



JUDGE GEO. W. WAKEFIELD,
of Sioux City

SERGEANT CHARLES FLOYD.

BY GEORGE W. WAKEFIELD.

Charles Floyd, whose remains are buried in Iowa soil, merits the attention of Iowa people, and a place in the ANNALS of the Historical Department.

President Jefferson, upon the purchase of Louisiana in 1803, at once organized an expedition, under command of Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, for its exploration. Nine young men from Kentucky volunteered and were mustered into the service of the United States for this expedition. Charles Floyd was one of the nine, and his home was in Jefferson county, Kentucky. Little is known of him outside of his service upon this expedition. He was appointed sergeant, and in the roster of Lewis and Clark's command of January 15, 1807, his record, as copied verbatim by Dr. Elliott Coues, is as follows:

5. Charles Floyd. "deceased the 20th. of August 1804—a young man of much merit—his father, who now resides in Kentucky, is a man much respected, tho' possessed of but moderate wealth. as the son lost his life while in this service I considered his father entitled to some gratuity in consideration of his loss, and also, that the deceased being noticed in this way will be a tribute but justly due his merit."

The captains kept journals of the expedition, and under their direction, seven of the men kept journals. Sergeant Floyd was one of the men who kept a journal; and his journal was lost to the public until February 3, 1894, when it was discovered by Prof. James Davie Butler, among the manuscript collections of the Wisconsin Historical Society, at Madison. A fac simile of the signature of Charles Floyd, appearing inside of the cover of his journal, is presented herewith, by permission of the Sioux City *Journal*.

Floyd's journal gives us a glance at his mental operations, and indicates that he was a careful and accurate observer. A comparison with other published journals

Chas. Floyd Bought
at River Dubois 13th March
1804

shows that he was more careful than others in noticing the condition of their arms, and setting down the hours of embarking and tying up, the nature of the current and the state of the weather. The following extracts are selected from his journal, without reproducing the peculiarities of the original spelling, capitalization, and punctuation:

A journal commenced at river Dubois, Monday May 14, 1804. Showery day. Captain Clark set out at 3 o'clock p. m. for the western expedition. The party consisted of three sergeants and thirty-eight working hands, which manned the batteau and two perogues.

Tuesday, July 31, 1804. We lay by to see the Indians, whom we expect here to see the Captains. I am very sick and have been for some time but have recovered my health again. The Indians have not come yet. This place is called Council Bluffs.

Thursday, August 2, 1804. To-day the Indians came, whom we had expected. They fired many guns when they came in sight of us, and we answered them with the cannon. They came in about two hundred yards of us. Captains Lewis and Clark met them at shaking hands. We fired another cannon.

On the 14th of August he states that the Omaha Indians have not lived at their town since the small pox was so bad four years before, when they burned their town; and the balance of this entry is given in the fac simile of part of the last page of his journal, presented herewith through the kindness of the *Sioux City Journal*:

town and only live about it in the winter and in the
 Spring go all of them in the prairie after the Buffalo and
 do not return until the fall to meet ^{the} french traders they have
 no corn nor any thing except some times they have some corn
 and then the Ottoo nation comes and cuts it down while they are
 in the prairie ^{to}
 Wednesday August 15 Capt Clark had 10 of his men and
 my self went to the Mahas Creek ofishen and Capt 3000
 17 fish of Different kinds were men has not returned yet
 Thursday August 16 ^{the} Capt Lewis and 12 of his men went
 to the Creek ofishen Capt 709 had different kinds

The last entry is dated August 18th; and on the following day there was a council with some of the Omaha Indians, which closed with a dance, in which, as reported by Patrick Gass, Sergeant Floyd participated; and becoming overheated, and going upon guard duty shortly afterward, he lay down on a sand bar and was soon seized with a fatal illness, growing worse until his death, August 20th.

Dr. Elliott Coues, in his recent edition of the Lewis and Clark History, in a note (p. 79) gives from the original manuscript of Captain Clark the following in substance:

Sergeant Floyd is taken very bad, all at once, with a bilious colic. We attempt to relieve him without success. And yet he grows worse, and we are much alarmed at his situation. All attention to him; Sergeant Floyd much weaker and no better; as bad as he can be; no pulse, and nothing will stay a moment on his stomach or bowels; died with a great deal of composure. Before his death he said to me, "I am going away, I want you to write me a letter." We buried him on the top of the bluff, one-half mile below a small river, to which we gave his name. He was buried with the honors of war, much lamented. A cedar post with the name, "Sergeant C. Floyd, died here the 20th of August, 1804," was fixed at the head of his grave. This man at all times gave us proofs of his firmness and determined resolution to do service to his country and honor to himself. After paying all honor to our deceased brother we camped at the mouth of Floyd's river, about thirty yards wide.

The journal of Patrick Gass says:

On the 19th a council was held with these Indians, who appeared to wish to make peace with all nations. This day Sergeant Floyd became very sick and remained so all night. He was seized with a complaint somewhat like a violent colic.

Monday, 20th. Sergeant Floyd continued very ill. We embarked early and proceeded, having fair wind and fine weather, till two o'clock, when we landed for dinner. Here Sergeant Floyd died, notwithstanding every possible effort was made by the commanding officers and other persons to save his life. We went on about a mile to high prairie hills on the north side of the river, and there interred his remains in the most decent manner our circumstances would admit; we then proceeded a mile further to a small river on the same side and encamped. Our commanding officers gave it the name of Floyd's river, to perpetuate the memory of the first man who had fallen in this important expedition.

Floyd's journal shows that they passed the mouth of Boyer river July 29th, the mouth of Soldier river August

6th, the mouth of the Little Sioux river August 8th, the grave of Omaha Chief Blackbird August 11th; and that they caught fish in Omaha Creek August 15th and 16th. The other journals show the passing of the Big Sioux river on the day following the burial of Floyd.

Floyd's river was charted on Lewis' map of 1806 and still bears his name. Floyd's grave is marked upon Clark's map of 1814 and Nicollet's of 1843, and was for many years a landmark on the Missouri river. Brackenridge mentioned it in 1811. George Catlin found the cedar post intact, and made a sketch and painting of this bluff. Nicollet visited it in 1839 and says:

We stopped before night at the foot of the bluff on which is Floyd's grave; my men replaced the signal, blown down by the winds, which marks the spot and hallows the memory of the brave sergeant who died here during Lewis and Clark's expedition.

So the memory of this place was preserved by explorers and traders until the the Indian title was extinguished by treaty and the permanent settlements of the white man began.

It was well known to the early settlers of Woodbury county and often visited by them. Thus it was that M. L. Jones of Smithland, in May, 1857, while on his way home visited the grave and found the river had so cut away the bluff that the coffin was exposed. He at once sent word to Sioux City. A committee consisting of numerous citizens promptly visited the grave, when they found that the river had already robbed it of a portion of its contents. At considerable peril they secured "the skull, lower jaw, one thigh and one shin, with quite a number of smaller bones, together with relics of the coffin." The committee took charge of the remains, and "on May 28, 1857, they were re-interred with appropriate ceremonies on the same bluff, within 200 yards of where they had formerly rested," in the presence of a large concourse of people. It was

then planned to erect a monument over the grave of Sergeant Floyd; but, like many other good purposes, the plan was not carried out.

So rested in this new grave the remains of the brave sergeant and citizen soldier through the busy years during which north-western Iowa grew from an almost unbroken wild into a wide expanse of well-tilled and productive farms; and during these years, by the operation of natural laws every distinction that marked the grave had been obliterated and its exact location lost, except as it was approximately retained in the memories of old settlers who were familiar with it in the early days.

Dr. Wm. R. Smith, who died July 1, 1894, had not forgotten the proposed monument over the sergeant's grave, for in his will he made a bequest to assist in its erection. W. P. Holman, late of Sergeant Bluffs, in his life time also contemplated making a like bequest, and had joined Dr. Smith in procuring a petition to Congress for an appropriation, signed by 780 citizens of Iowa. In the spring of 1895 the public attention at Sioux City was directed to the subject, and numbers of citizens visited the bluff to identify the exact location of the grave, but without success until May 30th, when it was discovered by John H. Charles, George Murphy and C. R. Marks. They deemed it advisable to have a larger number of interested persons present before opening the grave, and on June 6, 1895, there were present at Floyd's Bluff J. C. C. Hoskins, S. T. Davis, J. D. Hoskins, D. A. Magee, George Murphy, L. C. Sanborn, H. D. Clark, A. Groninger, A. M. Holman, L. Bates, E. R. Kirk, W. L. Joy, T. J. Stone, C. J. Holman, John H. Charles, J. P. Allison, W. B. Tredway, J. L. Follett, Jr., and C. R. Marks, most of whom had been present at the reburial in 1857. J. C. C. Hoskins was chosen president and C. R. Marks secretary of this meeting, and the secretary reported the opening of the grave as follows: "No depression of the ground

was visible, but at a place on the ridge a spot was pointed out where the dirt on the surface was light or yellow, in contrast with all the surrounding black surface earth. The top was removed for a few inches and the whole outline of a grave was plainly visible. The west end was dug into to verify the location, and the original walls of the grave in the dark colored dirt were visible as the mixed yellow and black dirt was thrown out. At a few inches below the surface, at the head and foot were found pieces of oak board about a foot long, much decayed, and at about four feet below the surface the coffin appeared, very much decayed but still in form, and the top caved in when struck with the spade. The skull and lower jaw were found at this west end in a good state of preservation, and a few other bones were at that end, but the grave was not further opened as the identification was deemed complete." It was then resolved by those present to organize the "Floyd Memorial Association," and the president and secretary, with A. M. Holman, Mitchell Vincent and George W. Wakefield, were constituted an executive committee to arrange future meetings, perfect the organization and provide for a memorial meeting on August 20, 1895. The skull was then placed in the custody of the president and secretary, to be safely kept until August 20, and those who were present at the reburial in 1857, or then knew the location of the old and new grave, fourteen in number, made and signed a formal certificate stating the facts and identifying the grave so found as "the place where now lie the remains of Sergeant Charles Floyd, the first soldier of the United States who died in the service in the new territory purchased from France." The Executive Committee held five meetings, at which Mr. Hoskins resigned and John H. Charles was chosen president; arrangements for the memorial meeting and permanent organization were furthered and completed, and the following persons added to the Executive Committee: Dr. Elliott Coues, Professor James

Davie Butler, Hon. Charles Aldrich, H. G. Burt, L. Bates, D. A. Magee and F. C. Hills. The skull and lower jaw of Sergeant Floyd were placed in an earthenware urn made for the purpose by Holman Brothers, of Sergeant Bluffs, on which was the following inscription: "Sergeant Charles Floyd. Died August 20, 1804. Re-interred May 28, 1857. Memorial services August 20, 1895." The remaining bones were placed in another urn for burial, and these urns were securely sealed up.

Measurements of the bones and skull were made by Dr. Grant J. Ross, the particulars of which are as follows:

One femur, extreme length 18 inches; one tibia, length 15 inches; one fibula, length $14\frac{3}{4}$ inches; circumference of skull $21\frac{1}{2}$ inches; diameter of lower part $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches; horizontal length $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches; greatest length $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches; horizontal width $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches; bitemporal width $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches; frontal breadth $4\frac{1}{8}$ inches; height $5\frac{1}{8}$ inches; upper facial height $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches; bimalar width $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches; greatest breadth of nasal cavity $\frac{5}{8}$ inches; greatest breadth of orbit $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches; greatest width of orbit $1\frac{3}{8}$ inches; length of profile of face $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The horizontal length and width of this skull give a cephalic index of 76.66, which places it in the mesocephalic class.

The memorial meeting of August 20th, ninety-one years after the first burial, was held at the grave of 1857 on Floyd's bluff, which is situated on the south side of lot 8, in section 1, township 88 north, range 48 west.

The Sioux City and Pacific R. R. provided a special train to convey the procession to the bluff, and the meeting was largely attended. John H. Charles presided; the grave of 1857 was opened in the presence of the meeting; the remains were viewed by those present and the formal exercises were opened by an address in behalf of Sioux City by George W. Wakefield. Professor Butler was then introduced and delivered an eloquent and touching funeral oration and presented for inspection the original journal of Sergeant Floyd. Hon. George D. Perkins next spoke

on behalf of the Iowa Historical Society. The soldier's funeral exercises and honors were then given by General Hancock Post No. 22, G. A. R. of Iowa, Post Commander Eugene Rice in charge and Rev. Dr. H. D. Jenkins acting as chaplain. After this impressive ceremony Dr. Coues read an extract from Captain Clark's journal, and Dr. S. P. Yeomans, who was present at the reburial in 1857, delivered an interesting address. A number of photographs were taken, and the urns containing the remains were then deposited, the grave filled, and a large stone slab placed covering the entire grave and bearing the following inscription: "Sergeant Charles Floyd. Died August 20, 1804. Remains removed from 600 feet west and reburied at this place May 28, 1857. This stone placed August 20, 1895." The Articles of Incorporation were signed by numerous persons at the grave and in the evening resolutions were adopted and addresses delivered by Dr. Coues and Professor Butler. The Articles declare the object of the Association to be, "to commemorate the death and burial of Sergeant Charles Floyd, and the Lewis and Clark expedition, of which Sergeant Charles Floyd was a member, and for that purpose to acquire and hold necessary real estate and other property, to erect a monument," etc. All who contribute one dollar or more are members. The annual meetings are to be held August 20th, and the officers chosen for the first year are: President John H. Charles; Vice-Presidents, George W. Wakefield, Professor James D. Butler of Madison, Wis., Dr. Elliott Coues of Washington, D. C., H. G. Burt of Omaha, Neb., Mitchell Vincent of Onawa, Ia., Dr. S. P. Yeomans of Charles City, Ia., Rev. Dr. T. M. Shanefelt of Huron, S. D., Hon. Chas. Aldrich of Des Moines, Ia., W. P. Garrison of New York, Colonel W. Hancock Clark of Detroit, Mich., Hon. George D. Perkins of Sioux City, Ia., George Murphy of Sioux City, Ia., Jefferson K. Clark of New York City, Colonel

M. Lewis Clark of Louisville, Ky., Major John O'Fallon Clark of St. Louis, Mo.; Secretary, C. R. Marks; Treasurer, D. A. Magee.

So a new impetus has been given to the purpose of erecting a monument to the memory of Sergeant Floyd over his remains, and the appeal is and will be made to the people of this great State, and of the Nation, to furnish the means of accomplishing this purpose at no distant day. It is the business of the present to make history, but it is also the duty of the present to see to it that the history that has been made in the past be properly preserved and the memory of those who made it perpetuated for the future. The Association appeals to the present to perform this duty for Sergeant Charles Floyd.

THE PASSING OF THE PIONEERS.

Almost before they can realize the transition those who a few short years ago constituted the strength, sovereignty and citizenship of this goodly county, find themselves a scattered remnant among the on-surging hosts who are already upon the ground to take the place of those who fall. And while the rear guard of the receding generation are tenaciously clinging to the tenure by which they have heretofore held their places, they cannot but realize, as a melancholy fact, that their few remaining years must be spent in the midst of "a generation that knew not Joseph." Other generations may follow them who will have more in the way of luxuries, educational advantages and refinements. But there were privileges, advantages and experiences, enjoyed by the pioneers, that can never come to any succeeding generation. They had a monopoly of new country life upon the extended prairies and grand old forests of Hamilton County. Theirs was the heritage of all its primitive glories. They enjoyed many things that can never be duplicated on the same territory as long as the sun moves forward on the dial plate of civilization. But the pioneers will soon be gone. He of the snowy beard and sharp scythe is close upon their tracks.—Hon. Isaiah Doane, in *Webster City Freeman*, December 4, 1895.

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