



KEOKUK, THE SAC CHIEF

Ruler of Iowa One Hundred Years Ago

Born about 1780, near Rock River, Ill.; died June 1848, in Kansas. The above authentic picture was taken from a full length oil painting by Prof. George Upp, now in the possession of the family of Judge C. F. Davis, deceased.

ANNALS OF IOWA

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THREE FORTS DES MOINES

CELEBRATION OF THE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MILITARY POST AT DES MOINES

The Centennial anniversary of the establishment of Fort Des Moines by the United States Government on May 20, 1843, at the confluence of the Des Moines and Raccoon rivers, was enthusiastically celebrated by citizens of the Capital City on the same day and month in 1943.

From the inception of plans under the leadership of the Des Moines Pioneer Club, to the hour of the last "taps" sounded by the bugle, as the beautiful afternoon sun was sinking to the western horizon, closing the patriotic flag raising ceremonies of Abigail Adams Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution on the banks of the Des Moines river, the historic significance of the event was marked.

For two weeks previous Des Moines citizens, officials, organizations and business institutions indulged in a whole-hearted and reverent commemoration of the city's beginnings at Raccoon forks, pausing in their usual activities and vocations to make note of the achievements of the first one hundred years since Capt. James Allen here raised the American emblem of liberty and freedom. The final program was rendered upon the exact spot of the original flag raising of one hundred years ago, later most fittingly dedicated by the erection of a large granite D. A. R. marker upon which there is a bronze tablet bearing suitable historical inscription.

During the period devoted to the celebration, meetings were held by the Chamber of Commerce, Greater Des Moines Committee, City Council, Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Co-operative, East Des Moines, Conopus, Library, Cosmopolitan and other clubs, the Real Estate Board, several patriotic organizations and in the city schools. The programs were devoted to commemoration of the establishment of the fort here, treaties with the Indians, the moving of soldiers and redmen, the coming of settlers after the abandonment of the fort by the government, the beginnings of the settlement, the growth of activities and population, the incorporation of the town of Fort Des Moines and the organization of local government, courts, schools, churches and business enterprises which flourished from the first.

In the preparation for the celebration Mayor John MacVicar and Commissioners John Budd, Arthur H. Daniels, Clarence Koenigsberger and Harry Vicker gave full cooperation on behalf of the city government. The Des Moines Pioneer Club, which took the lead in the movement, has been an active organization, in Des Moines for forty-eight years. A committee consisting of its president, Vernon R. Seeburger, the secretary, Forest Huttenlocher, with John Sherman, Daniel M. Finch, Ora Williams, Craig Wright, Forrest Geneva and others arranged for the various meetings held.

Speakers were assigned by Mr. Seeburger, with help of John D. Adams, secretary of the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce, including in addition to those mentioned above, Brig. Gen. Charles H. Grahl, Iowa State Director of Selective Service, Curator Ora Williams, of the Iowa State Department of History and Archives, Senator Addison M. Parker, Judge John J. Halloran, Wm. M. McLaughlin and others, several of whom addressed many meetings which were well attended.

At the city council chamber in the municipal building on May 20, 1943, in the forenoon, Mayor John MacVicar and members of the council held a special session as a part of the patriotic anniversary program. City Solicitor

Fred T. VanLiew directed the program and spoke on the "Early History of Fort Des Moines", and Vernon R. Seeburger, president of the Pioneer Club delivered an address on "Fort Des Moines and Des Moines" tracing the settlement of the state and the occupancy of the Des Moines river valley first by the Indians and later by the settlers. The city council adopted a Centennial resolution as a part of the program commemorating the day and directed that the proceedings be spread upon the city records and printed in pamphlet form for general distribution.

INDIAN DESCENDANTS PRESENT

At the ceremonies in the city council chamber, and likewise at the D. A. R. flag staff and marker on the river front, Jonas Poweshiek and family of Altoona participated and added to the historic significance by giving Indian songs and dances, Mr. Poweshiek is a descendant of the Chief Poweshiek, who was one of the signers of the treaty at Agency by which he and his associates relinquished the Des Moines river valley.

At the flag raising and anniversary celebration on the site of Fort Des Moines No 2, a committee of the Abigail Adams Chapter, D. A. R. had charge, namely, Mesdames B. E. Braught, Olney S. Weaver, Gordon L. Elliott, Jacob Held and H. E. Webb. Arthur H. Daniels, park commissioner, presented the flag to the chapter, and response was by Mrs. Tom B. Throckmorton, state regent. The military detail in charge of the flag raising was under Capt. E. M. Pritchard, the pledge of allegiance was given by Mrs. Henry E. Sampson; General Grahl was introduced by Col. E. S. Olmstead; the bugler was Ernie Johnston of the Sea Scout Ship "Remey." The WAAC band of twenty-four pieces came from Fort Des Moines No. 3 and added greatly to the occasion.

A special meeting of the Polk County Bar Association was called by President Gibson C. Holliday and held at the Polk county court house on Saturday, May 22,

which was addressed by District Judge John J. Halloran, who made an outstanding contribution upon the topic "Pioneer Bench and Bar of Polk County." From a personal acquaintance with most of those mentioned in the course of his paper his presentation of the individual characteristics and abilities of each made his deliverance of historic merit.

It was pleasing that much interest was aroused among pupils in the Des Moines public schools, and at least one address to a junior high school group was received with marked enthusiasm. At the urgency of several teachers the schools were supplied with a leaflet containing historic information regarding the three forts in Iowa known in turn as Fort Des Moines—No. 1 at Montrose, Lee county, on the Mississippi, to guard the Indians; No. 2 at Raccoon forks, on the Des Moines river, barracks for a regiment of dragoons, and No. 3 four miles south of No. 2, now the home of thousands of WAAC personnel in training—prepared and published by the State Department of History and Archives, and this was well received.

This leaflet headed "Des Moines' First Century" gave in concise form accurate data regarding the establishment of the three Forts Des Moines, and the start of the present capital of the state of Iowa. Not only was it distributed widely among the pupils of the schools, but was supplied to club members who are interested, and to the WAAC stationed at Fort Des Moines No. 3. This leaflet received voluntary commendation from a large number of students and historians and doubtless served its purpose to awaken interest in the colorful history of the beginnings of the state of Iowa.

From the group of addresses delivered at the various meetings several are included in this issue of THE ANNALS. While there is some duplication of material, the entire subject is such as to merit a place in Iowa historical records and consideration from many angles. The charm of the entire celebration as well as the events

commemorated will be best preserved by giving extended space to these Des Moines talks about the beginnings of the state capital.

DES MOINES' FIRST HUNDRED YEARS

BY ORA WILLIAMS

Iowa was beautiful and peaceful, a hundred years ago this month of May, and no part of it more beautiful nor peaceful than at this central spot where two fine rivers join for the long journey to the troubled oceans. All Iowa is the beautiful land, the chosen place, the ideal place for freedom, for life, for home. Never more delightful than when the prairies sparkle with the bright flowers of the springtime and the woodlands echo with the songs of the birds as they make their nests. Just a century ago a change was taking place. The leisure of a million years was about to be abruptly broken by an event ushering in a century of intense activity.

What did it mean that an American flag was to be unfurled here for the first time at the very center and heart of what was to become a commonwealth of unparalleled abundance?

Why disturb the quiet of the centuries with the clanking spurs of dragoons?

The stars and strips kissed the wild breezes and a new era commenced. We are celebrating that event this week—at least a few who are conscious of the meaning of the procession of the years and seek to understand the grand sequence of cosmic events. As measured by our fleeting lives, a hundred years is a long time, but a century is only a tick of the clock in the workshop of the Master Builder, a summer day on the calendar of eternity.

There was a reason. A new military post was to be established. It was to be Fort Des Moines No. 2. There has been a No. 1 and would be a greater No. 3. It was the familiar story—the flag, the sword, homes and industry.

There was little to break the silence on that May morning. There was the murmur of the rippling waters hardly held back by the frail dams of the beavers. Out upon the high levels the prairie chickens were calling their morning challenges, a timid herd was coming down to the salty deer licks, and perhaps there was the snort of a stray buffalo looking for its lost mate. There were trails leading over the hills, and the oaks were blazed by

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