

The Spirit Lake Expedition

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ANNALS OF IOWA.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT.

THE SPIRIT LAKE EXPEDITION.

We have surrendered the larger portion of space in this number of *THE ANNALS* to the publication of the narratives of men who were connected with that most thrilling episode in the early history of northwestern Iowa. This is done with the purpose of saving all accessible details of the massacre, the organization of the Expedition, and of the weary march, suffering and losses consequent upon it. Another purpose will be subserved—that of doing justice, as far as practicable at this late day, to the memories of those who participated in it, and especially of those who in a large degree were responsible for its management. Several of the officers and privates have given us their best recollections of the affair, and it is in our judgment most fitting that these should be gathered together in these pages where they will be preserved to future times. Still further, we have secured excellent portraits of many of the actors in the Expedition. Those of Maj. William Williams and W. E. Burkholder may be found in Vol II, pp. 146 and 157 of this periodical. It has been the hope of the editor that Vols. I, II, III, of this 3d series of *THE ANNALS*, should contain full details of the Expedition, though some papers may be left over for publication hereafter. The late Gov. Cyrus C. Carpenter contributed to Vol. II (pp. 146-60,) a sketch of Maj. Williams, with incidental mention of William E. Burkholder, which is not only very readable, but possesses great historic value. The frontispiece of this number is a fine portrait of Mr. Carpenter from a photograph taken not long after the Expedition and may fairly be considered to represent him at that time. We have two others which will be presented in some future number.

So far as additional materials of this history are concerned, we may mention the following to which reference can be made:

"History of the Spirit Lake Massacre," by Mrs. Abbie Gardner Sharp, Des Moines, 1885.

Articles by Sergeant Harry Hoover and Jareb Palmer, in *The Hamilton Freeman*, of Webster City, Iowa, in July and August, 1857. Mr. Hoover's article is especially valuable. He was an active and intelligent young man, and usefully connected with the Expedition from its inception until its close. It may also be added that *The Freeman* of that year contained many shorter articles relating to those matters.

Files of *The Fort Dodge Sentinel* in 1857-8, *The Northwest*, *The Messenger*, and *The Spirit Lake Beacon*, in later years, have preserved many items and facts relating to the Massacre and the Expedition.

Hon. Rodney A. Smith of Okoboji has written a history of Dickinson county, which will doubtless be published during the coming year. He was a pioneer settler and a soldier in the Expedition, and therefore wrote of things he saw and in which he bore a part. We have read some of the advance sheets and we believe it promises to be a valuable work.

In 1894-5 the State erected a monument at Lake Okoboji, where the Massacre began. The inscriptions on this monument contain what has been characterized as "almost a history" of the whole affair. These are copied in an article in this 3d series of THE ANNALS, Vol. II, pp. 69-73.

Gov. James W. Grimes wrote letters to our U. S. Senators and to the authorities at Washington some time before the outbreak of hostilities, asking that the General Government take immediate steps for the protection of our exposed frontiers. Little or no attention was paid to his reiterated requests, and so, when the Indians resorted to hostilities, our Iowa border was wholly without protection. (See ANNALS, Vol. II, pp. 627-30, and Vol. III, pp. 135-37.) Had the earnest appeals of Gov. Grimes been heeded, the Spirit Lake Massacre would not have occurred. What made this neglect appear more stupidly and wickedly cruel was the fact

that in those days the catching of runaway negroes, under the infamous fugitive slave law, was rife in the land, and detachments of the federal army, or vessels of the U. S. Navy, could be readily secured to return a slave to his master. Henry Wilson's "Rise and Fall of the Slave Power," and the "Life of Anthony Burns," fully confirm these statements.

"The Tragedy at Minnewaukon" is the title of the concluding article in "John Brown among the Quakers and Other Sketches," a neat little volume by Hon. Irving B. Richman, of Muscatine (Des Moines, 1895), which may be found in most Iowa libraries. This is a clearly written and most interesting history of the massacre and the causes which led to it, including an account of the captivity of Miss Abbie Gardner, the present Mrs. Sharp, who was so largely instrumental in securing the erection of the beautiful monument at Lake Okoboji.

The Midland Monthly (Des Moines, Iowa), Vol. IV, contains two valuable illustrated articles on the Massacre and the Expedition. One of these was by Ex Gov. C. C. Carpenter, pp. 17-31; the other by Mrs. Abbie Gardner Sharp, pp. 32-39.

AUTOGRAPHS OF JULIEN DUBUQUE.

There is not in all probability a scrap of the handwriting of this old miner and Indian trader within the limits of this State, notwithstanding he left his name so prominently identified with our early settlements. It has been believed by those who have thought upon the subject that the papers of the Chouteau family of St. Louis would be found to contain many letters or other business papers in Dubuque's handwriting, and historical collectors have been looking forward to the proposed division of those documents among the northwestern states, in the belief that much valuable information would be brought to light. Letters by this "first white man who lived in what is now the State of Iowa," would be both interesting and valuable. Several weeks ago the Editor of THE ANNALS called upon Colonel Pierre

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