

The Battle of Athens, MO.

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citizens of Center Point, erected a fine granite monument to his memory.

For the information contained in the above notes we are indebted to the records of the U. S. Pension Bureau and the researches of the Iowa Daughters of the American Revolution.

In addition to the above, a soldier who had fought on the side of the British, died and was buried at Burlington in the autumn of 1833. His name was Ross, but his given name or names are no longer known with certainty. Neither can the spot where he was buried be identified. "His grave," writes the Rev. Dr. William Salter, "is believed to have been in the old cemetery, (on ground given for that purpose by Major Jeremiah Smith, the first merchant here,) now occupied by the Burlington Institute and High School and many dwellings." Dr. William R. Ross, the first postmaster of Burlington, and one of its earliest merchants, was his son. The aged man had previously lived in Lexington, Kentucky. He passed away a few months after reaching Burlington, and "was the first white person buried in that section of the New Purchase."

THE BATTLE OF ATHENS, MO.

Athens is a post village of Clarke county, Mo., on the west side of the Des Moines river, some twenty miles northwest of Keokuk. Croton station, Iowa, on the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific railway, is on the east side of the Des Moines river, about half a mile from Athens. "The battle of Athens" was an affair which occurred at that place August 4, 1861. Considered by itself alone, the event was altogether unimportant, but when it is remembered that it occurred so near the outbreak of the civil war, and that it resulted in the complete discomfiture of the Confederate forces which had started out with the intention of invading Iowa, its results were highly important. The population of southern Iowa was altogether peaceable and quiet, while there were hundreds, if not thousands, of Missourians who were ready at a moment's notice to engage in a raid into our State. In the leading article in today's ANNALS, Gen. Cyrus Bussey gives a clear and succinct account of the events which preceded and led up to this affair. The article becomes all the more important from the fact that he adds several letters from the correspondence between himself and the authorities of our State. At that time he held a staff appointment under Governor Kirkwood, with authority to act upon his own discretion in any emergency which might arise. How promptly and admirably he used that discretion he clearly sets forth. Until he had made himself thoroughly understood, he was censured for interference with the plans of the State and general government, and also of Col. G. M. Dodge, who was at that time organizing the Fourth Iowa Infantry at Council Bluffs. But it will be seen by the letters of Governor Kirkwood, Adjutant General Baker and Judge Caleb Baldwin, that his course was heartily endorsed. In his speech before the Crocker Brigade on the 27th of September, 1900, which was copied into THE ANNALS for January, 1901 (pp. 577-594), Gen. Dodge also makes mention of this action of Gen. Bussey.

As Gen. Bussey deals more particularly with events preceding the bat-

tle, we presume that it will now be in order for some one who participated in it to give a circumstantial account of the action itself. There was considerable apprehension during the years of the war that Iowa might be invaded from the south, and it was believed that the capital itself would, in that contingency, be placed in jeopardy. This signal defeat of the enemy went far towards discouraging them from undertaking that task again.

A VERY PROPER MOVEMENT.

Dr. J. M. Shaffer, of Keokuk, has sent us a marked copy of *The Washington (Pa.) Reporter*, of February 6, 1901, a weekly paper which, we observe, was established in 1808. The article marked is an account of the preliminary steps in the organization of the Washington County Historical Society. The ends sought to be accomplished are stated to be "collecting and preserving books, papers, records, writings and relics, local, military and otherwise, relating to the history of Western Pennsylvania, and especially of Washington county." The society was duly incorporated and made a matter of public record. The incorporators met and organized January 1, 1901—beginning their good work on the first day of the twentieth century. A constitution and by-laws were adopted and a meeting appointed for the 22d of February, "to explain to the public the purposes of the society, to induce applications for membership and to complete the society's organization." The date was deemed a most auspicious one for the purpose. In issuing the call for this meeting the president and secretary of the society submit the following by way of program:

"One hundred and twenty years have now elapsed since Washington county had its birth. He who knows its history cannot avoid a pride in being one of its native-born citizens. . . . Shall the written and other evidences of the history of the county become lost, obliterated? Scattered everywhere, in the old and forgotten files of court records, in the hands of private persons, stuck away in old boxes and in garrets and never thought of, are important papers of all kinds, as well as books, writings and relics, civil, legal and military, which illustrate that history, and ought to be preserved in some safe place where they would be accessible.

"The organization to undertake this end now has a name, and a place to live; and with the aid of all the people or as many as can be had to take an interest in its work, it has a chance to succeed and enjoy a permanent prosperity.

"While it shall give special attention to the collection and preservation of materials illustrating the history of Washington county, yet materials illustrating the history of the state and union of which it forms a part will not be regarded as foreign to its purpose.

"Any person over the age of 16 years is eligible to membership on payment of a membership fee of three dollars, and annual dues after the first year of one dollar. The age limit has been fixed at 16, to enlist the interest of the young of both sexes in the history of their county and country.

"It is the purpose of the society to hold public meetings at least once each year, and as many more as possible, at which addresses will be deliv-

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