

Sergeant Floyd's Journal

Sergeant Charles Floyd was one of the outstanding members of the Lewis and Clark expedition. His grandfather, William Floyd, migrated from Wales to Virginia early in the eighteenth century. He died in Amherst County in 1779, leaving five sons and seven daughters. In the fall of 1779 eight of these children, four sons and four daughters, migrated to Kentucky and settled at Bear Grass in Jefferson County near Louisville. The best known of these brothers was Colonel John Floyd, an officer in the Revolutionary War. Another brother, Charles, a surveyor and a friend of Daniel Boone, is supposed to have been the father of Sergeant Charles Floyd. Although the birth date of Sergeant Floyd is unknown, he is believed to have been born in Jefferson County, Kentucky, sometime between the years 1780 and 1785.

The Floyd family has given to America some notable pioneers, Indian fighters, soldiers, and statesmen. The family was on intimate terms with the Boones and the Clarks. The choice of William Clark as one of the two leaders of the Lewis and Clark expedition may account in part at least for the enlistment of Charles Floyd as one of the

nine Kentuckians to embark on this great adventure.

The Floyd Journal which follows is necessarily the briefest of all the journals kept on the expedition. The first entry was made on May 13th and the last on August 18th, two days before Floyd's death. These dates cover ninety-nine days, thirty-one of which record his adventures along the western border of Iowa. For several days in late June, Floyd was unable to make his own entries because "my hand is painfull." Again, on July 31st, Floyd wrote: "I am verry Sick and Has ben for Somtime but have Recovered my helth again." Thereafter his entries were normal in length until August 16th.

Sergeant Floyd recorded the departure of Lewis and Clark from Camp Dubois on a "Showery" Monday in May. The swift waters of the Missouri were difficult to stem and Floyd ordered his men to pitch camp on the north bank of the Big Muddy six miles above its mouth. Early the following afternoon the expedition arrived at St. Charles and awaited the arrival of Lewis from St. Louis. On May 21st they left St. Charles, making a scant four miles upstream. The following day they made fifteen miles before encamping. Indians arrived with four deer and were given two quarts of whiskey.

On May 23 the expedition passed the Femme Osage River where some Kentuckians, including

Daniel Boone, had settled just before the turn of the century. On May 25 they pitched camp near a French village which Floyd described as the "Last Setelment of whites on this River." Two days later they passed the mouth of the Gasconade and on June 1st reached the Osage River. On June 2nd, while most of the men were engaged in measuring the width of the Missouri and the Osage, some hunters went out and killed four deer. Upon their return they reported to Floyd that the land they traversed was "as Good as aney they ever saw."

Continuing upstream past the mouth of the Kansas River, the expedition slowly approached the mouths of the rivers that had their headwaters in southwestern Iowa. The following is the complete Floyd Journal from July 4 until his death.

Wensday July 4th 1804

Set out verry erley this morning passed the mouth of a Beyeu leading from a Lake on the N. Side this Lake is Large and was once the Bend of the River it reaches Parrel for Several miles Came to on the South Side to Dine rest a Short time a Snake Bit Jo. Fieldes on the Side of the foot which Sweled much apply Barks to Coor [cure] and passed a Creek on the South Side a bout 15 yards wide Coming out of an extensive Prarie as the Creek has no name and this Day is the 4th of July we name this Independance Creek above this Creek the wood Land is about 200 yards Back of these wood is an extensive Praria open and High whigh may be Seen Six or Seven below saw Grat number of Goslins to day nearley Grown the Last mentioned prairie I call Jo. Fieldes Snake prarie Cap^t

Lewis walked on Shore we camped at one of the Butiful Praries I ever Saw open and butifulley Divided with Hills and vallies all presenting themselves

Thursday July 5th 1804

Set out errley this morning Swam ouer Stray Horse a Cross the River to Join our other Horses prossed [proceed] on for two miles under the Bank of the old Kansas village formaley Stood in 1724 the couse [cause] of the Indians moving from this place I cant Larn but natreley Concluded that war has reduced thair nation and Compelled them to Retir further in to the Plaines with a view of Defending themselves and to operserve their enemey and to Defende them Selves on Horse Back encampt on the South Side

Friday July 6th 1804

Set out prossed under a Jentell Brees from the South west the water wase So [s]trong that we could Hardley Steem [stem] it Came 12 miles encampt at the mouth of a Creek on the South Side of the River Called Whipperwill Creek it is 15 yards wide

Saturday July 7th

Set out errley prosed [proceed] along, passed some Strong [fast] water on the South Side, which Compelled us to Draw up by the Cord Clear morning verry warm Strong water Came 10 miles Camt on the N. Side

Sunday July 8th

Set out at Sun Rise Rain Last night with wind from the E. passed some Good Land to day and High passed a Creek on the N. Side it Cam in Back of Isla[n]d it is a Bout 70 Yards wide Called Nadawa [Nodaway River] Creek the Land is Good and well timberd Camt on the N. Side

Monday July 9th 1804

Set out erley this morning prosed on passed a Small Creek on the South Side Called monter Creek High Land Rain to day Sailed the Gratist part of the day passed a prarie on the South Side whare Seve[r]al French famileys had Setled and made Corn Some Years ago Stayed two years the Indians came Freckentley [frequently] to See them and was verry frendley passed a Creek on the South Side Called wolf Creek it is about 60 yards wide the Land is Good water Strong made 10 miles encampt on the South Side Saw a fire on the N. Side thought it was ouer flanken partey Sent ouer perogue over for them and when they got over Saw no fire Seposed it to be Indians fired ouer Cannon for ouer men

Tuesday July 10th

Set out when we Could See, about us, when we Came to the place it was ouer men which had Left us two days ago, much feteged [fatigued] had Lay down and fell asleap passed a Small Creek on the South Side Called pape Creek it Comes through Bottom Land it is Called after a man who by drawning his Gun out of the Boat Shot him Self passed Som Strong water Campt on the North Side the Land is good

Wendesday, July, 11th, 1804.

Set out errley this morning prosed on passed a Creek on the N. Side Called Tarcio [Little Tarkio] Creek it Comes in Back of a Is^d on the N. Side Came to about 12 oclock P. m for the porpos of resting on[e] or two days the men is all Sick encampt on an Is^d, on the Southe Side floos in Creek Called Granma mohug [Big Nemaha] Creek it is about 100 yards wide the Land is good and well timber^d High and well Waterd this Creek Runs up and Heds near the River platt [Platte]

Thursday July 12th

Som Hunters out on the No. Side those on the South Side not Return Last night ouer object in Delaying hear is to tak Some observations and rest the men who are much fategeued, armes and amunition enpected all in Good order

Friday July 13th

Set out erley in the morning prosed on our Jorney passed a Creek on the N. Side Called the Big Tarkuo [Tarkio] River it is about 40 yads wide and verry mirey for Horses to Cross the Land is Low a verry hard Storm Last night from the N. E. which Lasted for about one ouer proseded with a Small S[h]ouer of Rain wind fare Sailed all day Came 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles Camt on a Sand Bare in the midel of the River a Small Shouer of Rain

Saturday July 14th 1804

Set out at day Lite Came one mile and $\frac{1}{2}$ Came a Dredfulle hard Storme from the South which Lasted for about one ouer and half which Cosed us to Jump out and hold hir She Shipt about 2 Barrels of water Came one mile the wind fare Sailed, passed a Creek on the N Side Called Neeshba Creek [Nishnabotna River] it is about 40 yards wide the Land is Low encamt on the Southe Side

Sunday July 15th 1804

Set out at Six oclock A. m pased a Creek on the South Side Called Plumb Run water verry Strong passed a Creek on the South Side Called Nemahaw Creek it is about 30 yards wide the Land is High and Good encamt on the South Side.

Monday July 16th

we Set out verry early and prosed on the Side of a Prarie the wind from the South Sailed ouer Boat Run

on a Sawyer Sailed all day made 20 miles passed Sevrall Isd Camt on the North Side

Tuesday July 17th 1804

Lay by all this day for to kill Som fresh meat Capt. Lewis & Go. Druger went out Hunting Drugher Killed 3 Deer the Land is prarie Land the Blufs puts in about 2 miles from the River and all prarie Land betwen which Runs up and Down for Som distance from 20 to 30 miles

Wendesday July 18th 1804

we Set out at Sun Rise the day Clear wind fair Sailed the Side of the Prarie Hear we toed for about 5 or 6 miles the Elke Sine [sign] is [v]erry plenty Deer is not as plenty as it was below passed Som High Clifts on the South Side Which hase the apperence of Iron ore the Clay is Red passed a verry Strong pace of Water. Saw a Dog on the Bank Which we Sepose to be Indians had ben Lost this is the first Sine of Indians we have Saw Camptd on the South Side the Land is Low that on the N. Side [Iowa] is prarie Land

Thursday July 19th

we Set out errley this morning prosed on passed a Run on the South Side Has no name we Called Cherry Run the Land is High Cliefts [cliffs] and pore whare a Grate number of thos Cherres thay Gro on Low Bushes about as High as a mans hed Came 9 miles past Several Is^d water Strong Campt on the South Side on a Small willow Is^d near the South Side the Land on the N. is Low, Land that on the South is High prarie Land

Friday July 20th

Set out at 6 oclock proseded on passed [t]he mouth of a Creek on the South Side Called Crys Creek it is about 35 yards wide it Comes in above Clifts oppset a willow Is^d at this Clift thare is a fine Spring on the

MANDAN VILLAGES WHERE LEWIS AND CLARK WINTERED



From Maximilian's *Travels*

Mandans on the Frozen Missouri

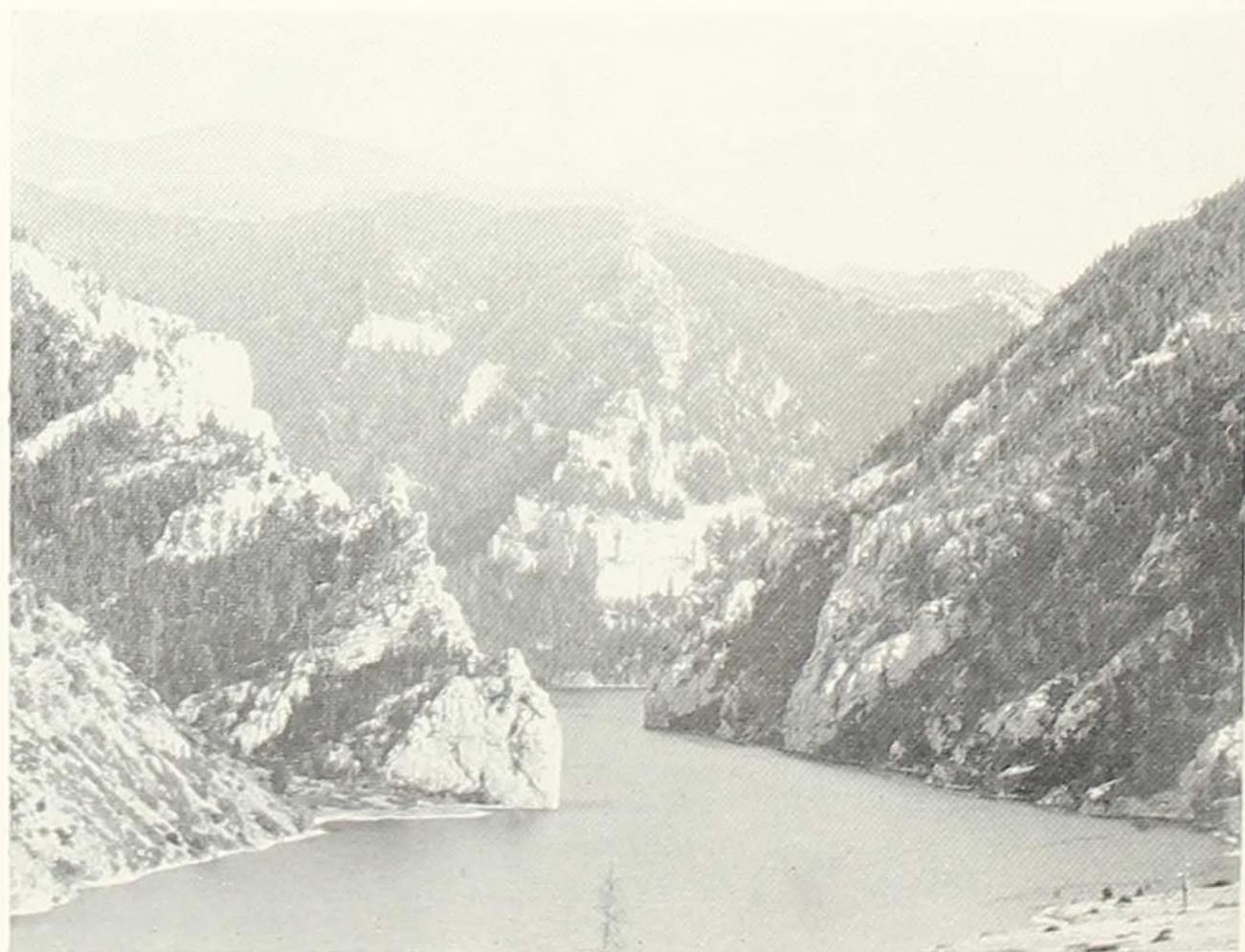


From Maximilian's *Travels*

A Mandan Village: Bullboats in Foreground



Courtesy Montana Historical Society
Sacajawea Hotel at Three Forks, Montana



Courtesy Montana Historical Society
Gates of the Mountains, Missouri River

top of this Hill is oppen prarie passed a Creek on the N. Side Called Pigen [Pigeon] Creek the Land is Low that on the South is High prarie Land passed Several Bad Sand Bares Camp on the South Side under a Large Hill

Saturday July 21th 1804

Set out at 4 oclock a m prossed on ouer Jouney Rain this morning wind fair Sailed passed the mouth of the Grait River Plate [Platte] on the South Side it is much more Rappided than the missorea [Missouri] it is about from one mile to 3 miles wide the Sand Roles out and formes Large Sand Bares in the middel of the missorea up the Plate about one mile the Hilles of Prarie Land about 2 days and half up the Plate 2 nations of Indians Lives vic [viz.] The Souttoes [Oto] the Ponney [Pawnee] this River is not navigable for Boats to Go up it passed a Creek Called the [blank space in MS.] on the South Side it is about 20 yardes wide it Comes out of a Large Prarie Camp on the South Side

Sunday July 22^d

Set out verry erley this morning prossed on in Hopes to find Some Wood Land near the mouth of this first mentioned River but Could not we prossed on about 10 miles at Lenth found Som on Both Sides of the River encamp on the North Side

monday July 23^d 1804

We Lay By for the porpos of Resting and take Som observations at this place and to Send for Som Indians Sent George Drouger and ouer Bowsman w[h]o is aquainted with the nations nothing worth Relating to day

tuesday July 24th

we mad Larg and Long f[l]ags Staff and Histed it up

Histed ouer Collars [colors] in the morning for the Resep-
tions of Indians who we expected Hear when the Rain
and wind Came So that we wase forst to take it down
Sent Some of ouer men out to Hunt Some ore [oar]
timber for to make Some ores as the timber of that Coind
is verry [s]Carse up the River Continued Showery all
day

Wendesday July 25th

Continued Hear as the Capts is not Don there Riting
ouer men Returnd whome we had Sent to the town and
found non of them at Home but Seen Some fresh Sine of
them.

Thursday July 26th

ouer men fineshed the oares nothing worth Relating
except the wind was verry villant from the South Est

Friday July 27th

Swam ouer Horses over on to the South Side on acount
of the travilen is beter Set out at 12 oclock P. m prossed
on under a Jentell Brees from the South Este Sailed
made 10 miles encamt on the South Side at Prarie

Saturday July 28th

Set out verry erley this morning prossed on passed a
Creek on the North Side Called Beaver Creek is about
20 yards wide the Land is Low that on the South is
Prarie Land Rain the fore part of the day the Latter
part Clear with wind from the North Est. made 10 miles
Campt on the N. Side the Land is Low that on the
South is High prarie Land ouer flanken partey Came
with one Indian thay found on the South Side

Sunday July 29th

we Set out after we Dspashed the Indian and one of
ouer men with him to bring the Rest of his party the

Reason this man Gives of His being with so small a party is that He Has not Got Horses to Go in the Large praries after the Bufflows but Stayes about the Town and River to Hunte the Elke to separte thare famileys passed the mouth of Boyers [Boyer] River on the N. Side it about 30 yards wide the Land is Low Bottom Land out from the River is High Hills Camp't on the North Side at a prarie

monday July 30th

Set out verry erley this morning Cam 3 miles Sopt [stopped] for the man whome we Had Sent with the Indian yesterday He has not Return'd Yet Sent 2 men out Hunting Did not Return Last night Camp't on the South Side at prarie

Tuesday July 31th 1804

we Lay By for to See the Indianes who we expect Hear to See the Captains. I am verry Sick and Has ben for Somtime but have Recoverd my helth again the Indianes have not Come yet this place is Called Council Bluff 2 men went out on the 30th of July and Lost ouer horses

Wendesday august 1th 1804

Lay by all this day expecting the Indianes every ouer Sent George Drougher out to Hunt ouer Horses Sent one man Down the River to whare we eat Diner on the 28th of July to See if aney Indianes Had been thare He Return'd and Saw no Sigen of them

Thursday auguste 2^d

Ouer men hough [who] we had Sent after ouer Horses Return'd With them and Killed one Elke ouer men Killed 3 Deer to day the Indianes Came who we had expected thay fired meney Guns when thay Came in Site of us and we ansered them with the Cannon thay Came in about 2 hundred yardes of us Capt Lewis and Clark met them

at Shakeing Handes we fired another Cannon there wase 6 Chiefs and 7 men and one French man with them who has Lived with them for som yeares and has a family with them

Friday august 3th

the Council was held and all partes was agreed the Captens Give them meney presentes thes is the ottoe and the Missouriies the Missouriies is a verry Small nathion the ottoes is a verry Large nathion So thay Live in one village on the Plate River after the Council was over we took ouer Leave of them and embarked at 3 oclock P. m under a Jentell Brees from the South Est Sailed made 6 miles Campt on the South Side the Land Low, that on the N. prarie Land.

Satturday august 4th 1804

Set out erly this morning after the Rain was over it Rained Last night with wind and thunder from the N. W. it Lasted about an ouer prossed on the morning Clear passed a Creek on the South Side as it has no name and the Council was Held below it about 7 miles we Call it Council Creek or Pond this Creek Comes out of a Large Pond which Lays under the High prarie Hills the wood Land is not plenty hear ondley along the River Banks in places, passed Som bad Sand bares camt on the South Side a Large prarie that on the N. is prarie Land

Sunday august 5th

Set out erley this morning Cam 2 miles when a verry hard Storm of wind and Rain from the North Est it Lasted a bout 2 ouers and Cleard up I have Remarked that I have not heard much thunder in this Countrey Lightning is Common as in other Countreys a verry Large Snake was Killed to day Called the Bull Snake his Colure Somthing Like a Rattel Snake passed Sev-

erall Bad Sand bares made 16 miles Camp^t on the North Side at Som wood Land that on the South is wood Land

monday August 6th 1804

we Set out at a erley ouer this morning prossed on passed a Creek on the N. Side Called Soldiers Creek [Soldier River] it Comes in Back of a Isld near the N. S. about 12 oclock Last night a villant Storm of wind and Rain from the N. W. Cam^t on the South Side the Land is Low that on the N. S. the Saim

Tuesday August 7th

Set out at 6 oclock A. m prossed on day Clear wind from the North west on the 4th of this month one of ouer men by the name of Moses B. Reed went Back to ouer Camp whare we had Left in the morning, to Git his Knife which he Had Left at the Camp the Boat went on and He Did not Return, that night nor the next day nor Night, [u]pon examining his nap-Sack we found that he had taken his Cloas and all His powder and Balles, and had hid them out that night and had made that an excuse to Desarte from us with out aney Jest Case we never minded the Said man u[n]till the 7th we Sent 4 men after him we expect he will make for the ottoe town as it is not mor than 2 days Journey from whare he Run away from us Water Good made 16 miles Camp^d on the North Sid at Some Wood Land

Wendesday Aug^t 8th 1804

Set out this morning at the usele time day Clear wind from the N. W. prossed on passed the mouth of the Littel Soue [Little Sioux] River on the N. Side it is about 80 yards wide this River is navigable for Boates to Go up it for Som Distance in the Cuntrey and Runes paralel with the Missourie 2 miles above on a Sand Bare

Saw Grait Number of Pelicans Capt Clark went out on the South Side and Jo Collines Killed on[e] Elke water Bad mad 12 miles Camp^d on the N. Side the Land is Low march Land that on the South is prarie Land

Thursday augt the 9th

Set out at 7 oclock a, m, after the fague [fog] was Gon which is verry thick in this Cuntrey Cap^t Clark and my Self went out on the South side passed a verry Bad place in the River whare the water is verry Shellow mad 17 miles Camp^d on the South Side at prarie

Friday augt the 10th

Set out at errley ouer this morning prosed on passed a bad Sand bare Which is verry Shallow made 23 miles Camped on a sand bare on the N. Side the Land on the S. S. is High Hilley Land

Saturday august 11th 1804

Set out after a verry hard Storm this morning of wind and Rain continued untill 9 oclock A m. and Cleard up prosed on passed a high Bluff whare the Kinge of the Mahas [Omahas] Died about 4 yeares ago the Hill on which he is berred [buried] is about 300 feet High the nathion Goes 2 or 3 times a year to Cryes over him Cap^t Lewis and Clark went up on the Hill to See the Grave thay histed a flage on his Grave as noner [an honor] for him which will pleas the Indianes, passed the mouth of a Creek on the South Side Called Waie Con Di Peeche or the Grait Sperit is Bad whare this Chief died and about 300 Hundred of his men with the Small pox this Chiefs name was the Black Bird made 15 miles Camped on the North Side

Sunday august 12th 1804

Set out at the usel time prosed on under a Jentel Brees from North Est Sailed day Clear passed Red Seeder

Bluffs on the South Side made 16 miles Camped on a Sand bare in the middel of the River

Monday august 13th

Set out verry erley this morning prosed on under a Jentel Brees from the South-Est Sailed morning Clouday about 10 o.ck. it Cleared up we aRived at the Mahas village about 2 oclock P m Sent Som of ouer men to Se if aney of the natives was at Home thay Returnd found none of them at Home

Tuesday August 14th

Lay by for ouer men How we had Sent after the Desarter on the 7th thes Indians has not Live at the town Sence the Smallpoks was so bad about 4 years ago thay Burnt thare town and onley live about it in the winter and in the Spring Go all of them in the praries after the Buflow and dos not Return untill the fall to meet the french traders thay Rase no Corn nor aney thing excep Som times thay Rase Som Corn and then the Ottoe nation Comes and Cuts it Down while thay are in the praries

Wendesday august 15th

Capt Clark and 10 of his men and my Self went to the Mahas Creek a fishen and Caut 300 and 17 fish of Difernt Coindes ouer men has not Returnd yet

Thursday august 16th

Capt Lewis and 12 of his men went to the Creek a fishen Caut 709 fish Difernt Coindes

Friday august 17th

Continued Hear for ouer men thay did not Return Last night

Saturday augt 18th

ouer men Returnd and Brot with them the man and Brot with them the Grand Chief of the ottoes and 2 Loer ones and 6 youers [others?] of thare nattion

Sergeant Floyd became ill the next day and died on August 20th. The following spring Lewis wrote Jefferson that he had sent the Floyd journal to Captain Stoddard in St. Louis. Some years later it was acquired by Dr. Lyman C. Draper and deposited in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin where Dr. Reuben G. Thwaites discovered it in 1893 among the Draper papers. It was written in a $5\frac{7}{8}$ by $7\frac{1}{2}$ inch notebook with marble boards.

The Floyd Monument at Sioux City stands as a fitting memorial to the young Kentuckian who died while passing along the western border of Iowa. The inscription on the obelisk reads:

FLOYD
THIS SHAFT
MARKS THE BURIAL PLACE OF
SERGEANT CHARLES FLOYD
A MEMBER OF THE
LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION
HE DIED IN HIS COUNTRY'S SERVICE
AND WAS BURIED NEAR THIS SPOT
AUGUST 20 1804

GRAVES OF SUCH MEN ARE PILGRIM SHRINES
SHRINES TO WHICH NO CLASS OR CREED CONFINED

ERECTED A D 1900
BY THE
FLOYD MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION
AIDED BY THE UNITED STATES
AND THE STATE OF IOWA

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN