

Annals Addenda ...

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Annals Addenda . . .

CAPTAIN ALLEN'S EXPLORATIONS

An honored visitor in Des Moines several times following the Civil War was Gen. William T. Sherman, who then had two brothers residing here. One was Lampson P. Sherman, who established the *Des Moines Gazette*, the first Whig newspaper, and Major Hoyt Sherman, who had been a paymaster in the Union army, and later served as president of the Equitable Life Insurance Company of Iowa.

Sherman's memoirs contain a graphic account of his visit to the California gold fields in 1848-49, when he was a staff lieutenant in the regular army under General Kearney. The headquarters were at Monterey for upper California, which then was still a Mexican province, in the hands of the United States by conquest, though not yet a part of it, as the war was yet progressing in Mexico.

This was a most interesting epoch, especially to Iowa people, as it was Capt. James Allen, who in 1843 had established Fort Des Moines, in 1846 at Kaneshville, now Council Bluffs, organized a battalion of Mormon troops, consisting of five companies, and proceeded over the trail leading to California, most of whom found their way back to Salt Lake, Utah, after being discharged from army service in 1847. Captain Allen died on the march to the west.

It was at Mormon Island, fifteen miles below the place of original discovery of gold, that the richest deposit was found. As soon as the fame of the gold discovery spread, hundreds of the Mormons joined the others in digging for the treasure and prospecting in the "placers."

Captain Allen's unfortunate death deprived him of the exciting experiences of the "gold days" on the coast, but he had enjoyed the highlights of discovery and ad-

venture as an early explorer of the Northwest country. As lieutenant and captain of the First Regiment of Dragoons, U. S. army, he is credited with a large share of successful explorations, including territory now northwestern Iowa, and far up both the Des Moines and the Little Sioux rivers. He was a West Point graduate and member of the class with Robert E. Lee and Joseph E. Johnston.

Assigned to duty on the western frontier, and stationed at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan territory, Allen was detached to accompany Henry R. Schoolcraft, with a small escort, to make an expedition to the Indians of the northwest. In June-August, 1832, a decade prior to his establishment of Fort Des Moines at Raccoon Forks, they traveled nearly 3,000 miles in the upper country. The fame of this expedition rests in the fact that this army officer and the scholar-explorer first gave the world an intimate knowledge of the region around and beyond the headwaters of the Mississippi.

MEN THAT HISTORY FORGOT

On the shelves of the public libraries of Iowa are many county histories. And in the book cases in private homes they are also available. While these volumes have great value and are indispensable in making historical research, they are lacking in many ways. The older volumes were written when information was not so generally obtainable or widely broadcast as now. Their natural limitations were to be expected; but in their biographical sections the apparent favoritism is lamentable and to be regretted. This can be understood and pardoned in part by reason of the lack of funds to gather material and publish such works.

The personal sketches included in their production often were obtainable only from individuals who were able to pay for the prominence given them, whether worthy of it or not, and omitting others equally or more

entitled to mention. Yet, aside from personal memoirs, family biographies and articles written by local historians, they constitute the only readily accessible source of historical data so valuable in research. Through this individual fee system these county histories were actually made possible, and form the background of record covering those early days in Iowa life, inadequate and limited though they may be in contents.

Now and then articles appear in the press of the state dealing with the lives of individual early settlers of Iowa—sturdy pioneers, dependable men of purpose and character, both strong and patient, who have been the backbone of countless Hawkeye communities, whose lives and achievements are not mentioned in any historical publication. One such recently was published in the *Sioux City Journal*, written by Park Rispalje, who presented the story of a Woodbury county pioneer that history had forgotten, in which is said:

Hundreds of unsung and unheralded pioneering heroes contributed to the greatness of Iowa. They were the task force of ambitious, liberty loving, determined, stalwart men who fashioned a wild and dreary wilderness of plains into a garden spot of America.

Such was Francis William Wright, an English emigrant, whose name was given to Wright creek in Rock township, Woodbury county. This strong pioneer was typical of the many whose names do not appear in the available county histories of the state. Such histories generally are only partial annals of the progress of early Iowa . . . The details and data of the lives of many of the pioneers who settled on the land and developed the various sections of the state are seldom recorded and are little known.

In the effort to give the rightful niche in Iowa history to these unhonored heroes, Kenneth Edward Wright has compiled a factual account of the life of his pioneering grandfather, Francis William Wright, early settler in eastern Woodbury county, as being typical of the men who had such large part in making Iowa great. This biography is now catalogued in the state's geneological library in the Department of History and Archives, at Des Moines, for record and reference.

The grandson has presented the highlights of a colorful career that probably was typical in many respects of the

early pioneer. It is a story of the emigrant coming from England to America on a sailing vessel, working first in New York, then in Wisconsin, enlistment and service in the Civil war, after discharge coming to Iowa, working near Battle Creek, then Oto, and finally purchasing forty acres of land on a creek, now bearing his name, four miles from the present site of Correctionville, his struggle for a home established, details of his long and useful life, his marriage, raising a family, and his passing in 1921.

It is a story of pioneering well worth while and superbly told. Would that our libraries and homes contained many, many more such tales of the indomitable characters that builded Iowa, and made possible its glory as a commonwealth and the people and homes that constitute its real greatness.

CENTENNIAL OF IOWA FEDERAL COURT

The first week of this month marks the centennial anniversary of the first holding of a session of the district court of the United States in and for the Northern District of Iowa, at Dubuque on January 7, 1850. That the event will be properly commemorated is attested by the following word from Clerk Lee McNeely to the ANNALS, as instructed by Judge Henry N. Graven, to-wit:

Dubuque, Iowa, October 5, 1949.

Dear Mr. English:

There is enclosed herewith copy of Order made October 3, which provides for holding a session of our court at Dubuque on January 7, 1950, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the first session of Federal Court held in what is now the Northern District of Iowa.

This is sent to you at the request of Judge Graven, and of course I am glad to furnish the copy to you.

Yours truly,

LEE MCNEELY, Clerk.

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN
DISTRICT OF IOWA—ALL DIVISIONS

Order for Session of Court Commemorating
the Holding of the First Session of Federal
Court in the Northern District of Iowa at
Dubuque, Iowa, on January 7th, 1850.

WHEREAS, the records of this Court show that on January 7th,
1850, the following Court proceedings were had in Federal Court
at Dubuque, Iowa:

“At a District Court of the United States within and for
the Northern Division of the District of Iowa—held at the
City of DuBuque on Monday the 7th day of January
A. D. 1850.

Present

Hon. J. J. Dyer, District Judge,
Stephen Whicher, District Attorney,
S. B. Shelledy, Marshall,
T. S. Parvin, Clerk,

The Marshall for the District returned into Court the
Venire Facias for Petit Jurors, who being called certain
of them, come, to wit

John Blake, Richard Plumb, H. S. Hetherington, Thomas
Hardie, Jesse M. Harrison, T. J. Chew, William Gilliam,
Sr., A. H. Miller, Joseph Dean, Thomas R. Brasher, John
Grimm, Michael O'Brien, John W. Markle, Matthias Ham,
David Haggard, Gian Kennedy, Abraham Evans, Peter S.
Lorrimer, and John J. Webb who were excused from further
attendance today.

Ordered, That H. S. Hetherington (one of the jurors) be
appointed Crier to this Court

Ordered, That the Marshall summon another juror in place
of H. S. Hetherington, appointed Crier,

Mr. Hetherington appeared and was sworn as Crier to the
Court.

On motion of Stephen Hempsted Esq. Ordered, That
James Burt and Robert H. Turner Esq. (of the County of
DuBuque) Attorneys & of the Supreme and District Courts
of the State of Iowa, be admitted as Attorneys, Counsel-
ors, Solicitors, Advocates, and Proctors of this Court,
whereupon they respectively appeared and took the oath
required of them by the Rules of Court.

Ordered that Court do now adjourn till tomorrow morning
9 o'clock.

J. J. DYER”

AND WHEREAS, the said session was the first session of Federal Court to be held in what is now the Northern District of Iowa;

AND WHEREAS, it would be most fitting to observe the centennial of the holding of said session;

AND WHEREAS, the Dubuque County Bar Association has voted to co-operate in the observance of such centennial and authorized Judge John G. Chalmers, its President, to appoint a committee to assist in arranging for such observance;

AND WHEREAS, said President has appointed the following committee for such purpose: H. C. Kenline, Chairman, Judge Milton J. Glenn, Frank A. O'Connor, Frank D. Gilloon, Sr., and M. H. Czizek;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED, that on Saturday, January 7th, 1950, at the Federal Court House at Dubuque, Iowa, a session of Court will be held commencing at 10:00 o'clock A.M. commemorating the holding of the first session of Federal Court in the Northern District of Iowa, on January 7th, 1850.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that at said session Naturalization Proceedings will be conducted and Motions heard for the admissions to the Bar of this District.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that immediately following such proceedings, a commemorative program provided for and arranged by said Committee of the Dubuque County Bar Association will be presented.

Signed in the Northern District of Iowa this 3d day of October, 1949, for entry in all Divisions.

/s/ HENRY N. GRAVEN
United States District Judge

SEAL

The above is a true copy.

ATTEST: LEE MCNEELY, Clerk.

ERRATA—ANNALS OF IOWA

Vol. XXX, No. 2, p. 121—Date in first line should read: "March 4, 1922".

Vol. XXX, No. 2, p. 107—Omission occurring in the tenth line requires insertion after the word "exception", the following: "of certain counties named in the act, a new Central division, terms to be".

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