's story of the massacre. Again I tread the snowy trail, plunge through the swollen creeks or bivouac on the bleak prairie. And again I pay the silent tribute of a tear to the silent dead.

From notes hastily taken on the march I compiled an account of "The Expedition to Spirit Lake," which was published in *The Hamilton Freeman*, in August, 1857, and although that account is necessarily imperfect it may serve to indicate to the citizens of the flourishing Webster City of today what it meant to be a pioneer thirty years ago.

I understand that my old friend, W. K. Laughlin, to whom I am indebted for many of the most valuable facts in that narrative—will be with you, and will, no doubt, be able to supply any of its deficiencies.

In behalf of my comrades permit me (through you) to thank the generous citizens of Hamilton county for this token of appreciation of our humble efforts to be equal to *our duty*. While claiming no merit for ourselves, we confess to a feeling of gratefulness that our dead comrades will not have died in vain. I regret that I cannot be present at the contemplated ceremonies, but desire to say a few words to the survivors who may be present:

Comrades, I greet you! From the mountains in Pennsylvania to the prairies of Iowa I stretch my hand to clasp yours. Although four years' service in the "War of the Rebellion" may have given some of us a wider experience and riper knowledge, yet our "first campaign" will never lose its thrilling interest, and the trip to Spirit Lake will form the nucleus, around which will cluster, some sad, yet many happy memories during our declining years. As in the past, so let us continue to do what we can and leave the world better than we found it.

So shall our lives, serene at eve'n,  
Be nourished by the dews of heaven,  
Our duty done, our heads shall rest  
Soft pillowed on kind Nature's breast.

Cordially and fraternally yours,

H. HOOVER.

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