

Polk County's Semi-Centennial

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ANNALS OF IOWA.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT.

POLK COUNTY'S SEMI-CENTENNIAL.

On the 8th day of July, 1896, the capital county of Iowa was fifty years old. This event was elaborately and fittingly celebrated in the city of Des Moines, the programme occupying the entire day. There was a salute of fifty guns at daybreak, fired by the artillery squad from the local companies of the National Guard; a gathering of thousands of people—among whom the early pioneers of Polk and adjoining counties were especially prominent and honored; parades in the streets and on the river; and addresses, historical and eloquent, by four gentlemen, three of whom were born in Des Moines. A delegation of Tama county Indians (Musquakes) were present during the day, dressed in the gaudy costume of the tribe. They marched in the procession, gave several exhibitions, including their war dance, and as primeval inhabitants, uniting the present with the far past, were objects of much interest. The day was one of great delight to the pioneers, who met old friends for the first time in many years, exchanging hearty congratulations, and narrating experiences of other days. The industrious and enterprising journalists of the city gathered up a world of facts connected with or illustrating the progress and development of the town and county, presenting an interesting detail

of personal memoranda, and of facts and events, which our limited space prevents any attempt to follow. Suffice it to say, that all this valuable historical matter was carefully preserved in the State Historical Department, in convenient shape for reference or use hereafter. The capital city and county did themselves great credit in thus observing the close of the first half century of their existence.

THE INDIAN CHIEF WAPELLO.

McKenney and Hall's great work on the Indian Tribes of North America contains a fine portrait—a lithograph colored by hand—of this distinguished Musquakee Chief, in all the glory of feathers, bead work and red and yellow paint. We have attempted its reproduction by the half-tone process, but not with as good a result as we had hoped. No portrait of this estimable, peace-loving Indian, whose name was given by law to one of our richest and most populous counties, has ever before been published in our State. A better one may some day appear—when some artist paints his portrait in oil—but this presents a good representation of his dress and general appearance.

According to the late Hon. A. R. Fulton's "Red Men of Iowa," (p. 252), Wapello was born at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, in 1787. The name signifies prince or chief. At the time of the erection of Fort Armstrong, Rock Island, he is said to have ruled over one of the principal Indian villages in that vicinity. In 1829 he removed to Muscatine Slough on the west side of the Mississippi, and afterward to a point in the vicinity of the present city of Ottumwa, near which he died, March 15, 1842. Judge

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