

A Very Proper Movement

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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-

ered or carefully prepared papers read, on special subjects of local or general history; and at these meetings an effort will be made to have the attendance not only of the people generally, but especially the teachers and the advanced pupils of the public schools; for it is believed that this country of ours will be saved from impending dangers only by the education of its people, not only in the arts and sciences generally, but by a thorough knowledge of the country's history, and thereby of the principles which have given it life and vitality."

From a late number of *The Reporter* we learn that the Washington County Historical Society was successfully organized and started out upon its good work under very promising auspices. A constitution and by-laws were prepared and adopted providing for regular meetings, dues to be paid by members, the making of collections, the preparation of historical papers, etc., etc. The movement appears to have elicited a good degree of public interest, and as the community is old, populous, and long a noted educational center, there would seem to be an excellent prospect of usefulness before the new society.

There ought to be a similar society in every Iowa county, and its organization should be commenced at once and not deferred until the county is more than a hundred years old. In the case of Washington county, Pennsylvania, this long delay cannot but have resulted in the loss beyond recovery of much precious historical material. But the people turned over a new leaf with the beginning of the new century and the best results may be confidently anticipated.

During the past two months the subject of founding such a local historical society has been discussed in Boone, Scott and Lucas counties. From the standing of the parties who have interested themselves in these matters there would in each locality seem to be a good prospect of success. Wherever a public library has been established, and a building erected, a county historical society might easily be organized. The expenses could be made very moderate and much good accomplished. A volume or pamphlet should be published every year or two, thus making a permanent record of the early history of each county. Portraits of the pioneer settlers, with cuts of early buildings, can be secured at trifling expense as compared with the cost of illustrations a few years ago. Every effort of this character should meet with local encouragement. Once begun, many organizations would assuredly have long and useful lives.

• Our first territorial governor, Gen. Robert Lucas, had also been Governor of Ohio before he crossed the Mississippi. He was one of the most distinguished friends of education of his time in the West. From "A History of Education in the State of Ohio" (Columbus, O., 1876), we learn that he was made president of the first State Convention held in Ohio in the interest of public education. When he was transplanted to Iowa he began at once to use his influence for common schools, public libraries and other means of general education.

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