

In Honor of Iowa Soldiers

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IN HONOR OF IOWA SOLDIERS

A stately and beautiful monument in the Capital park, erected in honor of the soldiers and sailors of Iowa in the Civil war for the preservation of the American union, attests the wholesome regard of Iowa people for the loyalty and sacrifices of the defenders of the flag. The monument faces the worthy state capitol in which the business affairs of the state are conducted. It was erected by the state in response to a spontaneous urge from the survivors of the war, and was completed nearly fifty years ago. A group of able men and women had collaborated in planning, locating and erecting this memorial. The corner stone was laid with an elaborate ceremony and a notable address. Since no formal dedication had ever been made, the surviving members of the Iowa department of the Grand Army of the Republic decided that such dedication might be properly made now, on an occasion that probably will be the last State Encampment of their organization.

The event was the 71st Annual Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, Iowa department. There were still living seven of the members. Two only could attend—John M. Gudgel, department commander, and David Sisk, assistant adjutant general.

A brief program had been arranged for the encampment, at the monument, June 7, 1945. The two survivors were present, also representatives of the various auxiliaries. Col. Ralph A. Lancaster presided and there was invocation by the Rev. E. A. Elliott. The East High junior boys quartette sang patriotic songs and the National Fife and Drum corps repeated old army music.

John M. Rankin, attorney general, welcomed the surviving soldiers and others to the occasion and paid tribute to the Iowa soldiers of 1861-5. Helen J. Tadewald, of Muscatine, department president of the Woman's Relief corps, spoke for that organization and laid a wreath

upon the monument. W. T. Alstrand, of Waterloo, department commander of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil war, paid tribute to the soldiers by reading the beautiful words of President McKinley. By request of the G. A. R., Ora Williams, curator of the State Department of History and Archives, gave a brief history of the building of the monument. After the ceremonies at the monument, a dinner was served to the G. A. R. and others under the direction of Miss Amy Noll, who is secretary in charge of the state G. A. R. memorial rooms in the capitol.

The history of the monument as given by Mr. Williams in his address is as follows:

"THE BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE"

Of the forty-eight stars on the flag that today waves salute to the Iowa soldiers and sailors monument, one very near the center of the constellation, stands for Iowa, the twenty-ninth state, first free state of the Louisiana Purchase.

There were only thirty-three stars on the flag at the time thousands of Iowa men volunteered for its defense when it had been fired upon by enemies. They went forth with a vow that not one star should ever be erased. This monument is a recognition that they made good. They celebrated their V-day with a grand parade up Pennsylvania avenue, proudly holding aloft a flag of thirty-six stars.

On one side of the pedestal are the words: "The Bravest of the Brave." That was the tribute of their commanding officer to Iowa men who fired the unfit muskets with hands still calloused by the plows and axes.

Before their task had been finished, nearly 80,000 men had enlisted from a state only fifteen years old. Perhaps a majority of these were still active in civil life when twenty-two years after Appomattox, their Grand Army of the Republic initiated the movement for this monument in 1887.

The Twenty-second General Assembly, in 1888, timidly approached the subject by authorizing purchase of a site for a monument. The next one approved. The Twenty-fourth General Assembly gave the go ahead signal.

The commission took over the site of the old temporary state capitol, which had been burned, after thirty years of usefulness, and added some adjoining land. Even then there was lack of agreement, and the commission was directed to report "whether

a monument, a memorial arch, a memorial hall, or a memorial hall and monument combined" would best honor those who "served in the War of the Rebellion."

It was a time of profound peace. It was time of great material prosperity and advancement. The nation was even then garnering its ponderous might for a far distant V-day not then dreamed of. Iowa was breaking the last prairie sod for the fields that would one day help to feed the whole world.

Rich as was the State of Iowa even then, its wise men were reluctant to use a dollar to do honor to the heroes who helped save their nation from dissolution. Then, as ever since, Iowa has been skimpy about the preservation of the history of her people and the achievements of her courageous men. Also, there was the never-ending jealousy directed at the capital city, and the petty fear that too much will be done for the state capital.

COST MET FROM FEDERAL REFUNDS

The money problem was solved by providing that the memorial to be erected should be paid for out of money received from the general government in refund of advancements made at the beginning of the war, for equipment of the Iowa regiments. The refund was secured and \$150,000 used for this monument.

The design adopted was after the plans of Harriet A. Ketcham, an Iowa woman of high artistic ability, who won in competition with forty-seven other designers. She did not live to see the work completed, and Carl Rohl-Smith, a Danish sculptor of much experience, finished the work.

The main shaft is of granite and the impressive figure of "Victory" rises to a height of 135 feet. The sculptured figures and reliefs are in bronze.

The allegorical figure "Iowa" represents the state as a vigorous young mother offering nourishment to her children. It suggests the abounding plenty of the state.

"History" is symbolized by another group with a kindly teacher, turning the pages of history for the enlightenment of a boy—a hint at the tremendous importance of the wise guidance of experience in world affairs.

There is a fine bas-relief showing the Battle of Donelson which inspired the words "bravest of the brave", and another depicting the return home and the welcome of grateful Iowa people.

Four fine equestrian statues represent four distinguished Iowa commanders, and four other figures depict the infantry, the cavalry, and artillery, and the navy.

On the sides of this fine memorial are shown the faces, true to life, of thirty-five representative Iowa soldiers and sailors, on large bronze plaques—officers and privates, lawyers and farmers,

old men and boys, they who became governors, statesmen, judges, builders, workers all.

The cornerstone was laid with appropriate ceremonies in September, 1894, with a notable address by Senator James Harlan and the work was completed two years later. It is a majestic monument, with many elements of beauty, certainly well adapted to serve for all time as a reminder of the service of Iowa men in one of the greatest of civil wars.

DEDICATION AWAITED LATE DATE

Perhaps it should have been formally dedicated fifty years ago when there were still many thousands of the men living for whom it was built. But no words could have added to the glory of the men, nor can any words now bring into stronger relief the deeds here commemorated.

There was excuse, if not reason, for the delay in this ceremony until a bare half dozen of the survivors may know. These Iowa men who fought in 1861-5 were volunteers. They clamored for enlistment even before war was declared. They literally sprang to the defense of their flag. They crowded into the camps, took steamboats down the river, and waited neither for training, proper clothing, nor good guns. First enlistments were for only 90 days. Iowa boys were sacrificed within that period. The first regiment fought a bloody battle after the term of enlistment had expired.

They came home holding their heads high. I have recollection of a thin line in faded blue trudging along a dusty stage road—every man a prince of the realm returning to his patrimony. They knew what they had been fighting for. They approved the inscription on this monument:

“Iowa’s tribute to the courage, patriotism and distinguished service of all her soldiers and sailors who fought in the War of the Rebellion.”

They looked with pride upon the flag that still had its 36 stars and several more. Some of them had long memories. They knew of the little stone canopy on a southern hillside with the inscription “Providence Spring.” They remembered how the water gushed forth at that place to slake the thirst of the suffering prisoners of war. They remembered that of the 50,000 comrades penned up there, nearly 13,000 perished from inexcusable cruelty, and they knew that more than 200 from Iowa were lost in the death hole of Andersonville.

The returning veterans did not learn any art on the march from Atlanta to the sea; but some there were who criticized the artistry of this monument. They said the Victory wasn’t tilted right, that the Iowa was immodest and the History too classical. They

quibbled over details. Some of them said that a better location might have been secured for the monument, which was true. Some regiments were represented and others were not. The veterans wanted to know why. There were faces of living soldiers on the monument. Why one and not another? Effort was made to detect political favor in the selection of those to be represented.

The just pride and stalwart independence of these survivors, their courage and fine spirit, were the very traits that made it difficult for them to overlook details and see only the majestic beauty of this memorial. The faces shown on the plaques were there not because of any desire to honor these individuals as such, but because they were typical Iowa soldiers and sailors.

THE REPUBLIC PRESERVED

This monument is in commemoration of a great event in American history, yes, in world history, and that event was the settlement for all time that a republic that is a federation of sovereign states, has the right and the duty and the power of self-preservation.

In two places on this monument there is reference to the "War of the Rebellion." To the Iowa soldiers it was just that.

They didn't lose a star. Three were added as they fought. On their V-day, now nearly eighty years ago, they realized the truth that—

"Right is right since God is God,
And right the day has won."

To these men from the brown fields and green valleys of the first free state of the Louisiana purchase, the first statehood fruit of the Missouri compromise, their soldiering had not been in a negative war; but in a very positive and aggressive way they had gone forth to make good on the principle of the Declaration of Independence, as stated by their war leader, that "gave liberty not alone to the people of this country but hope to all the world for all future time."

They had returned to their cottages with renewed faith in the world's last and greatest experiment in democracy, and this memorial was intended to perpetuate that faith. They had won their crusade for the right of men to govern themselves; not some men, but all men; not for a brief time, but for all time.

The men in blue, and the men in gray, made history. It is for us not to forget. History has a way of repeating. It is true now as of old that the feet of wise men can best be guided by the lamp of experience.

Those who know their own history are armed to resist wrong. This monument will remain as an everlasting reminder that our ancestors made good on their pledge to freedom and independence.

THE IOWA MONUMENT

The Iowa soldiers and sailors monument is a tall granite shaft rising from an elaborate pedestal and base, upon which are the following inscriptions:

NORTH

Iowa—Her affections, like the rivers of her borders, flow to an inseparable union.

Iowa's tribute to the courage, patriotism and distinguished service of all her soldiers and sailors who fought in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865.

EAST

The bravest of the brave—Major-General Halleck, Feb. 19, 1862.

SOUTH

The patriotic work of Iowa women during the War of the Rebellion unsurpassed in every excellence.

Designed by Harriet Ketcham, of Mount Pleasant, Iowa, located and erected by Act of the Twenty-fourth General Assembly, approved April 7, 1892.

WEST

Right is right since God is God,
And right the day has won.

Upon the commission, in charge of erection there were at various times the following persons: Governors William Larrabee, Francis M. Drake, Horace Boies and Frank D. Jackson; also Ex-Gov. Samuel J. Kirkwood, and James Harlan, George G. Wright, Edward Johnstone, D. N. Richardson, E. Townsend, L. E. Mitchell, H. H. Trimble, Cora C. Weed, C. H. Gatch and J. F. Merry.

The crowning figure of the monument is symbolic of Victory. On one side is a group representing History and on another a mother representing Iowa. There is a coat of arms of Iowa. A bas-relief shows the great battle of Donelson, and another shows a group of Iowa people welcoming return from the Civil war, and on this is

represented a large number of well known Iowa persons. There are four equestrian statues showing Gen. Grenville M. Dodge, Gen. John M. Corse, Gen. M. M. Crocker and Gen. Samuel R. Curtis. There are four life-size representations of Iowa men, namely: Infantryman, Shelby Norman; sailor, Ensign W. H. C. Michael; artilleryman, Capt. H. H. Griffiths; cavalryman, Lieut. James Horton.

Upon the monument there is a series of plaques showing the faces of Iowa soldiers and sailors as follows: W. W. Belknap, Ed Hatch, E. F. Winslow, J. B. Weaver, D. B. Henderson, N. W. Mills, J. C. Parrott, R. P. Clarkson, J. B. Sample, S. A. Rice, W. T. Shaw, C. H. Smith, T. S. Wright, J. R. Reed, W. H. Merritt, J. F. Hartman, C. L. Matthias, Wm. Vandever, Samuel Duffin, F. M. Drake, C. A. Stanton, E. C. Haynes, G. A. Stone, John Scott, J. A. Williamson, John W. Noble, A. H. Sanders, J. M. Hedrick, J. L. Geddes, S. M. McFarland, W. H. Kinsman, S. G. Hill, J. B. Dorr, D. S. Wilson, and Chas. Foster.

At the time of the enlargement of the Capital park, plans were made for removal of the monument to a more sightly place on the plaza east of the capitol. The commission that built the monument made a strong effort to secure a different location, but the General Assembly had fixed the original location of a site partly on ground formerly used for the temporary capitol, and there it has been allowed to remain.

EARLY MONEY TROUBLES

The *Milwaukee Sentinel* cautions immigrants from the east to bring their own bank notes along with them, and not exchange them with the brokers for western funds. New York and New England money is as good as gold throughout the west—10 or 20 per cent better than notes of chartered Banks of that region, and not to be compared with "Wildcat." Our friends will govern themselves accordingly.—*New Yorker*, New York, June 16, 1838.

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