

Memorial Tablet Presented to State

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In the sunny southland, in his native Virginia, is a little mound, and within it are the mortal remains of Tom Drummond, but fifty years have not dimmed the memories of those who knew him as an honorable citizen and a valiant soldier. Above that mound is a simple slab of marble, but that little stone is the noblest monument ever erected to man, because it marks the resting place of a Union soldier who fell fighting for the Union cause. We stand today under the lofty dome of another monument which will, for ages to come, commemorate the splendid services which Drummond rendered to mankind—a monument nobler than the grandest mausoleum that ever stood beside the Appian Way, or reared its bulky form along the banks of the Nile.

MEMORIAL TABLET PRESENTED TO STATE

By CATO SELLS

A large number of those participating in this memorial service were personally associated with, or have inherited a veneration for him whom we honor today.

The space of half a century but bridges the time, and transmits the story from parents, who were a part of the primitive conditions of the fifties to the sons and daughters of the new generation now enjoying the civilization for which they labored, and of which they dreamed.

The battle they fought was to overcome the undeveloped wilderness and plant the seed of development for those who were to come after them. The unbroken prairie of the "south slope" and the massive oak along the Cedar, yielded alike to the plow and the axe of those sturdy pioneers. A county government was organized, the county seat was established, and with their coming men of brain, brawn and stalwart manhood, our fathers, contended in business, professional and political life, not alone for material gain, but in shaping the future of a county, that was destined to be an important factor in determining the policies of the state and nation.

A very few of the active participants of the formative period of Benton county have survived the century mile post, and grace this occasion with their presence; many have fallen as the years have multiplied; and others passed over the river before they had reached the zenith of their power, or accomplished their possibilities.

Among those whose accomplishments were many, but whose career was all too short, whose life was devoted to his country and the cause of his countrymen, was Captain Thomas Drummond. In the legislature of 1858 this young man of rare talent exhibited the courage and the ability to do things. He had in some way conceived the idea that the state had a duty to perform in the education of the unfortunate blind. Early in that session he introduced a bill creating the College for the Blind, which after a hard fight was enacted into law and is known as Chapter 125 of the laws of the Seventh General Assembly. To him the state is indebted, in large part, for the magnificent building in which we are now gathered, and for an educational institution that ranks among the very best of its kind in the country. I venture to say that many a young man and young woman has graduated from this institution, well prepared to successfully take part in the great battle of life, who has never once given a thought or heard the name of Thomas Drummond.

As a citizen, a legislator and a soldier, we owe him a debt of gratitude. To the end that his name may be perpetuated and remembered by the generations yet unborn, and especially by that part of our population which may be privileged to pursue their educational work at this great institution, the citizens of this community have purchased, and today, Governor Cummins, in behalf of the citizens of Vinton and Benton county, I have the honor to present to the state of Iowa this appropriately engraved bronze mural tablet, as a memorial to Captain Thomas Drummond, whose memory we all love for what he did for us, for the state and for our country.

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