

ANNALS OF IOWA

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

THE WORLD WAR DIVISION OF THE HISTORICAL DEPARTMENT.

Almost as soon as hostilities began with Germany the Curator of the Historical Department of Iowa, with the approval of the Board of Trustees, established our "War Division." It is intended that the record of service and sacrifice of each Iowa man and woman contributing to the success of the American force in the World War should be noted. The care with which our government and state hitherto have prepared and preserved the military rosters of its men sufficiently assures the future of every essential fact touching the actual participation of individuals in or incident to hostilities. But the lesson of prior wars in a democracy is that military connection in war is but a meager portion of their lives, often merely a matter of months. Whatever his valor or achievement, if the soldier survive to re-enter civilian enterprise, his contribution as a citizen usually rivals and often outweighs his contribution as a soldier. The Historical Department of Iowa, therefore, has full faith that it may rely upon other officers and offices for pure military history and biography, but charges itself with noting after peace the attainments of the lives of those who distinguished our state in war. So that it is intended that for complete biographical and historical purposes our collection shall be so shaped and administered that the soldier, the nurse, the person of every kind and calling, having taken the oath of service and having had inscribed all his military history in the war, shall also be remembered in peace through our collections containing all pertinent facts of subsequent life.

In other words, the department has noticed that those deceased in action or otherwise sacrificed in the uniform in the Civil War and the War with Spain, while remembered in mass seemed sometimes to have been overlooked if not forgotten, especially if lost

and interred in the South or overseas. Almost numberless grave-stones with the eloquent "Unknown" support this proposition, and though the rosters detail age and personal appearance, time, place and manner of death, they are too meager to be of that comfort sought by surviving relatives and especially by their relatives of the recent and the future generations.

Endeavoring to pay some lasting debt of gratitude to each person in the World War who lost his life, and with the thought to contribute to the comfort of relatives surviving and of those of future generations, the Historical Department has made of each name a special object of commemoration, and has added to the roster record what it can of personal history. Thus for each of the ninety-nine counties we have established a special record with the name of each person lost, with his close kinship noted, with his photograph, inscribed with his name, and other personal data. Related to this list is everything we can obtain that was part of his personal or military equipment, such as a weapon, utensil, uniform, document or other object illustrative of his service or his traits, and these appropriately assembled, identified, and labeled form the nucleus of our World War museum.

The way of the world shows in this enterprise. At the close of the war nearly every county had its organization aimed at preserving the record of its own contribution toward the victory. In some counties there were many societies and associations gathering data. Hardly a county completed its work in permanent form, for its energy, if not dissipated, was quickly diverted to productive activity. The war spirit gave way to the silent grief of the home and fireside, or to organized business and political interests.

Holding to the original plan our department centers at present on the gold star heroes of Iowa. Of these we have some 2,000 photographs of the almost 4,000 who gave their lives. Of these photographs we have from each county a few and from some the full number. These are framed and accessible to the visiting public. Cards going with each name identify our museum specimens relating to each name and are available on request. For the want of space the entire World War collection is crowded into the corridors of the building.

We can but regret both the decreasing zeal in home committees for the gathering and preserving of memorabilia of our lost boys, and our department want of means wherewith to increase our own achievements, as time assuages grief and tends to erase thought of their sacred sacrifice.

EDWARD JOHNSTONE'S CHARACTER AND HISTORY

The unique and elaborate character sketch of Edward Johnstone published in this issue of the ANNALS was written in long-hand over thirty years ago and deposited in the Historical Department of Iowa. It is of almost as much interest because of the author as of the great man described. Dr. J. M. Shaffer was himself a man of great activity and influence in the formative period of the new state of Iowa. His work as physician, as lecturer at the Keokuk College of Physicians and Surgeons, as surgeon of the board of enrollment of men entering the Union Army from the First Congressional District, as secretary of the Iowa State Agricultural Society in its early years, as state senator, as a lifelong student of science and natural history, as a collector of specimens, and as one helpful to Charles Aldrich in researches in early Iowa history and in founding the Historical Department of Iowa—all these things have already been set out in the ANNALS twenty and thirty years ago. But an accurate and connected account of Edward Johnstone has never been published in the ANNALS. E. H. Stiles in his "Recollections and Sketches," and B. F. Gue in his "History of Iowa," both give good sketches of his life, Gue's being nearer complete. Sam M. Clark in the *Gate City* at the time of the death of Mr. Johnstone, gave extended biographical material and the "History of Lee County, Iowa," Western Historical Company, Chicago, 1876, also contains considerable fragmentary matter about him.

This article by Dr. Shaffer is more of a characterization than a biography. It glows with the warmth of personal friendship, and delineates personal qualities that cause the reader to know Judge Johnstone, the man, more accurately than a plain recital

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.