

**The Robert Lucas Journal of the War of 1812, During the
Campaign Under General William Hull/Executive Journal of Iowa,
1838-1841**

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reconstructed and will probably never be,—a result which will be entirely satisfactory to the fishermen.

Beginning with pioneer times, several generations of the Meek family have been engaged in large business operations at Bonaparte. Their flouring mill and woolen factory was one of the most important pioneer enterprises ever undertaken in southern Iowa. They always performed excellent work, whether in the manufacture of woolen cloths or bread-stuffs. Their customers came from long distances in northern Missouri and southern Iowa. Scarcely another business enterprise could have been of so much importance to the pioneers. Early settlers always speak of the Meeks in terms of the highest respect, paying just tributes to the importance of their mill and factory. Even the fishermen themselves no longer indulge in any expressions regarding the Meeks except those of highest commendation.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE JOURNALS OF GOVERNOR ROBERT LUCAS.

The Robert Lucas Journal of the War of 1812, During the Campaign Under General William Hull. Edited by John C. Parish, p. IX, 103. Published at Iowa City, Iowa, in 1906, by the State Historical Society of Iowa. Edition limited to 400 copies.

Executive Journal of Iowa, 1838-1841. Edited by Benjamin F. Shambaugh, Professor of Political Science in the State University of Iowa, pp. XXV, 341. Published at Iowa City, Iowa, in 1906, by the State Historical Society of Iowa.

The Historical Society at Iowa City is indeed to be congratulated upon the good fortune that has enabled it to publish these Journals of Governor Robert Lucas, and the public is under lasting obligations to Mr. Parish and Dr. Shambaugh for their labors in discovery and preparation for the press. The Journal of the War of 1812 is reprinted from Professor Shambaugh's *Journal of History and Politics*. Both volumes appear in handsome form. The binding is attractive and firm. The paper is "Old Stratford," heavy and compact, hand-made, with deckle edges and gilt tops. The type is large and clear, the lines are leaded and the margins broad. These volumes are in fact *editions de luxe* by far excelling anything heretofore put out by the Historical Society. Certainly, if it is necessary or peremptorily desirable that documentary

material be thus reproduced one must be captious or eccentric who would not prefer these fine tomes.

The Journals constitute important additions to our stock of original materials bearing upon our national and state history at critical stages. They illuminate or make possible more satisfactory explanations of events heretofore perplexing or but partially understood. More than this, they bring out in strong relief the sturdy character of Iowa's first chief magistrate, who, if we err not, has been greatly underrated alike by contemporaries and historians, because of his collisions with the territorial legislature and his stubborn adherence to his own views in his many controversies with the first lawmakers throughout his term of office as Governor.

The general, special or relative values of the two Journals cannot be easily measured and perhaps no gain would result by such estimates. To one interested in studying the nature and course of events in the "disastrous campaign" that concluded in the "general wreck of the Northwestern Army" at Detroit, "The Journal of the War of 1812" is of inestimable value. But of like value is the "Executive Journal" to the student searching for the major facts and predominant influences determining the political history of Iowa from July 17, 1838, to June 18, 1841. The Journal of Captain, Brigadier General and Private (for such he was simultaneously), Robert Lucas far excels in dramatic interest the Executive Journal of Governor Robert Lucas. In the former, although the recital is given in concise, intermittent, rough narrative, the blood begins to run faster as the story of the march proceeds and the campaign culminates in the capitulation that amazed and outraged "the Patriotic army" under General Hull: while in the latter Journal the accounts and discussions in letters, messages, memoranda and proclamations, while enlightening and important, stir one but little.

The editors tell us little or nothing of the reasons for the development of the whereabouts or the mode of discovery of these Journals and it is not idle curiosity wholly to wish for more information. What led to their discovery? Who exhumed them—the respective editors or some one of the descendants of Robert Lucas? We should naturally infer that Mr. Parish unearthed the Journal he edits and Professor Shambaugh the collection he edits. On the other hand, it is not unlikely that Mr. Parish discovered both documents. Further, were they discovered by accident while rummaging the trunks and receptacles in the attics and cellars of the owners or were they secured as a result of direct search for them? There is no reason to doubt their authenticity, nevertheless fuller information respecting such details would have been most appropriate in the explanatory data supplied by the editors.

The Journal of the War of 1812 begins April 25, 1812, in "Scioto county," Ohio, and closes under date of Sept. 4, 1812, at Portsmouth, where the writer had "safe arrived, etc." Lucas was with the Army of Detroit when Hull surrendered but he avoided transportation to prison by flight as he "had no inclination to go with such Detestable

Enemies as the British, to Quebec as a prisoner of war." The Journal is almost a daily account of his journeyings. There are but two serious breaks in the narrative, viz., from June 7 to June 13, and from July 27 to Aug. 3. The entries of the first month are generally quite brief, the notations and references in many instances making no more than four, three or two lines, and now and then one line. Thus on May 20, he notes simply but significantly "Done my duty with the army." The narrative throws interesting side-lights on many men and subjects—on methods of dealing with Indians, on the character of the western militia and volunteer soldiers, on the character of army organization, on the lack of discipline and the enervating effects of favoritism, and rivalry of local and popular leaders. It would be presumptuous perhaps to say that the assertions of this eye-witness and keenly interested officer alone warrants the conclusions that General Hull was guilty of treachery in surrendering Detroit, yet this recital of facts and first hand impressions and observations, seems to make one of three conclusions necessary: He was utterly incompetent and gave up supinely; or, he was completely befogged by misinformation or temporarily unbalanced by his perplexities; or, he was guilty of the treachery with which his compatriots charged him. "Never was there officers more Solicitous," says Lucas, "or more united than our Patriotic Colonels (and indeed the whole army) have been both of the Regulars and Volunteers, to promote the Public good, neither was there ever men of talents as they are so shamefully opposed by an imbesile or treacherous commander as they have been." This declaration of Lucas is enhanced by his habit of cautious judgment and the evidence of general freedom from rancor or self-seeking in his notes and reflections.

Three interesting letters in appendices, one by Governor Meigs referring to General Lucas, and two long letters by Lucas further describing the events incident to the surrender of Detroit; facsimiles of the first and last pages of the original Journal, maps of the routes of Lucas and of Hull's army and of the region from Detroit to Browntown and St. Malden on the Detroit river, and an index of 9 pages increase the value and usefulness of the Journal. One is curious whether the maps (pp. II, 23) are taken from the original Journal or from contemporary prints, or have been constructed by the editor from data afforded in the Journal.

This volume that Professor Shambaugh entitles "Executive Journal, 1838-1841," consists of a miscellany of copies of certificates of election, commissions, letters, memorials, messages to the legislature, oaths of office, proclamations, together with an appendix containing a "Memorandum" or schedule of legislative bills on which Governor Lucas took action. The real title of the volume from which the contents of this Journal are taken is "Copy of Ex[ec]utive Letters": a title more accurate as a description than the arbitrary designation of the editor. The latter appreciates this fact but he takes the original volume to be in effect the "Record" which the Organic Act establishing the territory directed the Secretary to keep, but which, so far as known, was not done.

Impatient because such a record was not kept by Wm. Conway, the official charged with the duty, Governor Lucas, doubtless for prudential reasons, systematically made copies of most of his important communications in his copy-book. It is with one exception the contents of his copy-book or letter-press that we have here. The messages and proclamations were in essence communications no less than the letters included. The book containing them, in the absence of the "Record" required, was, of course, a fair equivalent or substitute but it is stretching terms not a little to designate this collection as a "Journal."

Professor Shambaugh does not misrepresent the facts in his editorial preface, but one gains an impression on reading his enthusiastic expressions anent the discovery of the manuscript record that this Journal contains documentary materials hitherto entirely hidden, or unavailable—hence its value and his joy on its discovery. There is nothing in the preface to indicate that a large portion of these pages has always been available in the Journals of the Territorial Council and of the House of Representatives and in the "Messages" recently collected and published by the editor himself. This Executive Journal contains 279 pages, and approximately 150 pages of its contents are found in Volume I of the editor's edition of the Messages between pages 75 and 246 thereof. Comparison of the contents of this Journal with the documents in the Messages is not easy, because the chronological order is followed in the former and the topical order in the latter. It would have added greatly to the usefulness of the Journal if a comparative schedule showing the messages found herein that are lacking in the Messages, and *vice versa*. Besides the numerous notes acknowledging receipt of acts or resolutions transmitted to him by the Council or lower House, four messages seem lacking in this Journal that are found in the Messages. On the other hand, if my count is correct, this Journal discloses some 10 formal public communications not given in the collected messages of Lucas.

The editor's comments in the foot-notes are almost wholly confined to elucidation of verbal obscurities in the transcripts of the original copy. We are not informed whether there has been any systematic comparison of the text with other manuscripts or printed copies. In one instance at least I find slight textual differences. In the collected Messages (Vol. I, p. 175) a communication addressed to the "Legislative Assembly," dated "Dec. 20, 1839," appears in this Journal as addressed to the "House of Representatives of the Legislative Assembly" under date of "Dec. 21, 1839." Again in the former Governor Lucas is compelled to veto the act because of a "conscientious sense of duty," while in the latter he is constrained so to do by reason of a "conscious sense" of duty. Such discrepancies may be slight and unimportant, and they may be exceedingly important, depending upon the matters in controversy or doubt.

The great value of the Executive Journal lies largely in the many letters of Governor Lucas wherein we may find his statements of the facts

as he saw them and his explanations or arguments in justification of his course in the various controversies he aroused and maintained during his gubernatorial career. In his collision with the Legislature, the practical outcome for him personally was discomfiture and defeat. The opposition was successful in securing a limitation of his powers by Congress. The political revolution in the country at large that took place in 1840 enabled his opponents to enforce his retirement. The public, judging simply by the contrary drifts of public sentiment, has not unnaturally concluded that our first governor was not only wrong, but was more than firm, pig-headed. It is fallacious, of course, to depend solely upon the printed or written records in measuring the faults or merits of political conduct because so much that is vital takes place *sub rosa*, or behind the curtains and in obscure recesses of which no record is made and hence correct interpretation *ex post facto* is exceedingly difficult. But an impartial study of Governor Lucas' letters and messages must convince one that he had solid ground in law, if not in fact, for his opposition to so many of the legislative bills presented to him. These letters in his own defense seem not to have been initial communications on his part, but in each case to have been written in response to official inquiry of his superiors at Washington. There is a fine dignity, and reserve of manner in his explanations, although his arguments and rejoinders are keen and his irony cutting at times. One cannot but think of the striking similarity in points of character and conduct, in the circumstances and experiences in the careers of Robert Lucas and Arthur St. Clair, the first Governor of the Northwest Territory. Both men were Scotchmen, and made of staunch stuff; both were firm to stubbornness in any course they deliberately undertook; both were conscientious and constant in carrying out both the letter and the spirit of the laws; both quickly ran counter to the ardent, insistent populace heedless or reckless of the law's injunctions, and both were finally worsted and ousted by the belligerent partizans they offended.

Drake University.

F. I. HERRIOTT.

THE SOD-COVERED SCHOOLHOUSE.

Mr. J. W. Ellis, Secretary and Treasurer of the Maquoketa Valley Pioneer Association, Secretary and Curator of the Jackson County Historical Society, sends the following communication about the old sod-covered building, the cut of which appears on another page.

By all odds the most important building erected in the then village of Springfield, later Maquoketa, was the sod-covered log house built by J. E. Goodenow and a Mr. Gowen for a blacksmith shop some time

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