

Mrs. Lydia H. Sigourney and Iowa

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the late Judge Walter L. Smith said he once made to Colonel Roosevelt on the occasion of a similar dedication, namely, "If this deserves a dedication by you, Iowa should have 99 dedications by presidents annually, forever."

MRS. LYDIA H. SIGOURNEY AND IOWA

In the article on Thomas Gregg, published in this number of the *ANNALS*, there appears a letter from Mrs. Lydia H. Sigourney to Mr. Gregg, which leads to the knowledge that the noted authoress was greatly interested in the West, and that she was very popular in Iowa. It seems that a copy of Mr. Gregg's paper, the *Western Advertiser and Herald of the Upper Mississippi*, containing an account of the burial of an Indian girl at Montrose came to Mrs. Sigourney's attention, which caused her to write the poem, "Indian Girl's Burial." From "Pocahontas, and Other Poems," by Mrs. L. H. Sigourney, published by Robert Tyas, London, 1844, page 161, we quote as follows:

INDIAN GIRL'S BURIAL.

"In the vicinity of Montrose, Wisconsin Territory, the only daughter of an Indian woman of the Sac tribe, died of lingering consumption, at the age of eighteen. A few of her own race, and a few of the pale-faces were at the grave, but none wept, save the poor mother." *Herald of the Upper Mississippi*.

A voice upon the prairies
 A cry of woman's woe,
 That mingled with the autumn blast
 All fitfully and low;
 It is a mother's wailing;
 Hath earth another tone
 Like that with which a mother mourns
 Her lost, her only one?

Pale faces gather round her,
 They mark'd the storm-wind high
 That roars and wrecks the tossing soul,
 But their cold, blue eyes are dry,
 Pale faces gaze upon her,
 As the wild winds caught her moan,
 But she was an Indian mother,
 So she wept her tears alone.

Long o'er that wasted idol,
 She watch'd, and toil'd, and pray'd,
 Though every dreary dawn reveal'd
 Some ravage Death had made,
 Till the fleshless sinews started,
 And hope no opiate gave,
 And hoarse, and hollow grew her voice,
 An echo from the grave.

She was a gentle creature,
 Of raven eye and tress,
 And dove-like were the tones that breath'd
 Her bosom's tenderness,
 Save when some quick emotion,
 The warm blood strongly sent,
 To revel in her olive-cheek
 So richly eloquent.

I said Consumption smote her,
 And the healer's art was vain,
 But she was an Indian maiden,
 So none deplor'd her pain;
 None, save that widow'd mother,
 Who now by her open tomb,
 Is writhing like the smitten wretch
 Whom Judgment marks for doom.

Was! that lowly cabin,
 That bed beside the wall,
 That seat beneath the mantling vine,
 They're lone and empty all.
 What hand shall pluck the tall, green corn
 That ripeneth on the plain?
 Since she for whom the board was spread
 Must ne'er return again.

Rest, rest, thou Indian maiden,
 Nor let thy mourning shade
 Grieve that those pale-brow'd ones with scorn
 Thy burial rite survey'd;
 There's many a king whose funeral
 A black-rob'd realm shall see,
 For whom no tear of grief is shed
 Like that which falls for thee.

Yea, rest thee, forest maiden,
 Beneath thy native tree;
 The proud may boast their little day

Then sink to dust like they,
 But there's many a one whose monument
 With nodding plumes may be,
 Whose nature nor affection mourns
 As soon they mourn for they.

One of the evidences of Mrs. Sigourney's popularity in the West and particularly in Iowa is that one of our fine old county seat towns was named in her honor. The facts given below concerning the naming of Sigourney are gleaned from the "History of Keokuk County, Iowa," published by the Union Historical Company, Des Moines, 1880.

Soon after Keokuk County was created a commission was appointed to locate the county seat. It consisted of Dr. George H. Stone, a practicing physician of Washington, Washington County, John A. Stewart, a farmer of the north part of Washington County, and Samuel Shuffleton, a lawyer of Fairfield. While Mr. Shuffleton did not concur, Dr. Stone and Mr. Stewart joined in selecting the northeast quarter of section two, township seventy-five north, range twelve west, and according to their report made May 19, 1844, "designated the same as the seat of justice for Keokuk County, and have called the same Sigourney." It is said that while Mr. Stewart concurred, yet Dr. Stone actually selected the location and the name. It is said he was a great admirer of Mrs. Sigourney's writings.

It is also stated in the county history that Mrs. Sigourney "showed her appreciation of the compliment at one time by providing for the planting of the trees which now adorn the Court House yard."

As a contribution to this subject we append the following letter recently received from Miss Helen M. Lee, assistant librarian of the State Library, Des Moines:

Mr. E. R. Harton,

Curator Historical Department

My dear Mr. Harton:

Apropos of the recent conversation relating to bits of early Iowa history with which I became familiar in my childhood from hearing them discussed in my home by my parents and their friends, there is one little incident connected with the early history of the town of Sigourney which I well remember hearing my mother relate. My parents, James and Maria Louisa Brown Lee, lived in Sigourney for a few years in the late 'fifties, and my mother learned, upon inquiry, that the place had been named, as she had already surmised, for the poetess, Lydia Howard

Sigourney. She also learned that the poetess had never been apprised of this fact. In taking the matter over with some friends I was convinced that it was fitting that Mrs. Sigourney be informed, as it would doubtless be a matter of some interest to her. Accordingly a letter was written, by my mother I believe, to Mrs. Sigourney, acquainting her with the fact that a town away out in Iowa had been named in her honor. In due time a reply to the letter was received expressing Mrs. Sigourney's appreciation of the compliment which had been paid to her, and enclosing fifty dollars with which to defray the expense of printing slide trees about the little town.

Yours truly,

HENRY M. LEE

THE BOSTON CHRONICLE, 1768

Among the most precious files of old newspapers in the Historical Department is Volume I of the *Boston Chronicle*, extending from January 1, 1768, to December 26, of the same year. It is most interesting, showing the contrasts between newspapers then and now; and revealing much of the social and economic conditions of the people a century and a half ago.

Boston in 1768 was a city of 20,000 people. It had been sixty-four years since Boston had its first newspaper, the *Boston News Letter*. In 1768, the time of the founding of the *Chronicle*, the city had two other papers, the *News Letter* and the *Gazette*. The *Gazette*, especially, was the organ of the Whigs. Its office was the resort of the leading spirits of the day, Otis, the Adamses, the Warrens, and the Quineys. The *Chronicle* occupied a different position. Its publishers were Messrs. Mein and Fleming. They evidently took a very conservative position. It is charged that Mr. Mein greatly insulted the Whigs, ridiculing their vanity and Puritanism, endeavoring in that way to weaken the influence of their leaders with the masses. After a year or two Mein was practically driven from Boston, returning to England, from whence he had come five years before, and Fleming soon followed. They had been assisted by Joseph Green, a wit, and Samuel Waterhouse, an official in the customhouse. But in 1770, after a little over two years of precarious existence, the *Chronicle* passed into oblivion. The closing statement of its publishers says, "The Printers of the *Boston Chronicle* return thanks to the

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