

LEWIS AND CLARKE'S EXPEDITION.

INCIDENTS ON THE WESTERN BORDER OF IOWA IN 1804.

BY HON. A. R. FULTON.

IN May, 1804, Captains Lewis and Clarke, under authority and direction of the Government of the United States, started on their memorable and perilous voyage of exploration up the Missouri River. Their party consisted of forty-two persons, twenty-one of whom were soldiers of the United States army. At that time there were but two small white settlements bordering on the Missouri River—one at St. Charles, twenty-two miles up, and the other at La Charette Creek, sixty-eight miles from the mouth of the Missouri. The latter consisted of only seven poor French families. The boats in which the explorers embarked consisted of a keel-boat, fifty-five feet long, partly covered, and two pirogues, or open boats, of smaller size. This was before the days of steam navigation.

After numerous wonderful adventures and strange interviews with the Osages and other tribes, we find the explorers, on the 14th of July, 1804, passing the mouth of the Nishnabotna, near the southwest corner of Iowa. There they encountered a herd of elk, the first they had seen in their passage up the Missouri. The fact is noted, that at a distance of twelve miles up the Missouri, above the mouth of the Nishnabotna, the latter stream is but three hundred yards from the former. On the 22d, the party encamped on the Iowa side of the Missouri, at a point about ten miles above Platte River, where they remained until the 27th, for the purpose of making observations, holding interviews with the natives, and preparing dispatches to the Government, to be transmitted by messengers who had accompanied the expedition thus far. This station, or encampment, was near the mouth of Mosquito Creek, in the northwest corner of Mills County. Here they found a great abundance of ripe wild grapes, and saw deer, wild turkeys and grouse. Continuing their journey, on the 30th they again encamped for three days at a point on the

Nebraska side of the river, where they held a council with the Otoes and the Missouris. From this circumstance, they named the place Council Bluffs. It was a short distance above the site of our present city of that name, but on the other side of the river. On the fourth day, after leaving camp at Council Bluffs, the boats passed the mouth of another little Iowa river, called by their French guide *Petite Riviere des Sioux*, or Little Sioux River. The Sioux Indians called it *Eaneahwadepou*, or Stone River.

After many more brief stoppages on both sides of the river, on the 18th of August they landed on the Nebraska side, at a point nearly opposite the southwest corner of the present Iowa county of Woodbury. Here they held another council with a party of Otoe and Missouri chiefs, who received a number of the presents with which the explorers had been provided. They had now accomplished about one thousand miles of their journey without any serious disaster, or the loss of any of the party. In camp on the 19th, at the place where the council was held, Sergeant Charles Floyd, of the expedition, became very sick, and remained so all night. The next morning, however, which was Monday, August 20th, the party set out on their passage up the river. Having, as the account says, "a fine wind and fine weather," they made thirteen miles, and at 2 o'clock P. M. landed for dinner on the Iowa side of the river. The place of landing was under some bluffs that approached near the river. Here Sergeant Floyd became worse, and it was soon evident to his companions that he must die. A little before his death he said to Capt. Clarke, "I am going to leave you; I want you to write me a letter." Before he could impart further directions, his strength failed him, and he passed away, as the journal of the expedition says, "with a composure that justified the high opinion we had formed of his firmness and good conduct."

Near the place of his death the body of Sergeant Floyd was buried by his comrades with the honors due to a brave soldier. The grave was on the top of a high bluff, some two hundred feet above the bed of the Missouri. It was marked by a cedar post, on which the name of the deceased was

inscribed, with the date of his death. A short distance above the place of interment, a small river, about thirty yards wide, flows into the Missouri, and here the party encamped until the next day. Captains Lewis and Clark gave to this stream the name "Floyd River," to perpetuate the memory of the first man who had fallen in this expedition.

Nearly eighty years have passed away since that bright summer afternoon, when that little grief-stricken band of adventurers gathered on the summit of that "prairie hill," as they termed it, to perform the last sad rites on the mortal remains of one of their beloved companions. For nearly half a century from that day the savage continued to hold undisputed possession of all that vast region, and still that frail wooden monument remained to mark the resting-place of the dead. It was during the great freshet, in the spring of 1857, that the turbulent Missouri swept away a portion of the bluff, so as to expose a part of the remains of the soldier. Then the good citizens of Sioux City and vicinity came together one day, and re-interred them some distance back from the river on the same bluff. Judge M. F. Moore delivered an oration, and other appropriate ceremonies marked the occasion.

MEMORIAL OF SERGEANT FLOYD.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

A band of noble men were they,
Who, on that fair midsummer day,
Moored their rude craft by yonder shore,
Where broad Missouri's waters roar.

Three moons ere this, with buoyant heart,
Each man went forth to act his part;
With leaders brave did they embark—
Chivalric Lewis and noble Clarke.

Where now we see proud cities, then
Were prowling beasts and savage men;
And each new scene was weird and wild—
The home of Nature's untaught child.

Passed many weary, toilsome days,
Till August's sun sent down his rays;

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