



GEORGE BANKHEAD

Died in service, 1863, age 23 years. From a daguerreotype of 1862.

# ANNALS OF IOWA

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## THE COALPORT HOME GUARDS

BY HON. CHARLES J. FULTON

In the year 1860 there was living in Athens, Missouri, a merchant by the name of Spruance. He had a son, Hiram Alexander, then about ten years of age, destined in later life to be a lieutenant-governor of Colorado. Near their home was a grist-mill serving a large territory south of the Des Moines River. Here came slaves in charge of ox-drawn wagons loaded with corn and wheat to be converted into meal and flour. As these waited their turns in the order of their coming, sometimes for days, they often had leisure to wander about the neighborhood. The boy, in a spirit of mischief or as a result of overhearing intimate conversations of his elders, meeting such slaves under conditions favorable to his purpose, would tell them that they could gain their freedom by slipping over the river into Iowa. A brush dam, which maintained a supply of water for the mill, offered an easy way to get across without difficulty or danger. The suggestion, planted in susceptible minds, bore its legitimate fruit. There were mysterious disappearances. Oxen and wagons were left without attendants, and grists without claimants. There was an investigation. Young Hiram's complicity, if not clearly proven, was suspected. Either on account of his youth or the scantiness of the evidence, he was not treated as a criminal, but to restrain his activities in this direction he was dressed by his mother as a girl and shamed to be seen in public.

The escaping slaves, once over the river, quickly found stations on the Underground Railroad operating through Croton, Farmington, Hillsboro, and Salem to the north. The Missourians pursued with vigor. Their efforts were vain. Persuasion, appeal to the law, threats, alike failed to locate and secure the re-

turn of their valuable live property. They were especially stirred to wrath by the open hostility of the inhabitants of Salem, a Quaker settlement. Soon after the Civil War opened, smarting over the opposition they had met with in the pursuit of their runaways, they proclaimed an intention to raid, sack, and destroy these towns as a reprisal and punishment. To guard against this invasion and to be able to meet it with an armed force, arrangements were made, it is surmised, to convey news of it, when imminent, to the various companies of "home guards" organized about the localities felt to be in danger.

Coalport was a mining camp which stood about a mile west of the present town of Lockridge in the eastern part of Jefferson County. It was a flag station on the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad which it supplied with coal and over which it reached markets at Mount Pleasant and Burlington. It boasted two stores, a tavern and saloon, and a blacksmith shop. It was the social center and the trading point of the country roundabout. The Coalport Home Guards, organized by Abial R. Pierce, the captain, were recruited from the miners, artisans, and farmers of the vicinity.

About dark on August 4, 1861, word came to Captain Pierce that the Rebels were on the point of raiding Iowa.<sup>1</sup> By whom the information was brought is not known. At once he sent out a summons to the members of his organization to assemble at Coalport. The night was spent in this, in molding bullets, and in preparing food to take with them. At daybreak, armed with shotguns and squirrel rifles, they started on their mission of repelling or preventing the invasion. Those who possessed horses, rode them; the others were conveyed in wagons. The weather was extremely hot. Some of the horses gave out and were left at Hillsboro. Farmington was reached that evening after a hurried march of some thirty-five miles. There camp was made for the night. Early the next morning they hastened on to Croton, where they forded the river to Athens and reporting to Col. David Moore, then commanding the reserved guards in northern Missouri, were immediately put on duty. They displayed their

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<sup>1</sup>The Battle of Athens occurred August 4, 1861. See ANNALS OF IOWA, Vol. V, pp. 81-92.—Editor.

courage and determination by sticking to their posts, although the inhabitants, fearing an attack by the Rebels in force, rushed across the river to the Iowa side with such of their possessions as they could carry. After serving two days and nights they were relieved by a company from Keokuk. They arrived at Coalport on August 9, having been out five days.

To preserve a record of this expedition and evidence the loyalty and patriotism of the men who took part in it, Captain Pierce submitted a report of it to Adjutant-General Baker. A certificate of faithful service, containing a roster signed by Colonel Moore, accompanied the report. The original documents are still in the Iowa Archives. The names listed follow:

Captain, A. R. Pierce	
First Lieutenant, August Cassel	
Second Lieutenant, Wm. Hopkirk	
First Sergeant, T. C. Evans	
Second Sergeant, Thomas Pilkington	
John A. Thomas	Wm. Peck
Charles Ripley	John Hookins
Warren Peck	Charles Swan
John Simmons	John Herron
Abel Stephenson	Samuel Dougherty
Adam Brandhofer	Henry Shiver
Swan Swanson	George Craft
George Travert	Wm. H. Hopkirk
Charles Monhonrick	L. Dougherty
Henry Schmitline	David Brown
Luther Simmons	Augustus Pantzer
Philip Redinger	N. Flanders
Joseph Horton	Wm. Marker
John Birk	Henry Hugrelet
Samuel Horton	Jacob Printz
Oliver Toothaker	J. Skeers
Gustaff Birk	Charles Howard
Geo. Bankhead	John Lonquist

It will not be out of place, as far as it may be done, to show who and what these men were, how they and others of their families served their country, and to trace briefly their after fortunes.

Abial R. Pierce was born a Maine Yankee. He was a farmer and owned a large tract of land on part of which Lockridge is located. He was a representative from Jefferson County in the

Ninth General Assembly when the Civil War began. He raised a company of mounted men which was mustered in as Company M, Fourth I. V. C.<sup>2</sup> He was commissioned captain November 2, 1861, was promoted to first battalion major September 13, 1863, and was mustered out August 10, 1865, at Atlanta, Georgia. After the war closed he was elected senator from Jefferson County, serving in the Twelfth and Thirteenth general assemblies. He died May 9, 1880, and is buried at Lockridge.

August Cassel was born in Sweden. He was one of the party of immigrants who came to Iowa in 1845 and founded "New Sweden." He was a farmer. He enlisted as fourth sergeant October 5, 1861, in Company C, Fourth I. V. C., and was promoted to second sergeant. He died in hospital at Helena, Arkansas, December 27, 1862. A brother, Andrew F. Cassel, was long a member of the Board of Supervisors of Jefferson County and was further honored by being elected to the House of Representatives of three assemblies, the Twenty-ninth, Thirtieth and Thirty-first.

Wm. Hopkirk was born in Ohio. He enlisted August 5, 1862, in Company G, Thirtieth I. V. I. He died on the hospital boat, City of Memphis, May 8, 1863. A brother, Robert, born in Iowa, enlisted February 3, 1864, in Company M, Fourth I. V. C. He was wounded at Ripley, Mississippi, June 11, dying seventeen days later at Memphis, Tennessee. Their father, Wm. Hopkirk, a Scot by birth, was a representative from Jefferson County in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth general assemblies.

T. C. Evans was a bachelor living with his mother. He was a merchant, a justice of the peace, and the postmaster. He was small, slightly lame, and physically disqualified for military service. He removed to Corning, Iowa, where he conducted a store and where he died.

Thomas Pilkington, Adam Brandhofer, and John Hookins are not remembered. The only trace of their presence in the community is found in this roster. It is likely they were miners or farm hands, and belonged to that transient tribe whose members have no ties and tarry but a short while in any place.

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<sup>2</sup>In this article the abbreviation "I. V. C." means "Iowa Volunteer Cavalry," and "I. V. I.," "Iowa Volunteer Infantry."—Editor.

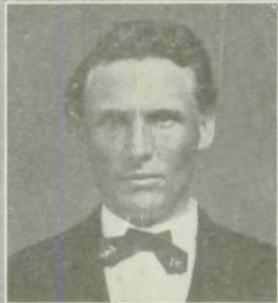
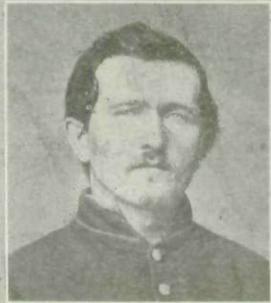
John A. Thomas was an engineer, a miller, and a stiller. He exercised these callings for a time at Herron's gristmill north of Lockridge. Later he was employed in the Asylum at Mount Pleasant where he passed his last years.

Charles Ripley was born in Maine. He was bass drummer for the Coalport Home Guards. He enlisted September 8, 1861, in Company E, Second I. V. I. He re-enlisted December 23, 1863. He died on July 5, 1864, from wounds received at Nickajack, Tennessee. A brother, William, enlisted on October 23, 1861, in Company M, Fourth I. V. C. He re-enlisted January 2, 1864, and was mustered out August 8, 1865, at Atlanta, Georgia. Of his later history nothing has been learned.

Warren Peck was a farmer living near Glendale. He was elder brother to William. They came from Ohio. William was snare drummer for the Coalport Home Guards. He enlisted August 9, 1862, in Company G, Thirtieth I. V. I. He was wounded January 11, 1863, at Arkansas Post, Arkansas, and again severely September 4, 1864, at Jonesboro, Georgia. He was mustered out June 5, 1865, at Washington, D. C. He lived but a short time after the close of the war. A sister married a man who held southern sympathies. She put up in their home a Union flag, which he tore down. She restored it to its place and informed him that if he touched it again, that moment she would leave him. As he knew her to be a woman of her word, he did not venture to disturb it.

John Simmons was a young farmer. As he did not enlist, he lost the favor of the girls. In their resentment at what they felt was lack of courage, they always took occasion when opportunity offered to sing in his hearing the popular song, "Take your gun and go, John." They were probably unjust to him as he was sickly and did not live out the war. Luther Simmons, John's uncle, was the tavern keeper at Coalport. He was born in Maine. He furnished and drove one of the wagons which carried the Home Guards to Athens. He enlisted August 9, 1862, in Company G, Thirtieth I. V. I. On December 1, 1863, he was transferred to the Invalid Corps. He removed to Kansas.

Abel Stephenson was an Englishman. He enlisted September 8, 1861, in Company E, Second I. V. I. He was killed in battle at Corinth, Mississippi, October 4, 1862, the first one of the



**GEORGE TRABERT**  
At age of about 20 years.

**GEORGE CRAFF**  
At age of about 63 years.

**MAJ. A. R. PIERCE**  
Commander of the Coalport Home Guards.  
From a photo taken at the age of about 40 years.

**AUGUSTUS PANTZER**  
At age of about 27 years.

**WILLIAM HOPKIRK**  
At age of about 18 years.

Coalport Home Guards to give his life for his country. A brother, Daniel, is remembered as a weaver of fine coverlets. The products of his loom are cherished by their possessors for their artistry.

Swan Swanson was a Swedish immigrant. He was a farmer. He enlisted July 12, 1861, in Company K, Bissell's Engineering Corps of the West, a Missouri regiment. This is the only record of him found. A brother, Victor, recently died on the old home place.

George Trabert, not Travert, a Pennsylvanian by birth, was a farmer. He enlisted September 8, 1861, in Company E, Second I. V. I., and was mustered out September 7, 1864, at expiration of term of service. He removed to Red Oak, Iowa, and from there to Kansas.

Charles Monhonrick was called locally "Charley Blacksmith." The nickname shows the familiar relations he sustained with the community. He removed with his family to Kansas.

Henry Schmitline was a farmer. On the Athens expedition, in addition to his rifle, he carried a corn cutter. He removed to Nevada. A brother, John, who lives near Four Corners, Jefferson County, enlisted March 4, 1865, in the Thirty-sixth Illinois V. I. Other brothers went to Arizona, California and Nevada.

Philip Bedinger, not Redinger, an Ohioan by birth, was a coal miner. He enlisted August 11, 1862, in Company C, Twenty-fifth I. V. I. He was discharged for disability January 22, 1863, at St. Louis, Missouri. On returning from the army, he married and moved away. A cousin, William S., an Illinoisian by birth, enlisted February 29, 1864, in Company G, Thirtieth I. V. I. He was transferred to Company K, Sixth Infantry, May 30, 1865, and was mustered out July 21, 1865. He was a drummer.

Joseph Horton, an Illinoisian by birth, enlisted August 20, 1862, in Company G, Thirtieth I. V. I. He was wounded at Kenesaw Mountain, Georgia, June 15, 1864, and was discharged June 21, 1865, at Keokuk, Iowa. He died in Kansas. Samuel, John's brother, drove one of the wagons on the Athens expedition. He is reputed to have belonged to the Knights of the Golden Circle but is not charged with any disloyal intent. He

became a local Free Methodist preacher. John, a brother of Joseph and Samuel, enlisted March 28, 1864, in Company E, Second I. V. I. His service was brief as he was mustered out May 16, 1864.

John Birk and Gustaff Birk, father and son, were Swedes. John drove one of the wagons on the Athens expedition. They moved to Swedesburg, Henry County.

Oliver Toothaker was a son of John Toothaker. John Toothaker was born in Maine, 1784, was a soldier in the War of 1812 and died at Lockridge, October 10, 1886, at the advanced age of 102 years. He has this further distinction that in his ninety-fifth year he took to himself a second wife. Oliver moved first to Mount Ayr, Iowa, then to Ogallala, Nebraska, and then to Des Moines, Iowa, where he died. He is buried at Lockridge. His nephew and John's grandson, Charles W., an Iowan by birth, enlisted January 20, 1864, in Company M, Fourth I. V. C., and was mustered out August 8, 1865, at Atlanta, Georgia.

George Bänkhead, a Pennsylvanian by birth, was a mine operator. He enlisted August 9, 1862, in Company G, Thirtieth I. V. I. He died September 14, 1863, at Black River Bridge, Mississippi.

Charles Swan, a Swedish immigrant, was a farmer. He enlisted October 5, 1861, in Company C, Fourth I. V. C. He re-enlisted December 30, 1863, and was mustered out August 8, 1865, at Atlanta, Georgia. For a time after the war he ran a peddler's wagon. His subsequent history is unknown.

John Heron, not Herron, a Pennsylvanian by birth, was a mill operator. He enlisted September 8, 1861, in Company E, Second I. V. I., and was mustered out September 7, 1864. He was the representative from Jefferson County in 1878 in the Seventeenth General Assembly. He lives at Lockridge, one of three of the Coalport Home Guards now living.

Samuel Dougherty, a Marylander by birth, was both farmer and miner, carrying on the former calling in summer and the latter in winter. He enlisted September 8, 1861, in Company E, Second I. V. I. He was killed in battle May 29, 1864, at Dallas, Georgia. His son, Lemuel or G. L. Dougherty, for his given name was George Lemuel, an Ohioan by birth, first enlisted September 8, 1861, in Company E, Second I. V. I. He was dis-

charged for disability November 25, 1861. He next enlisted March 1, 1862, in Company M, Fourth I. V. C. He re-enlisted May 6, 1864, and was mustered out August 8, 1865, at Atlanta, Georgia. He died in 1874 at Burlington.

Henry Shiver, or Sheiber as the name is properly spelled, an Ohioan by birth, was a farmer. He enlisted October 31, 1861, in Company M, Fourth I. V. C. He re-enlisted December 11, 1863, received promotions until he became fifth sergeant, and was mustered out August 8, 1865, at Atlanta, Georgia. He lives, one of the three survivors of the Coalport Home Guards, though in poor health, with his son Charles near Four Corners.

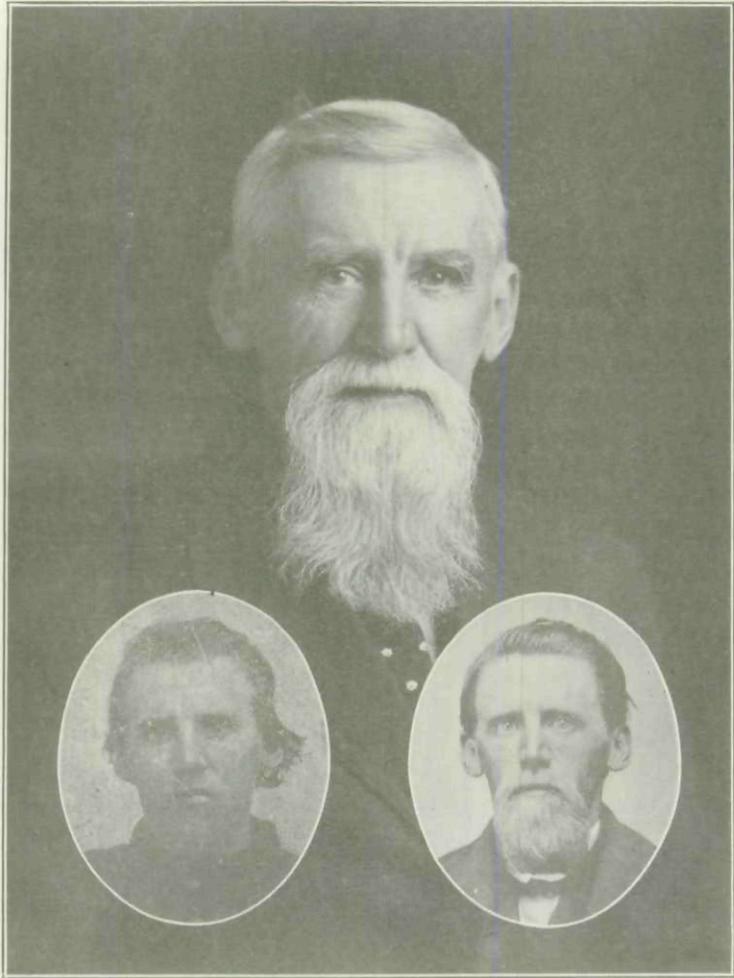
George Craff, not Craft, an Ohioan by birth, was a farmer. He enlisted September 8, 1861, in Company E, Second I. V. I. He was discharged for disability July 29, 1862. He lives at Lockridge, one of the three remaining of the Coalport Home Guards. An older brother, Michael, who was born in Germany, enlisted November 25, 1861, in Company M, Fourth I. V. C., and was mustered out December 5, 1864, at Memphis, Tennessee.

William H. Hopkirk, an Iowan by birth, was a cousin of William Hopkirk, the lieutenant. He was a farmer. He enlisted February 15, 1864, in Company M, Fourth I. V. C., and was mustered out May 19, 1865, at Davenport, Iowa. After the war he taught school in Fairfield, Agency, and Burlington. He died in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

David Brown, a Pennsylvanian by birth, was a mine operator. He enlisted August 9, 1862, in Company G, Thirtieth I. V. I. He was wounded on May 22, 1863, at Vicksburg. On March 23, 1865, he was discharged at Keokuk for wounds received in service. He died at Lockridge. His wife, still living, makes her home in Fairfield.

Augustus Pantzer, a German immigrant, was a farm hand who lived with the Craffs. He was called "Dutchman." He enlisted September 8, 1861, in Company E, Second I. V. I. He re-enlisted December 23, 1863. He was promoted to first corporal, and was mustered out July 12, 1865, at Louisville, Kentucky. He died at Goodland, Kansas.

Nathan Flanders, a Maine Yankee by birth, was a miner. He enlisted October 18, 1861, in Company M, Fourth I. V. C., and



HON. JOHN HERON

From a recent photograph.

JOHN HERON

Age 22 years. From a daguerreo type made during the Civil War.

JOHN HERON

From a photograph taken at the age of about 35 years.

was discharged for disability April 3, 1863, at Helena, Arkansas. On his return from the army, he married a sister of George Bankhead. They removed to Monroe County, where he died.

William Marker, or W. C. as the name sometimes appears, an Indianian by birth, was probably a miner. He enlisted November 2, 1861, in Company M, Fourth I. V. C. He died at Springfield, Missouri, May 5, 1862.

Henry Hugulet, not Hugrelet, a Swiss by birth, was a carpenter. He built William Hopkirk's house. He enlisted August 5, 1862, in Company G, Thirtieth I. V. I. He died September 1, 1863, at Black River Bridge, Mississippi.

Jacob Printz, a French immigrant, was a farm hand. He enlisted in the Union Army, from which after two or three years' service he was discharged for disability. He then married and settled on a farm near Coalport, where he lived until his death about three years later.

Jesse Skeers, an Indianian by birth, was a farm boy. He enlisted October 23, 1861, in Company M, Fourth I. V. C. He died of disease August 2, 1863, at Bridgeport, Mississippi. He is buried at Glendale. A brother, Charles, enlisted November 7, 1861, in Company M, Fourth I. V. C. He re-enlisted December 11, 1863, and was mustered out August 8, 1865, at Atlanta, Georgia. He lives in Mankato, Kansas. Another brother, Robert H., enlisted August 9, 1862, in Company B, Nineteenth I. V. I., and was mustered out July 10, 1865, at Mobile, Alabama. He died in Nebraska. Their father, Eli, a Pennsylvanian by birth, enlisted March 2, 1862, in Company M, Fourth I. V. C. He re-enlisted March 4, 1864. He died of disease November 16, 1864, and is also buried at Glendale.

Charles Howard, a Swedish immigrant, was a farmer. He enlisted September 28, 1861, in Co. K, Bissell's Engineering Corps of the West, which was a Missouri regiment. He removed to Nebraska.

John Lundquist, not Lonquist, a Swedish immigrant, was a farmer. He enlisted October 5, 1861, in Co. C, Fourth I. V. C. He was discharged at Keokuk, Iowa. Of him there is no further account.

This record, imperfect as it is, shows the devotion of the

pioneers of Iowa to their native or adopted land. These men, without thought of future recompense or reward, save only the safety of the state and the preservation of the Union, risked all that was dear to them in a cause whose appeal was for the performance of a sacred and imperative duty. They met a great need with the invincible spirit that has moved all heroes since the human race began to shape the destiny of the earth.

The writer is indebted to Mr. Charles Hiller of Kahoka, Missouri, for the story of Hiram Alexander Spruance, who was Mr. Hiller's cousin; to Mr. William Bankhead of Lockridge, for the description of Coalport; to Mr. Alex Hopkirk, Mr. Louis Hisel and Mr. James M. Gregg of Fairfield, and to Mr. George Craff and Hon. John Heron of Lockridge, for personal items; and to Mr. D. C. Mott for verification of military records.

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### THE TOMATO

Now is the time for gathering this healthy and most desirable vegetable, which is cooked in various ways according to the peculiar taste of people. As a salad it is good—as an omelet, with butter, eggs, and crumbs of bread, capital—it is good stuffed and baked—good stewed down close with a fat piece of beef and lima beans—in short, in what position is it not good? Recently the tomato has been successfully used in medical cases. It is good for a cough—soothing to the lungs. Use it freely in hot months to check the accumulation of bile. If you wish to dry and pack them away in bags for winter, gather them when ripe and scald them to get the skin off—then boil them with a little sugar and salt, but no water—spread them in thin cakes in the sun, and when dry pack them away in a dry room.—*New York Star*, republished in *Iowa Territorial Gazette* (Burlington), August 29, 1840. (In the newspaper collection of the Historical Department of Iowa.)

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