

Vignettes of Bygone Days

Memorial Day grew out of the Civil War and was designated to honor the heroic dead who fell in that epic struggle. Today it serves not only as the most fitting occasion on which to strew flowers and decorate the graves of all our soldier dead but also to visit and decorate the graves of all who lie at rest in our cemeteries throughout the Nation, and indeed, the world.

Honoring the dead is an ancient custom, one that dates back into antiquity. In Iowa the famous Effigy Mounds are a spectacular illustration of an Indian custom dating back long before the coming of the white man to America. Other Indian burials in Iowa actually antedate the Christian era.

The death of an eighteen-year-old Indian maiden near Montrose in 1837 was recorded by Dr. Isaac Galland in the *Western Adventurer and Herald of the Upper Mississippi*, the second newspaper printed in Iowa, which enjoyed only a brief existence. By some act of fate the story was read by Mrs. Lydia H. Sigourney, a popular American poetess, after whom Sigourney, Iowa, is named. She promptly wrote "Indian Girl's Burial." The girl's name, Kalawequois, was

adopted by the old Kalawequois Club, which had its rooms in the Estes building in Keokuk. It was a flourishing young men's social club which disbanded in 1899 when the Keokuk Club was organized.

In 1923 a granite marker was erected over the grave of Kalawequois on Highway 61 by Jean Espy Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Fort Madison.

The following pages honor men and women who now lie buried in Iowa.

Grave of Kalawequois

Montrose

"In the vicinity of Montrose, Wisconsin Territory, the only daughter of an Indian woman of the Sac tribe, died of lingering consumption, at the age of eighteen. A few of her own race, and a few of the pale-faces were at the grave, but none wept, save the poor mother."—Herald of the Upper Mississippi.

From *Poetical Works: Devotional and Miscellaneous Poems*, by Mrs. L. H. Sigourney. Philadelphia, 1885.

INDIAN GIRL'S BURIAL

A voice upon the prairies
A cry of woman's woe,
That mingleth with the autumn blast
All fitfully and low;
It is a mother's wailing;
Hath earth another tone
Like that with which a mother mourns
Her lost, her only one?

Pale faces gather round her,
They mark'd the storm swell high
That rends and wrecks the tossing soul,
But their cold, blue eyes are dry.
Pale faces gaze upon her,
As the wild winds caught her moan,
But she was an Indian mother,
So she wept her tears alone.

Long o'er that wasted idol,
She watch'd, and toil'd, and pray'd,
Though every dreary dawn reveal'd
Some ravage Death had made,
Till the fleshless sinews started,
And hope no opiate gave,
And hoarse, and hollow grew her voice,
An echo from the grave.

She was a gentle creature,
Of raven eye and tress,
And dove-like were the tones that breath'd
Her bosom's tenderness,
Save when some quick emotion,
The warm blood strongly sent,
To revel in her olive-cheek
So richly eloquent.

I said Consumption smote her,
And the healer's art was vain,
But she was an Indian maiden,
So none deplor'd her pain;
None, save that widow'd mother,
Who now by her open tomb,
Is writhing like the smitten wretch
Whom judgment marks for doom.

Alas! that lowly cabin,
That bed beside the wall,

That seat beneath the mantling vine,
They're lone and empty all.
What hand shall pluck the tall, green corn
That ripeneth on the plain?
Since she for whom the board was spread
Must ne'er return again.

Rest, rest, thou Indian maiden,
Nor let thy murmuring shade
Grieve that those pale-brow'd ones with scorn
Thy burial rite survey'd;
There's many a king whose funeral
A black-rob'd realm shall see,
For whom no tear of grief is shed
Like that which falls for thee.

Yes, rest thee, forest maiden!
Beneath thy native tree;
The proud may boast their little day
Then sink to dust like thee:
But there's many a one whose funeral
With nodding plumes may be,
Whom nature nor affection mourn,
As here they mourn for thee.

Floyd Monument

Sioux City

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

Revolutionary War Soldiers

(Buried in Iowa)

| <i>Name</i> | <i>Birthplace</i> | <i>Where Buried</i> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Benjamin Bell | Virginia (1751) | Boone County (1853) |
| William Blair | Pennsylvania (1760) | Des Moines County (1840) |
| Timothy Breese (or Breece) | | Lee County |
| Nathan Brown | New York (1761) | Linn County (1842) |
| Timothy Brown | New Jersey (1761) | Washington County (1852) |
| William Crockett | | Washington County (1849) |
| Nathaniel Fellows, Sr. | New Hampshire (1758) | Johnson County (1838) |
| Charles Harry | Virginia (1760) | Cedar County (1843) |
| John Lepper | | Clinton County (1840) |
| Samuel S. Lewis | Ireland (1766) | Washington County (1851) |
| Martin Linn | | Cedar County (186) |
| John Morgan | Virginia (1758) | Des Moines County (1843) |
| John Osborn | Virginia (1763) | Linn County (1854) |
| George Perkins | South Carolina (1754) | Lee County (1840) |
| Achilles Rogers | Virginia (1761) | Keokuk County (1854) |
| Richard Scarrem (or Scarren) | | Mahaska County |
| Charles Shepherd | Pennsylvania (1760) | Henry County (1848) |
| Lawrence Van Hook | New Jersey (1755) | Jackson County (1854) |
| Nathan Winton | Connecticut | Davis County (1846) |

During the past fifty years the number of marked authenticated graves of Revolutionary War soldiers has been tripled through the careful research of a few students. It has been estimated that the present list of Revolutionary War soldiers' graves might well be doubled. A goodly number of names has already been compiled but these have not been fully authenticated.

The graves of War of 1812 soldiers buried in Iowa have never been marked. The number who ultimately came to Iowa and died would probably run into the hundreds. The memory of these men is best commemorated by the grave of Robert Lucas in Iowa City. Lucas was a Brigadier General in the Ohio Militia. He served in the disastrous Detroit campaign under General William Hull. His journal of that campaign was used in the court martial proceedings against Hull and has been published by the State Historical Society.

The graves of men who fought in the Black Hawk War and the Mexican War are for the most part unidentified and unmarked. But their deeds should not be forgotten nor should their graves, when found, remain unmarked. Their names, like their deeds, are one of Iowa's most priceless possessions. Paraphrasing the incomparable "Ding" Darling we can only admonish: "Count that State Lost which Forgets Its Honored Dead."

WILLIAM J. PETERSEN