

CENTENNIAL POEM

Croton

Here where a lonely land lay deep and still;
Here where a brave, new town raised
steeples in the sun
Here where each family kept a latch string
out;

These peaceful friendly homes became a gar-
rison.

A wise old moon spilled down its silvered
light

As it had looked on wars of other men;
Each nighttime shadow stalked with sudden
death,

Ready to strike, not knowing where or when.

The August sun rose high to see the brutal
frenzy,

Dreaming streets in one short night enlarged
To border battlefields, men gone mad with
fury

Carried cannoned death each time they
charged.

Now Croton dreams again beneath an August
sun

Old twilight shadows curve the river's edge,
Yesterday's honor blazes high again and
newer dreams—

Fidelity to purpose every man must pledge.
Debtors to them, then born to flame and
sorrow

Who fought so we walk proud in their
tomorrow.

—Helen Virden
Mt. Pleasant



IOWA

WILL LONG REMEMBER

THE CIVIL WAR

1861

1865



Iowa.
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IOWA STATE TRAVELING LIBRARY
DES MOINES, IOWA

*"Our liberties we prize, and our
rights we will maintain"*

unb.



(Prepared for the Iowa Civil War Centennial
Commission by Edith Wasson McElroy.)

unb.

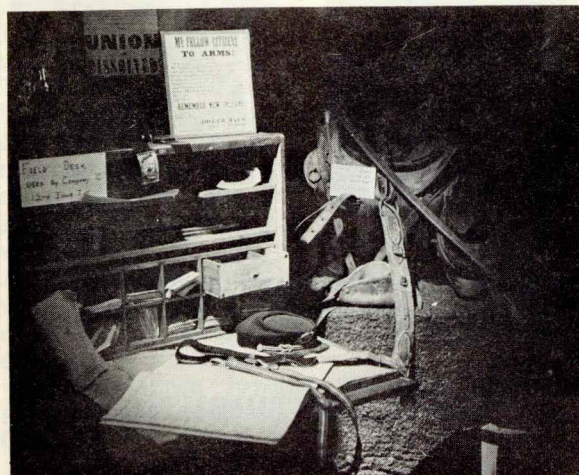
Iowa Civil War Centennial
Commission

Iowa will long remember
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Field desk used by Co. C, 12th Iowa Vol. Inf. largely recruited at Upper Iowa University at Fayette. (Part of the University's exhibit at Iowa State Fair, 1961.)

IOWA GOES TO WAR

At the time of Lincoln's election, the nation's leaders knew the country was sitting on a volcano—a volcano ready to erupt at any moment.

While Lincoln in Illinois awaited his inauguration, Governor Kirkwood visited him bearing the message that although Iowa was excited over the unhappy state of the Union, the state would never consent to the dissolution of the Union.

"Iowa will not," said Governor Kirkwood stoutly, "be frightened into abandoning its principles."

In April, 1861, Fort Sumter was attacked and war blazed.

President Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 volunteers and, true to its pledge, Iowans in an outpouring of patriotism volunteered in such numbers that Governor Kirkwood wrote exultantly to Secretary of War Cameron: "Ten days ago we had two parties in this state: today we have but one and that one is for the Constitution and the Union unconditionally."

So many volunteered that Iowa's quota of one regiment was filled to overflowing and the Governor organized two additional regiments. To the War Department he reported: "I can raise 10,000 men in this state but we have no arms; do for God's sake send us some!"



*Maj. Gen.
Grenville M. Dodge*

legislative duty done, many members hurried from the state house to don a uniform.

Called in special session in May, 1861, the General Assembly, in one of its shortest sessions with major business to consider, pledged "the faith, credit, and resources of the state of Iowa." \$800,000 worth of bonds, a staggering sum in the Sixties, was voted. Their

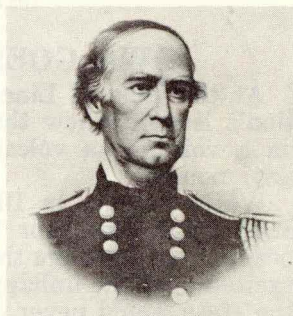
IOWA'S CONTRIBUTION

In the census of 1860, Iowa had a population of 675,000 of which number 116,000 were subject to military duty. The state, not yet 15 years old when the Battle of Bull Run was fought, sent 75,000 volunteers into the army, more than one-sixth of whom (over 13,000) were in their graves before Appomattox. Percentage wise Iowa contributed more men to military service than did any other state, North or South. Iowans left farm and village and school to fight from Wilson's Creek in Missouri to Atlanta in Georgia.

Forty-eight infantry regiments, nine cavalry regiments and four artillery companies were organized during the four years of fighting. Almost one-half of the eligible male population in Iowa bore arms; a record that has never been exceeded in any war since.

Iowa had four major-generals, Dodge, Curtis, Steele and Herron; and a number of brigadier generals and colonels. Many of these men were prominent in the state and nation following the war.

Belknap became Secretary of War; Bussey became Assistant Secretary of the Interior; Dye became Superintendent of the Metropolitan Police of Washington, D. C.; Dodge was a power in the Union Pacific Railway.



*Maj. Gen.
Samuel R. Curtis*

Iowa troops fought in the Battle of Wilson's Creek in Missouri, Pea Ridge in Arkansas, Fort Donelson, Shiloh and Chattanooga in Tennessee, Vicksburg and Corinth in Mississippi. They marched with Sherman to the sea. Iowa regiments were with the Union

Army of the Potomac in Virginia and fought with General Phil Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley. They died of starvation in Andersonville Prison.

Twenty-seven Iowans won the Congressional Medal of Honor, first awarded in the Civil War.



*Brig. Gen.
William W. Belknap*

THE HOME FRONT



*Drum Major 35th Iowa
Volunteer Infantry*

With so many able-bodied men in the field, carrying on at home fell to the women. To the already heavy tasks, in a day when each home was a self-sufficient unit, was added the burden of production on the farm, in the shop, wherever men laid down their work.

The equipping of volunteers was a community responsibility. Women gathered to stitch the uniforms, often by hand. Lacking a standardized style, each regiment or company selected its own. Woolens were scarce and availability of material often decided style and trim. Not all the diligent workers were accomplished tailors. In letters home the men complained of uniforms "too big in the wrong places" and of knitted socks that fit "like sacks".

Each community had its Soldiers Aid Society. The members sewed, knit, prepared lint and bandages, and necessities for the army. They raised money to purchase sanitary stores. For the first time in war, a concerted effort to care for the disabled and wounded was undertaken.

Cherished hand-woven blankets accompanied the men to the field. Copper kettles and iron skillet were sacrificed for use in preparing rations. Iowa families tightened their belts and endured short rations to send food to their men.

Money raising activities of the 60's followed much the same pattern as do those of today. Mush and milk suppers were popular. Boiling hot mush was ladled from great kettles in which it sputtered and puffed over crackling wood fires. Splashed with cold milk, flavored with sugar or sorghum, and sold for a few cents a serving, it put money into the fund and a moment of cheer into desolate days.

ANNIE WITTENMYER, CIVIL WAR HEROINE



Mrs. Annie Wittenmyer

Early in the war, the U. S. Sanitary Commission was organized in New York. Its objective was to aid the troops. The movement spread rapidly. Sanitary fairs were held where objects of every description were sold to raise money. Women sacrificed heirlooms of silver and china. Furniture, town lots, pumps, animals, were sold in this Civil War version of today's rummage sale.

In the beginning, Iowa's contributions went to the U. S. Commission in New York. Later, that supplies might be kept closer to home, contributions went to the Western Sanitary Commission in St. Louis. Finally, in response to the demand that Iowa's contributions go to its own men, the Iowa Sanitary Commission was formed with Mrs. Annie Wittenmyer of Keokuk as its president.

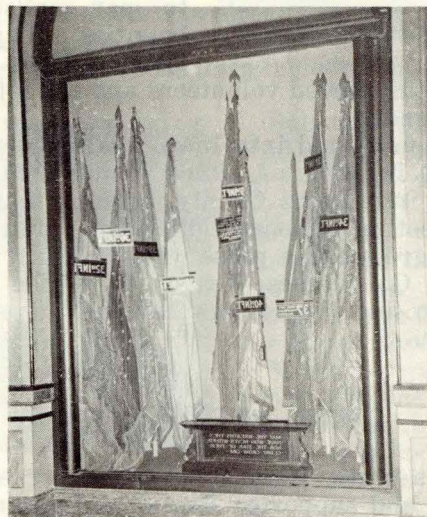
Annie Turner Wittenmyer was born in Ohio. Her mother claimed descent from soldier of fortune John Smith of Virginia. At the age of 20, Annie married prosperous William Wittenmyer, such older than herself, and moved to Keokuk.

When the war began, she was a financially independent widow, a cold-eyed executive type with boundless energy. In war work

she found the answer to her urge for public service. She began in camps and hospitals around Keokuk, and soon was organizing supplies for the battle front.

The legislature named her a Sanitary Commission agent and she established the first Diet Kitchen for field use. A born leader, calm, sensible, she became the close friend of other leaders of the day, including General and Mrs. Grant, and President Lincoln who consulted with her concerning sanitary conditions in the army.

Mrs. Wittenmyer is only one of many Iowa Civil War heroines. Courageous women braved flying bullets on the battlefields to care for the injured. Women drudged untiringly in hospitals under unimaginable conditions. They befriended the families of absent soldiers.



Battered Civil War colors displayed in State House. Included are flags of First Regiment, Iowa colored infantry, and 37th Inf. known as the Graybeards, all over 45 years old.

THE WAR AT HOME

History records no battles on Iowa soil, but Iowa had its inner turmoil. Invasion was a threat from slave-owning Missouri and from the warlike Sioux to the northwest. Guerilla warfare flared from time to time.

The Sioux ravaged southern Minnesota spreading terror among Iowa's scattered northwest settlements. Log stockades to shelter women and children were built from Chain of Lakes in Emmet County to Sioux City. The organization of the Iowa Border Brigade brought security to the settlers and discouraged the Sioux from invading the state.



Col. James B. Weaver

In 1862, Lincoln called for 300,000 volunteers. Iowa's quota was 10,570. A draft loomed and draft riots threatened. Gov. Kirkwood called a special session of the legislature which authorized protection of the Missouri border and the northwest frontier, as well as giving counties the authority to levy taxes for support of soldiers' families and to pay enlistment bounties. Happily this action pro-

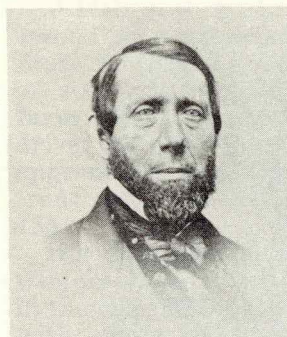
duced the needed volunteers and the internal crisis ended.

The final raid into Iowa was by Missouri guards in 1864. A dozen young men rode boldly into Davis County, robbing, murdering, looting. Bloomfield's county fair was in progress and a posse was quickly formed. Under Col. James Weaver they rode forth only to find the raiders had fled across the border.

IOWA STOOD FAST

As a state, Iowa stood staunchly by the Union and supported President Lincoln, but due to increasing difficulties in the war, those opposing it grew bolder. Many Iowans came from the south and others had strong sympathy for slavery and believed in a state's right to secede. The so-called *Peace Democrats* or *Copperheads* and other fifth columnists such as the "Knights of the Golden Circle" worked openly against enlistments and the draft. The Knights, it is said, were organized in every township in the state, 42,000 members in all. Refugee Confederate soldiers and paid agents fomented the dissension.

Peace Democrats paraded through South English, challenging townspeople gathered in a Republican convention. A shot was fired which led to others. Tally, leader of the Peace Democrats, was killed. Rumors flashed that a band of several thousand armed men was readying an attack on the town.



Gov. Samuel J. Kirkwood

not to their liking and the "Skunk River War" ended.

Gov. Kirkwood ordered eleven companies of the Home Guard to the scene and hurried there himself. Faced with armed resistance and the resolute Kirkwood, the Tally enthusiasts lost their thirst for revenge and disbanded. Disputing Iowa's armed might was

IOWA'S WAR GOVERNORS

Gov. Kirkwood was already in office when the war began. He was followed by Colonel William Stone whose term included the latter years of the war.



Mrs. Samuel J. Kirkwood

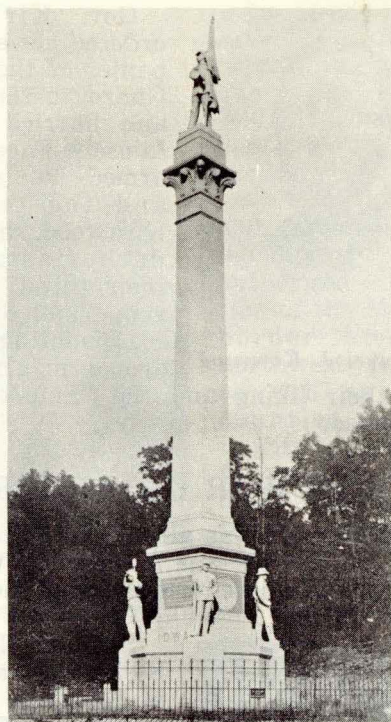
Samuel Jordan Kirkwood was born in Maryland during the War of 1812. His father was a farmer and the boy grew up in a log house pre-dating the Revolution.

When he was ten years old he was sent to Washington, D. C., to school and much of his early life was spent in that city.

Following financial reverses, his father moved to Ohio, and Samuel, then twenty years old, accompanied the family traveling by covered wagon over the Cumberland Trail. They settled in Mansfield.

During the next few years, young Kirkwood tried various occupations and found none to his liking until Judge Bartley, prominent Mansfield attorney, asked him to read law in the Bartley office. A few months after Kirkwood passed the bar he became a partner of the judge.

In 1844 Judge Bartley was made governor which left the responsibilities of the partnership to Kirkwood. This brought him to public attention, especially politically. Until 1854 he acted with the Democratic Party, but opposed as he was to slavery, he was unable to support Stephen Douglas' Kansas-Nebraska bill and vigorously attacked it.



Iowa monument at Ross-ville Gap through which General Sherman marched into Georgia.

In 1854, Kirkwood and his wife moved to Iowa City. At first his business affairs occupied his time but in 1856 he was a delegate to a convention for the purpose of organizing the Republican Party in Iowa.

From that time, the name of Samuel Jordan Kirkwood was well known in political circles. He was a member of the 6th General Assembly and strongly supported James W. Grimes for U. S. Senator. He served as chairman of the Republican state central committee. In 1859 he was elected governor, and in a hard fought campaign supported Lincoln for president.

Difficulties such as have never confronted any other Iowa governor faced him. His second campaign for Governor received little of his attention but he was re-elected.

In 1863, the legislature named him to fill the unexpired term of James Harlan as U. S. Senator. In 1875 he was again elected governor and during this term the legislature elected him to a six year term in the U. S. Senate.

In 1881, he resigned his Senate seat to become Secretary of the Interior. In 1882, almost seventy years old, he retired to Iowa City to spend the final days of his life.

WILLIAM MILO STONE was Iowa's second war governor. Born in New York State in 1827, he moved to Ohio at the age of six. At thirteen he was working as a farm hand, and two years later as a team-driver on the Ohio Canal. At eighteen he apprenticed to a chairmaker, following that trade until he was admitted to the bar in 1851.

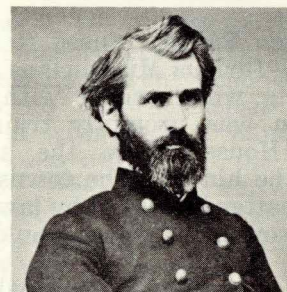
His formal education consisted of two winters in a country school. He read law in the office of James Matthews of Coshocton, with whom he practiced until he moved to Iowa where he established himself in Knoxville. Two years later he purchased the *Knoxville Journal*, and became its editor and publisher.

An active Republican, he was elected district judge holding the office until Ft. Sumter was fired on. When the word came he adjourned court, and hurried home to Knoxville where he raised a company of which he became captain. A few weeks later, he received his majority. In the Battle of Blue Hills he was wounded, and at Shiloh taken prisoner.

After three months' captivity, he was chosen one of three Federal officers paroled by the Confederates to arrange an exchange of prisoners in Washington. The mission was unsuccessful and Stone returned to Richmond and surrendered to the Confederate authorities. So pleased was Jefferson Davis with his conduct, that he sent him back to make another try. This time the mission was accomplished and a general exchange followed.

His experiences as prisoner of war gave Stone much publicity, and when he returned to Knoxville after his liberation he was made Colonel of the 22nd Iowa Infantry. During this service he was wounded at Vicksburg and ordered home.

While recuperating, he was nominated as governor and resigned his commission to make the campaign which elected him.



Gov. William M. Stone

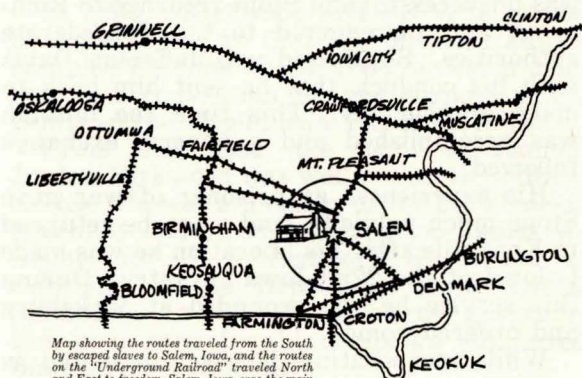
A slender, erect, handsome man, he possessed unlimited self-confidence and tremendous industry. His military service popularized him with the soldiers. A less able man than Kirkwood, his administration was even more popular.

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Preceding the Civil War, an organization known as the Underground Railroad actively assisted runaway slaves to reach Canada and freedom. Negroes fleeing their masters were sheltered, fed, clothed, in "stations" located in barns, homes, public buildings, wherever devoted men and women could find a few hours safety for their charges.

Iowa had many stations on the route in buildings which still exist. One of the best known stations was Salem, a typical frontier village of the day. Its settlers were predominantly Quakers, many of whom had left the Carolinas in protest against slavery.

At risk of their lives, the people of Salem befriended the runaways. Armed Missourians with baying bloodhounds often rode close on the fleeing slaves. Irate slave owners threatened to shoot or hang those helping the blacks and to burn the town.



Map showing the routes traveled from the South by escaped slaves to Salem, Iowa, and the routes on the "Underground Railroad" traveled North and East to freedom. Salem, Iowa, was the main "Office" on this carefully organized escape route set up by Quakers.

Once when Salem refused to release the negroes, the furious Missourians sent for reinforcements who arrived with a cannon. The cannon was promptly trained on the Lewelling House where the slaves were claimed to be hiding. The townspeople proposed the matter be settled by law. If ownership was proved, the slaves would be handed over.

Court was convened in the Quaker meeting house. After listening to both sides the

justice decided the evidence was insufficient and acquitted the negroes of being fugitive slaves. The disgruntled Missourians departed without their prey and the negroes were hurried on to Canada.

The stately stone Lewelling House sheltered by spreading cedars still stands, and is open to the public. In its kitchen, furnished as in Civil War days, the caretaker will lift the cellar door and point out the stone steps down which the slaves were led for hiding.

IOWA'S ONLY BATTLEFIELD

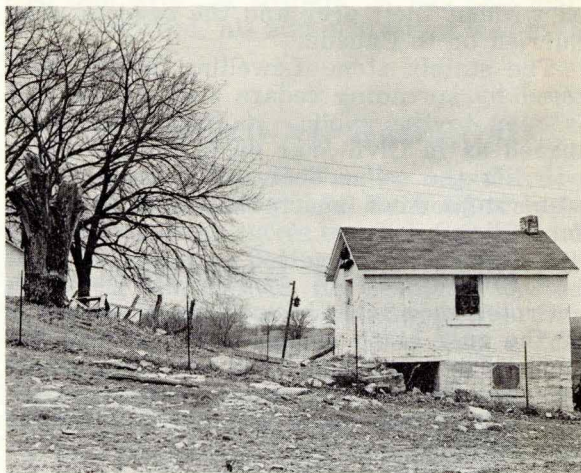
Croton each year observes the anniversary of the only battle on Iowa soil during the Civil War. Actually only bullets reached the Iowa side of the river. The battle, or skirmish as historians term it, was fought at Athens, Missouri.

The Des Moines River formed a boundary between north and south in the struggle, but the feelings of residents were not so clearly defined. In one school near Athens, a pro-southern teacher's attempt to influence children of Union parents precipitated a school battle injuring several pupils. When angry parents headed for the school, the teacher fled never to be heard of again.



Benning House, Athens, Missouri. Note shot hole at left of east doorway.

When news of the routing of Union troops at Bull Run flashed across the nation, Missouri secessionists went wild and Iowa's border counties felt themselves in danger. Citizens slept with guns at hand and Governor Kirkwood authorized the organizing of militia in southeastern Iowa. When rumor spread the rebels were marching north boasting they would breakfast in Athens, dine in Farmington, and sup in Keokuk, a few Home Guards and virtually unarmed recruits were the border's only defense.



Old spring house at Camp Harlan. Soldiers' initials whittled in its stone walls are plainly visible.

On Sunday, August 4, word came that a band of Confederates, the number varying from 500 to 1,500, was approaching Athens. Mexican War veteran Capt. David Moore, born in Missouri, whose sons were rumored to be with the oncoming rebels, aided by Col. Belknap's Rifles and Capt. Sample's Cavalry (on foot at the moment) from Keokuk, met the enemy and routed them.

During the fight, men from Primrose, Salem and surrounding communities armed with whatever weapons they had, many with only hatchets, knives and clubs, hurried to Croton, ready to defend their homes should the Johnny Rebs cross the river.

The number of casualties varies. The Keokuk *Gate City* listed the Confederate dead as 43. The *Chicago Tribune* gave the dead as 14 and the wounded as 40.

Two landmarks are silent proof that war touched Iowa. The Benning home in which a cannon ball went through the wall. The Sprouse House where wounded were cared for, and in which the elder Sprouse, among the battle wounded, later died.

The Sprouse House has been presented to the Iowa Society for the Preservation of Historic Landmarks, as a permanent monument to the battle. It is the hope a state park will be developed there.

IOWA'S GRAYBEARDS

By special authority of the War Department, the 37th Iowa Volunteer Infantry was made up of men beyond military age. Their average age was 57. More than one hundred were in their 60's. A number were 70. One man on the roster was past 80.

Organized in October, 1862, the regiment reached St. Louis on New Year's Day, 1863, to serve as provost and prison guards. Later that year the Graybeards were sent to Alton, Ill., and from there to Rock Island, again to serve as prison guards.

They were next shipped to Memphis, Tenn., to guard supply trains. Here they met their one great moment of war. Passing through guerilla territory, the train was attacked. Undaunted the old frontiersmen returned shot for shot. Four men were wounded of whom two died.

Riding atop swaying trains proving too strenuous for aged bodies, the regiment was sent to Ohio, again serving as guards.

Hard-bitten veterans of Indian wars and pioneer hardships, they complained of Col. Geo. W. Kincaid's strict discipline, but they had a high reputation for guard duty, treating their prisoners more humanely than was common in that day.

After Lee's surrender, the weary Graybeards asked to go home. Gen. Willich in recommending their discharge pointed out they had given some 1,300 sons and grandsons to the Union Blues.

On May 24, 1865, the regiment was mustered out at Davenport.



Brass Napoleon gun on lawn at State Historical Building.

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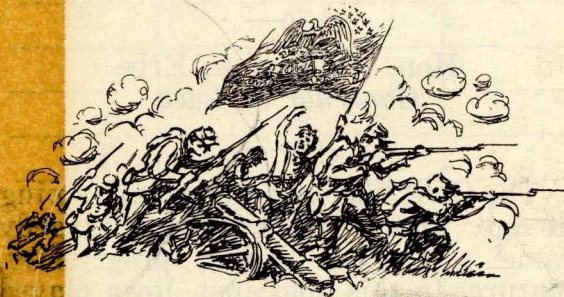
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