

## REMINISCENCES OF GEN. JAMES C. PARROTT.

BY MISS MARY R. WHITCOMB.

And I am glad that he has lived thus long.—*Bryant.*

No more interesting citizens can be found in the State of Iowa than Gen. and Mrs. James C. Parrott of Keokuk. Sixty-three years ago the General came to this section of the country. He passed the site of our present capital city, when not a trace of civilization existed within one hundred miles, when vast herds of elk, deer and buffalo roamed undisturbed over the places where now are thriving villages and growing cities. He has seen the departure of the red man and the buffalo before the advance of civilization, and the introduction of steamboats, highways, railroads, and the improvements and appliances of modern life. Nor has he been a passive onlooker, but a most active member of that army of pioneers whose courage and endurance in war and peace have brought about the development of our State and Nation.

Gen. Parrott although eighty-six years of age looks much younger. Time has dealt gently with him. He is erect and handsome, of commanding presence and dignified bearing, "every inch a soldier."

A beautiful escutcheon which hangs in his home, given to him by Torrence Post, G. A. R. and presented by his friend Dr. J. M. Shaffer, shows the extent of his military career. A brief summary is as follows: "Co. I, 1st U. S. Dragoons; Co. E, 7th Iowa infantry; battle of Belmont, Mo., wounded; in command of regiment at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, Tenn.; in charge of Fort Donelson February 15, 1862, advanced to confederate lines and brought offers of capitulation February 16, 1862; in command of regiment at Shiloh, wounded; in command of Union Brigade, 8th, 12th and 14th Iowa, and 8th Illinois, from May 17-July 1, 1862, during siege of Corinth; served in Prentiss', Smith's and Grant's



Yours Truly  
J. C. Parrott  
Henrietta Parrott

GENERAL AND MRS. JAMES C. PARROTT, OF KEOKUK, IOWA.

divisions Army of the Tennessee in all its noted battles; marched with Sherman to the sea." An article contributed by Gen. Parrott on the 1st U. S. Dragoons appeared in the Historical Record, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 523-26, and a part of the history of this regiment has been fully treated by Dr. William Salter in his articles on Gen. Henry Dodge, also published in the Historical Record, Vol. 7, No. 3, pp. 101-119. Gen. Parrott is very probably the only surviving member of that noted regiment.

The memories of such a man are a mine of treasure, and his personal account cannot fail to throw some side lights upon the men and events of his time.

It was the writer's privilege recently to sit in the pleasant home of Gen. and Mrs. Parrott and to hear from the lips of this able, genial and courteous gentleman his recollections of those early days. This article is an attempt to present faithfully his personal story, his judgments and opinions as he gave them to the writer, but no effort has been made to reproduce his exact language.

James C. Parrott was born in Easton, Maryland, May 21, 1811. His father had been an officer in the war of 1812, but the boy was trained in the mercantile business. Later, he lived in Baltimore, where he was employed in a large shipping house. In 1831 he first visited "the west" and settled in Wheeling, West Virginia, where his uncle had a large paper-manufacturing business. Here he remained until like many other young men he was attracted to the military life. On February 10, 1834, he joined the regular army and was assigned to a regiment known as the 1st U. S. Dragoons. This regiment, "the finest ever raised in America," was composed largely of brilliant young men from aristocratic and wealthy families of the East. They entered the army with the understanding that they were to be exempt from menial service and verbal promises to that effect were given. Later these pledges were broken, and much discontent and many desertions resulted. So keenly did the officer under whom Gen. Parrott enlisted feel this lack of faith, that he soon resigned, saying that he could not face his men, and that he

would rather die than not fulfill his pledges to them. This man was Albert G. Edwards,\* 2d Lieutenant Co. I, the youngest son of Ninian Edwards, first governor of Illinois. He was afterwards appointed by Lincoln sub-treasurer of the United States (the first ever appointed) and held that office at St. Louis for over twenty years.

The regiment came west to Benton Barracks and organized at Fort Gibson, Indian Territory. About half of the men were from the regular army, the other half was composed of so-called "rangers," men who had served in the Black Hawk war. The combination of these two elements was at times the cause of some unpleasantness. The regiment was finely officered. Col. Henry Dodge was in command. He was a ranger, a frontiersman, not so highly polished as some of the officers and lacking the military training, but a man whose subsequent distinguished career attested his splendid qualifications.

The regiment had as first adjutant Jefferson Davis, whom General Parrott characterizes as "one of the greatest tyrants that ever lived." He was a brilliant military man, of fine personal address, nearly six feet in height, affable towards his equals, but overbearing in disposition and inclined to show undue authority over his inferiors. Much trouble arose from the fact that he reduced to the ranks a half dozen or more sergeants, in the most arbitrary manner. Calling them up he ordered their chevrons taken from them without any charged complaint; thus exceeding the bounds of his authority. The sergeants were among the busiest men in the regiment, the office important, and bitter resentment was aroused by this unjust treatment. Complaints came to Col. Dodge: "Colonel, your adjutant has reduced my sergeant to the ranks without preferring charges." The policy pursued by Dodge, under the circumstances, was conciliatory, but at times exposed him to the charge of weakness. He would say: "Just let the thing rest quietly and I will give

\*Albert G. Edwards, cadet 1827-32; 3d Lieut. mounted Rangers 1832; Bvt. 2d Lieut. 1st Dragoons 1833; resigned 1835; Brig.-Gen. Missouri militia 1862; Asst. Treas. U. S. 1865-86.

them new warrants in a few days." He was as good as his word and eventually reinstated all of the reduced men.

Gen. Parrott, although the sergeant of Co. I, had no difficulty. "I happened to be a favorite of Jefferson Davis, as he was a great crony of my captain, Browne. They liked their whiskey pretty well." The major of the regiment, Richard B. Mason,\* was a regular army officer. By birth he was an aristocratic Virginian, a large portly man, six feet in height. He possessed all the peculiarities of a southerner, accentuated.

The 1st Dragoons were organized for general frontier service, and in the summer of 1834 a campaign was made west to the mountains, with the object of meeting the Camanches, Pawnee Picts and other hostile Indian tribes, and forming treaties with them. The regiment started with nearly five hundred men, but an unusual amount of sickness and other disasters eventually reduced its numbers to about one hundred ninety. At one time this small band was surrounded by 15,000 or 20,000 warriors. They were ferocious in appearance and came boldly wheeling up with every appearance of hostility. But in reality they were quite harmless, being without guns and in mortal terror of that weapon. It became the policy of the regiment to preserve this deadly fear. When guards were relieved in the morning a figure of an Indian was hastily sketched in vermilion on the trunk of a tree and used as a target. At each discharge of the guns the Indians would throw themselves on the ground in abject terror.

On this campaign they rescued the little son of Judge Martin who had been murdered by the Indians the year before. The little fellow was brought from the corn-field where he had been concealed, into a dark Indian tent filled with officers and men of the regiment. Col. Dodge took him on his knee and asked, "What is your name, sir?" "Matthew Wright Martin," was the prompt response, and as his line of

\*Richard B. Mason, 2d Lieut. 8th Infantry 1817; Capt. 1819; in Black Hawk war; Major 1st Dragoons 1833; Lieut.-Col. 1836; Col. 1846; commanded forces in 10th (Cal.) dept. 1848; bvt. Brig.-Gen. 1848; died 25 July, 1850, at Jefferson Barracks, Mo.

vision cleared and the soldiers grouped about met his eyes, "Where all you white people come from?" was his first question. Gen. Parrott had in his saddle-bags two red shirts, one of which he gave to the regimental tailor, and soon the little fellow was clothed in a complete suit of bright red flannel, which gave him a most grotesque appearance. A linen sack was filled with prairie grass, fastened to the bugler's saddle horn, and upon this the little boy made his long journey of six hundred miles back to civilization. The old Indian who had been like a father to the child during his year of captivity accompanied the regiment forty or fifty miles on foot and aroused much sympathy by the grief he manifested at parting with his young charge. Upon the return to Fort Gibson a detachment of soldiers was sent with the boy to his mother in Arkansas.

On this campaign the men struck what was known as the "cross timbers;" brush and thick tangles of the grape-vine combined making an almost impenetrable thicket. They were unable to cut their way through with knives and only escaped by happening upon a buffalo trail. Millions of buffaloes were about. "You couldn't look anywhere from daylight to dark without seeing them. It is one of the greatest wonders to me that in so comparatively short a time they should have been exterminated." As a result of this expedition a satisfactory treaty was made with the Indians. It was quickly violated, however, for the following year Major Mason and his three companies were surrounded by hostile tribes in this same country and nearly perished by starvation. George Catlin, the artist, accompanied the regiment on this campaign. He is remembered as a pleasant, gentlemanly fellow. He had probably not a dollar in the world at that time. It was later that he painted the famous picture of Keokuk, which was the means of making his fortune. Gen. Parrott was a witness to an encounter Mr. Catlin had with an enraged buffalo. The artist made a gallant fight but the flank of his horse was torn open and he himself narrowly escaped death.

After this summer campaign of 1834 the regiment was

divided, and the officers separated. Four companies went into headquarters with Col. Dodge at Fort Leavenworth, three remained with Maj. Mason at Fort Gibson, and three companies, B, H and I, under Col. Stephen W. Kearny,\* removed to Camp Des Moines, the present site of Montrose. Col. Kearny had been trained as a regular army officer. He was a disciplinarian of first grade, but he was idolized by his subordinates, and was one of the noblest of men. To Gen. Parrott he was like a father; there existed between them an exceedingly close and warm friendship. Col. Kearny had in earlier years undergone a court-martial with severe sentence—to serve five years without command, with no chance of promotion, with no association with the regiment. He was then a poor man and as he must choose between this sentence and dismissal from the army, he had the wisdom to submit. It was a bitter lesson, many younger officers were promoted over him, but he never regretted his decision and this severe experience doubtless was no small factor in making him the self-controlled gentleman and fine drill-master that he was. Another of Gen. Parrott's associates at that time was Capt. E. V. Sumner† of Co. B, a regular army officer, and a man of fine military acquirements.

Capt. Nathan Boone‡ of Co. H, was the youngest son of Daniel Boone the Kentucky pioneer and much resembled his famous father in taste and habit. He was at that time past middle life and one of the most celebrated woodsmen ever on the frontier, though a rather ordinary looking man, small of stature, and with little of the military about him. He was

\*Stephen Watts Kearny, born Newark, N. J., 30 August, 1794; 1st Lieut. 13th Infantry 1812; distinguished in assault on Queenston Heights 1812; Bvt. Major ten years service 1823; Major 3d Infantry 1829; Lieut.-Col. 1st Dragoons 1833; Brig.-Gen. 1846; commanded army of the west and made conquest of New Mexico; Gov. of Cal. 1847; died 31 October, 1848, at Vera Cruz.

†Edwin Vose Sumner, born in Boston, 1797; 2d Lieut. 2d Infantry 1819; served in Black Hawk war; Capt. Dragoons 1833; Major 2d Dragoons 1846; brevetted Lieut.-Col. for gallant conduct in battle of Cerro Gordo 1847; brevetted Col. for gallant conduct at El Molino del Rey 1847; governor New Mexico 1851-53; he rose to the rank of Major-General during civil war; died at Syracuse, N. Y., 1863, while on his way to take charge of the Department of the Missouri.

‡Nathan Boone, Capt. Rangers 1812; Maj. mounted Rangers 1813; Capt. mounted Rangers 1832; Capt. 1st Dragoons 1833; Major 1st Dragoons 1837; Lieut.-Col. 2d Dragoons 1850.

much loved by his men to whom he was friend and father. When horses were lost it was always Capt. Boone who attended to the details of finding them. Many times Gen. Parrott has seen him carefully adjust his glasses, dismount his horse and get down on hands and knees to examine closely the ground for some trail. Co. H were mounted on light sorrels, and so he might shout, "No, boys, that was not our horse, that was a gray."

Capt. Jesse B. Browne, who commanded Co. I, was a fine specimen of physical manhood, in height six feet, seven and three-fourths inches. Many stories are told of his rashness and dissipation and it is probably true that he was forced to resign. But he was a man of many fine qualities and commanded the respect of his associates and was honored by them. In after years he engaged in the mercantile business at Fort Madison with Gen. Parrott. Later he entered politics and in 1838 was elected president of the first territorial council of Iowa, "receiving the whole number of votes given." In 1846 he was elected speaker of the house in the first general assembly of the State of Iowa. Gov. Lucas on January 9, 1839, appointed him major-general of the Iowa militia. In 1850 he served as one of the official visitors at the West Point military academy examinations. He died at Lexington, Kentucky, in 1864.

The site chosen for camp Des Moines, now occupied by the pretty little town of Montrose, had been under cultivation. The government purchased it of the owner, Capt. James White, for six hundred dollars. When the detachment reached the point in September, 1834, the quartermaster from St. Louis was erecting the buildings. The double log cabin built by Capt. White was turned into a hospital and after a month in tents the men moved into comfortable quarters. Gen. Parrott as 1st sergeant kept a regular office. The social life was pleasant, although it must be confessed a great deal of gambling went on among the soldiers, especially after pay day. There were about ten or twelve women and children in camp. Col. Kearny had with him his wife and children. Captains Sumner and Browne also had their wives

with them. The soldiers built a house of willow timber for Col. Kearny and his family, in the fall of 1834. In the spring the willows (always ready to grow with half a chance) sprouted and formed a beautiful green arbor, making the "prettiest house you ever saw."

One of the most fascinating men about the camp was the half-breed interpreter Frank Labashure (his mother being a French woman), an able and brilliant man. He had been educated by the Catholics in St. Louis and was with the regiment three years. He furnished constant entertainment for the soldiers, but was addicted to the use of whiskey. He died in the early forties, and lies in the old burying ground at Keokuk.

Zachary Taylor, old "Rough and Ready," spent a night at Camp Des Moines on his way to the Seminole war in Florida. He wore sky-blue breeches and coarse cowhide shoes, without ties. He was careless and slovenly in appearance, but Gen. Parrott says: "I knew when I saw him there was fight in old Zachary Taylor." His men were thoroughly devoted to him, despite the fact that he was a rigid disciplinarian. As an instance of his severity, Gen. Parrott remembers that while coming down the river he would not allow his men to travel in steamers but required them to row in Mackinaw boats to keep them in practice.

Capt. White was a notable figure in those early days. He was a typical pioneer having served in the Black Hawk war, and his big stone house on the Illinois side and his pretty daughters were greatly to the liking of the young soldiers. During the time the troops were quartered at Camp Des Moines he formed an important factor in their social life.

Many were the visits of the jovial Captain to the camp where he entertained the soldiers with stories and dances, and many were the midnight revels across the river in the stone house, participated in by the soldiers. Trouble sometimes resulted as is shown by a good story Gen. Parrott tells.

There naturally existed on the part of the town boys at Commerce (now Nauvoo) much jealousy of the brilliant young military men who sometimes superseded them in the affec-

tions of their sweethearts. To quiet matters Col. Kearny forbade the soldiers from attending the festivities at the stone house. On one occasion, however, he yielded to the earnest request of Captain White that four of the men (including Sergeant Parrott) might attend a dance. He called the young officers to him and said: "Boys, I want you to attend this party. I wish you to dress in your handsomest uniforms, and go in your best style. I'll give you a crew to row you over. Behave like gentlemen and we will see the outcome." The boys went as bidden. There were dark looks but no open trouble until all repaired to a large room on the second floor for dancing. The officers chose their partners, Gen. Parrott leading out one of the Captain's daughters. All was ready for the music but the music failed to "strike up." To avert trouble the Captain cried, "Boys it's too long between drinks," and they went below. Perhaps a little too much was taken, for when they returned the Captain's policy of conciliation seemed to be forgotten; he confronted the little fellow who played first violin and demanded an explanation. On receiving the answer, "I don't play for any d— soldiers," the Captain seized the violin (a valuable instrument and an heirloom) dashing it on the floor, breaking it into pieces. At this the town faction, twenty-five or thirty strong, made a rush on the four soldiers. They were saved by the interposition of the Captain's tall son, who took a stand in front and said, "Boys, these soldiers are here by the personal invitation of my father. They have behaved like gentlemen and if you make trouble for them it will be over my dead body." This gave the four time to escape and to reach their boat. But the end was not yet. While they rowed back they discussed the affair and decided that it was cowardly on their part to retreat after such an insult, and that it was ignominy for soldiers to be beaten by untrained country lads. So landing above camp they quietly stole down and reinforcing themselves with four or five stout fellows, rowed back to the Illinois side. Here they drew their boat well up on the beach, so that it might not be set adrift, repaired to a store and arming themselves each with a raw-

hide suddenly confronted their rivals. In the fracas which followed the town boys were unmercifully beaten, especially the little violinist, and the soldier boys returned to camp satisfied with their revenge. The next morning a delegation of town boys waited on Col. Kearny. The four culprits were called in and Gen. Parrott as spokesman told his story. The complainants acknowledged that his statement of the affair was true, and the Colonel then said to them, "Boys, I give you just half an hour to leave this garrison." But the four soldiers did not altogether escape. Gen. Parrott, who was the master spirit of the affair, and who acknowledged that he had done wrong in taking the men from camp without permission, received a reprimand which he has not yet forgotten.

In June, 1835, the three companies started from camp on a northwestern expedition. There had been some trouble between the Sacs and Foxes and the Sioux, and the object of the campaign was to settle the difficulty. At that time there were but two counties in what is now Iowa, west of the Mississippi, Dubuque and Des Moines, and only a few scattered settlements. From Camp Des Moines they passed to the left of what is now Oskaloosa. Their line of march was for a long time after known as the "dragoon's trace." They then traveled northeastward and struck the Mississippi again at Lake Pepin, where they went into camp at Wabashaw, named for the old Sioux chief. This chief was reported to be over one hundred years old and looked it. He was very emaciated in appearance and had lost one eye, probably in battle. The troops however found him to be very friendly.

On the return the regiment reached the head waters of the Des Moines river and followed down its banks to the Raccoon fork. They crossed the river at a point where it was very deep and as smooth as a canal. It was full of shrubbery that formed a thick tangle and was alive with leeches. The horses and mules succeeded in swimming across, but the men relied on the aid of ropes stretched from bank to bank. Their wagon beds, constructed like boats, were easily managed. They moved down to the place where the

capital city now stands, and went into camp on the east side of the river, opposite the mouth of the Raccoon.

Lieut. Albert M. Lea\* (for whom the town of Albert Lea, Minnesota, is named) the talented engineer, was with the company. Gen. Parrott was his intimate friend, and when the Lieutenant was suffering from a long illness in Camp Des Moines he used regularly on Sunday mornings to write for him the letters that were forwarded to the beautiful Baltimore woman whom he afterwards married.

The soldiers while encamped at the mouth of the Raccoon built a canoe from a huge cottonwood tree, axes being their only tools. In this canoe Lieut. Lee, with one other man and two Sac Indians embarked and floated down the Des Moines river to the point where Keokuk now stands. They made the trip in about twenty days. Many times they were obliged to portage their boat over the shallows. This expedition was for the purpose of locating a new fort, and no more suitable spot could be found than near the Raccoon, where later Fort Des Moines No. 2 was built. When they reached the mouth of the river only the "lighter" men were there to tow the freight from the lower to the upper rapids.

The regiment followed by land reaching Camp Des Moines in fine condition after a tour of 1100 miles. The journey had been through a country beautiful then as now. The grass was of luxuriant growth, the profusion of wild flowers brilliant in the extreme. Game birds abounded. There were however not so many varieties of singing birds as now. Everywhere deer, bear, wolves and buffalo were to be seen, and along the Des Moines they met a large herd of elk. Rattlesnakes were exceedingly numerous. The men bought turtle eggs, by the bushel, of the Sioux Indians, who found them in the sand bars. The soldiers also bought "cashed

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\*Albert Miller Lea, cadet 1827-31; Bvt. 2d Lieut. 7th Infantry 1831; 2d Lieut. 1st Dragoons 1833; resigned 1836; chief Eng. of Tenn. 1837; U. S. commissioner to fix boundary Missouri and Iowa 1838; Asst. Eng. Baltimore & Ohio R. R. 1839-40; Brig.-Gen. Iowa militia 1840; chief clerk war department 1841; Prof. University Knoxville, Tenn., 1844-51; in rebellion, Confederate army, 1861-66; died in Texas, 1891, aged 84 years.

whiskey" of the Sioux, that is whiskey bought of the traders by the barrel and buried by the Indians in the ground to be resold when an opportunity arrived.

The officers had great confidence in Sergeant Parrott and in this same year, 1835, he was sent in pursuit of deserters. Eighteen dissatisfied men had taken a large yawl and escaped up the river. They had nine days' start but Sergeant Parrott taking his pick of horses and three men started in pursuit. One night he "scoured the village of Chicago thoroughly, going into all the saloons." At another time he lay all night at Quincy watching for that yawl. After a month's fruitless search he gave it up and returned. Shortly after a letter was received at Camp Des Moines from Chicago asking the recipient to tell Sergeant Parrott that the night he was hunting for deserters three of them were hidden in his cellar!

The companies were expected to make a campaign each season, as it served to keep the men in practice and was no more expensive than maintaining them in garrison. Accordingly in 1836 the regiment again started toward the northeast. Captain Sumner commanded the detachment. They crossed the Mississippi on horse boats; this kind of boat was propelled by the treading of horses which worked an endless chain. They went directly to Chicago, then a town of five or six thousand people. They happened there at one of the first public sale of lots. They next proceeded to Milwaukee, a town of about one thousand inhabitants. From there they advanced to Green Bay and up the Fox river. They stopped at Prairie du Chien where Colonel Zachary Taylor was stationed in command of the garrison of Fort Crawford. On their return they forded the Mississippi at Galena, and stopped for a night at Rock Island, receiving a visit from the officers there. When the regiment reached Camp Des Moines once more the "boys" who had been left in garrison had a sumptuous repast prepared for them. At the feast Capt. Sumner who had been in command of the expedition was given the place of honor. This courtesy was character-

istic of Col. Kearny, who was always ready to compliment his men.

Sergeant Parrott was given his papers of discharge and relieved from service February 10, 1837. He had served the full three years, for which he enlisted. The bright anticipations, with which he entered the army at the age of twenty-three had not all been fulfilled. But while dissatisfied with the management and to use his own words "tired of it and glad to quit," he now, after the lapse of sixty years, looks back on that time with many pleasant emotions, and although nearly all of the old comrades have passed to the other side, he holds them in tenderest remembrance.

In 1837 Gen. Parrott removed to Fort Madison, then a town of about three hundred inhabitants, and engaged in the mercantile business in partnership with his old captain, Jesse B. Browne. The visitor to Fort Madison may still see the old building used by them as a store, though the long low frame structure which then served as a hotel and which was built on ground originally occupied by the fort has disappeared. It was in this hotel that Gen. Parrott boarded. The well used was the one dug by the soldiers in 1808. This well, through the efforts of Capt. James W. Campbell, has been carefully preserved, and now, almost thirty years after, the visitor may be refreshed by a cool drink from it.

In this same hotel there lived with her guardian and his family, a gay and beautiful young girl, Miss Henrietta Buckhalter. She was born in Philadelphia, of German descent, July 20, 1820, and was educated at the Moravian Institution at Lititz, Pennsylvania, which was of the same general character as the well-known Bethlehem school. In 1837, when seventeen years of age, she came directly from her boarding school to Fort Madison. Here "like birds from a cage," she and her young cousin entered gaily into the social life of the little frontier town, danced on the long veranda overlooking the beautiful Mississippi, coquetted with Nes-se-as-kuk, Black Hawk's handsome son, and enjoyed the excitement and novelty of the situation. There were gay times at the hotel that winter, balls and parties. The Indians were about

a great deal. Black Hawk, who wintered at Devil's Creek six miles from Fort Madison, was a frequent visitor. The young people sometimes mounted their horses and following an Indian trail, went out to his lodge to take tea with Madam Black Hawk. The little grandchild strapped to a board was a great attraction. Now a wagon road passes near, and the traveller on the Burlington line crosses a bridge a short distance from this historic spot. What wonder, that on meeting handsome Sergeant Parrott, just out of service in the U. S. Dragoons, a friendship was formed between these two that culminated in marriage September 4, 1838. Mrs. Parrott delights to tell now of those early days. Of the time when Black Hawk seized and kissed her, of his handsome son always a welcome guest, of the ball at the hotel where the old chief, much enamored of the English, appeared in a British uniform, and Madam Black Hawk in a tall, wonderful hat.

Gen. Parrott had great respect and esteem for Black Hawk, a respect and esteem based on personal acquaintance with him. The old chief was a brave man, brave indeed to a fault. He was rather small of stature, and at this time perfectly bald with the exception of his scalp lock. He seemed always conscious of his mistake in having gone into the war, and mortified by the great failure that resulted. He was an interesting talker and had the power of graphic description. He said the white men were as numerous as leaves on the trees. He told his people that it was of no use to fight against the white men as they could ascend to heaven and hold communication with the Great Spirit. He held this belief because of the fact that when in an eastern city he had once witnessed the ascent of an aeronaut. His last visit to Fort Madison was on July 4, 1838, and is described in his autobiography. He was on that day the honored guest of the citizens, "but a deep-seated melancholy was apparent in his countenance and conversation." The old spirit, when with eyes flashing fire, he cried "Black Hawk will have revenge, he will never stop until the Great Spirit shall say to him, come away," had disappeared.

In contrast to this brave old war chief was the politic Keokuk, a brilliant man, a born orator, but a coward; wily, drunken, dissipated, using policy in all he did, "squaw chief," his people called him. He never lacked for money, as the government annuities allowed him were divided into two equal parts, one for his people the other for himself. When the regiment broke up Keokuk purchased for \$250 the beautiful horse, "Napoleon," that Gen. Parrott had used during his army service, and to which he was much attached. He was of finest Kentucky blood, but in two weeks the chief, a heavy man, weighing over 200, rode the horse to death.

Gen. Parrott continued in the mercantile trade in Fort Madison until 1852. He was elected one of the trustees when the town government was first established, and later served as county treasurer and as mayor. In 1852 he removed to Keokuk, where for forty-five years he has continued to reside.

Gen. Parrott was in business in Keokuk when the war of the rebellion broke out. At that crisis he said, "My military education I owe to my country," and immediately set to work. He raised a company in Keokuk in June, 1861. The regiment was organized in Burlington the following month and the Keokuk company mustered into service at once as Co. E, 7th Iowa Infantry. J. G. Lauman of Burlington was colonel and James C. Parrott captain of the company. At St. Louis they received arms and equipments, and then did close drilling for several weeks at Ironton, Missouri. From this point they marched south to Cairo where Grant was in command. November 6, 1861, they boarded transports, steamed down the river and on the morning of the fatal 7th of November landed on the Missouri side at the little village of Belmont where the enemy was encamped. The transports were stationed up the river out of reach of the heavy guns. The attack was made with Grant in command and Logan as colonel of an Illinois regiment. They fought all day, driving the enemy away from the Missouri side, but reinforcements were sent that landed between the Union forces and their transports. Capt. Parrott was detailed to help the

regiment in an effort to cut its way through to the fleet. He rode a fatal horse. A rebel colonel had been killed while on him in the morning, a Union lieutenant-colonel later in the day and now Capt. Parrott fell pieced by four bullets—wounded in the hand, both arms, shoulder and spine. He was put on board one of the large New Orleans steamboats. It was at the time under fire and as he lay in the ladies' cabin the rebels shot away the skylights and literally covered him and the other wounded with broken glass.

When the surgeon, Dr. Amos Witter,\* reached him, his verdict was that he had not two hours to live. The captain's stanch reply was—"If I haven't two minutes to live I don't want to die with a rebel ball in me." Mrs. Parrott has vivid recollections of this trying time. She was near by, at Bird's Point, Missouri, and the day before, with other ladies and several officers of the regiment, including the brilliant Col. Augustus Wentz, had attended a pecan hunt. After gathering quantities of the nuts they sat down in merriest mood to their picnic repast. Mrs. Parrott gaily sang a little German verse beginning—"Wir sitzen so fröhlich zusammen"—much to the delight of Col. Wentz. In a few hours that gallant officer was killed and Mrs. Parrott was on her way to her wounded husband. On reaching the boat she walked the length of the cabin, where three hundred dead and dying lay, to her husband's side. Her first words were: "Doctor, tell me the truth about my husband." Gen. Parrott had time to give one glance (a look the doctor said he never should forget) and the reply came in a cheerful tone—"Madam, there is nothing in the world that will kill your husband."

Grant was the last man to board the boat, and when Capt. Parrott lay in the hotel at Cairo he came in person and said: "Captain, just as soon as your surgeon pronounces you able I want you to go home, get well and come back and help us out, and when you send for the furlough I want to

\*Amos Witter, born in New York, Mch. 24, 1807; served in Iowa State legislature 1851, 1855, 1860; trustee State university 1855-57; surgeon 7th Iowa Infantry 1861; post surgeon and later brigade surgeon of Lauman's brigade; died Mt. Vernon, Iowa, Mch. 13, 1862, as a result of overwork at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson.

write the order myself." Grant was as good as his word and the wounded captain went home to recuperate with this farewell—"Boys, I am coming back again and we will fight it out." That special order for his leave, in Grant's own writing, hangs in Gen. Parrott's home. Over it is a photograph of Grant taken by Gen. Parrott's son in Vicksburg after the war. The two were warm personal friends, and Gen. Parrott is very proud of the fact that "Grant considered our regiment one of the brightest he ever commanded."

Gen. Parrott took command of his old regiment again as lieutenant-colonel December, 1861, and participated in all the noted battles of the Army of the Tennessee. His was the charging brigade that captured Fort Henry. He commanded the regiment at the battle of Fort Donelson, and it was Gen. Parrott who on that memorable Sunday morning advanced and brought back offers of capitulation. The story of the gallant 2d Iowa has been often and fully told; the disgrace in which they marched out of St. Louis, with flag furled, without sound of drum; their brilliant record at Fort Donelson, where nobly leading the "forlorn hope," against fearful odds, they wiped out the earlier dishonor and won immortal fame. At the battle of Shiloh, Gen. Parrott commanded the regiment and was in the thick of the "Hornet's Nest." Two fine horses were shot under him. At the battle of Corinth he received the wound that for thirty years since has troubled him. Of his part in that engagement Col. E. W. Rice\* said, "I must make special mention of Lieutenant Colonel Parrott, who, with great bravery and coolness cheered and encouraged the men to renewed vigor."

In 1865, while his command was marching through Richmond, an interesting incident occurred. Gen. Parrott was the only mounted officer on the right flank. As they approached an elegant residence, he noticed a black servant by the gate, with an immense bouquet in her hand, while back on the wide veranda stood a beautiful woman dressed in black. As the line advanced a signal passed from mis-

\*Elliott Warren Rice, born Pa. 1835; Maj. 7th Iowa Infantry 1861; commissioned Col. 1862; Brig.-Gen. 1864; Maj.-Gen. 1865; died in Sioux City, Iowa, June 22, 1887.



*Elliott W. Rice*

BRIG. GEN. ELLIOTT W. RICE.

2<sup>d</sup> Colonel 7<sup>th</sup> Iowa Infy Vol's.

tress to servant and the latter came forward and handed the flowers to Gen. Parrott. He brought them home to Iowa and has always thought the fair white lady was Mrs. Lee, and that he was the favored recipient because of his acknowledged resemblance to her husband, Gen. Robert E. Lee.

The "boys" had great sport on this march with the poor whites. They would call to them—"Say, mister, can you tell me where the first families of Virginia live?" They would lean on the fence, stare and listen, but give no information as to the first families of Virginia. Of the long journey through the Carolinas, 480 miles, "Col. Parrott, a man not given to the melting mood, speaks in the most exalted terms of the conduct of his gallant men throughout the march." (Ingersoll's *Iowa and the Rebellion*). "The greatest day we ever had," says Gen. Parrott, "was Sherman's grand review at Washington—Grant's old army—the army of the Tennessee 'that never knew defeat.' I was proud to see that our men, although many had had no new clothing for a year, were clean."

Gen. Parrott's estimate of his officers is interesting. Of his idol, Grant, he says—"No one had the qualifications for a soldier that Grant had. No one could handle an army as Grant could. There was not a man on the continent like him, he always knew when to strike." Of McPherson, that brilliant young officer, worshipped by his men as though he were a god, he says—"It was a sad day when McPherson was killed. Poor old Sherman—I don't know that he cried—but he rode about to the colonels saying 'For God's sake, Colonel, don't let the boys know McPherson is dead.'" Lee, he had known in boyhood, "The handsomest man I ever saw, with a hand so small and fine he wore a lady's glove."

Gen. Parrott left the army July 12, 1865. He never attained the rank of colonel because of the army regulation, an unjust one, that required certain numerical strength in a regiment before it could support a colonel. In honor of his gallant service, he was afterwards by act of Congress promoted to the rank of brevet brigadier general. He had the reputation of being a fine disciplinarian, but there was not

a boy or a man under him but held him in the highest esteem and respect. His men all "swore by him." One old soldier said to him in after years, "Colonel, do you know what we thought of you at Bird's Point? We thought you were a perfect tyrant, when we saw you drilling your men. They did not dare move a muscle. We could not understand it when an hour or two after you were pitching horse shoes with them." His soldiers at Belmont, although receiving meager pay at the time, made up a purse from their pitances and presented him with a beautiful sword to show their love and admiration.

In 1867 Gen. Parrott was appointed by President Johnson postmaster of Keokuk, which position he held for more than ten years. He was afterwards made justice of the peace, retaining the position until he was no longer able to attend to the duties of the office on account of growing disability. He has been honored by his old comrades and was G. A. R. Commander of the Department of Iowa in 1874-76.

Gen. Parrott and his devoted wife have lived together a longer period than is granted to many, over fifty-nine years. In the words of their friend, Gen. W. W. Belknap, they have "proved what love and affection can do in spite of darkness and clouds." Now, as the "shadows lengthen," together in closest companionship they descend life's hill, loved and honored by hosts of friends in Keokuk, Fort Madison, and throughout the State. At the Lee County Pioneers and Old Settlers' Association, held July 4, 1890, on motion of Hon. D. F. Miller, it was ordered "That Gen. J. C. Parrott be and hereby is designated by this Association the 'bravest of the brave' in Lee county, Iowa. That Henrietta Parrott, the oldest pioneer lady present and having the record of the longest continuous residence in the county, be elected Patriarchess and be presented with the badge of her position."

This is but fitting recognition of the worth of these pioneers. Gen. Parrott's early associates are gone. His active work has ceased. But perhaps in the quiet, dignified and happy life of these final years he and his devoted wife are doing their best work.

It is always difficult to estimate the total effect of any man's life and doubly so in a life like Gen. Parrott's, replete as it has been with activities, presenting scenes from the most stirring battles, and vistas of the struggles by which, within the lifetime of one generation, Iowa has been won from a wilderness to civilization. But there will always remain to his credit on the pages of history a substantial contribution to the achievements of his country and his State, and in the hearts of those who knew him the refreshing memory of a vigorous, noble manhood, of a life well spent.

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RAWLINS was one of the most valuable men in the army, in my judgment. He had but a limited education, which he had picked up at the neighborhood school and in Galena, Illinois, near which place he was born and where he had worked himself into the law; but he had a very able mind, clear, strong, and not subject to hysterics. He bossed everything at Grant's headquarters. Rawlins possessed very little respect for persons, and his style of conversation was rough; I have heard him curse at Grant when, according to his judgment, the general was doing something that he thought he had better not do. But he was entirely devoted to his duty, with the clearest judgment, and perfectly fearless. Without him Grant would not have been the same man. Rawlins was essentially a good man, though he was one of the most profane men I ever knew; there was no guile in him—he was as upright and as genuine a character as I ever came across.—*Charles A. Dana's Recollections in McClure's Magazine, Jan., 1898.*

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