

**MANY NOTABLES TRAVERSE FOX-WISCONSIN PORTAGE
SINCE NICOLLET MENTIONED IT 284 YEARS AGO—
HISTORICAL CELEBRATION AT OLD FT. WINNEBAGO**

Portage, Wis., Sept. 2.—It was here, in this vast arena of the northwest, that "America, France and England underwent the training and education which give to them the blood and sinew whereby they can wrestle down the beast of Berlin," said Rev. William Dawson, Episcopal rector in this city, in an instructive address at the Fort Winnebago celebration today. It was a notable occasion with hundreds present from far roundabout including many from Madison; and they gathered on the lawn of the old Indian agency house, built between 1830 and 1833, still in good condition, and occupied by J. H. Kinzie, agent, and his brilliant wife, the latter author of Wau-Bun and mother of a girl who before dying was the oldest living white child born in Chicago. This child was Eleanor Augusta Kinzie, born in 1835, who at 22 married W. W. Gordon of Georgia, distinguished later as a confederate general, and died Feb. 23, 1917, the most honored woman in Savannah. A letter of regret and of appreciation from W. W. Gordon, attorney of Savannah, grandson of Wm. Kinzie, was read by O. D. Brandenburg of Madison. Mrs. Gordon left another son, G. Arthur Gordon, now with the Red Cross in France. He too is a lawyer; and three Gordon daughters survive—Mrs. Richard Wayne Parker of Newark, N. J., Mrs. W. M. Low and the Hon. Mrs. Rowland Leigh of London, England, besides several grandchildren. John H. Kinzie is a Savannah businessman also descended from the author of Wau-Bun. Kinzie street, Chicago, was named for the father-in-law of this author, and his home was the first in that city. He settled there in 1804.

Fascinating Story

The observance today was jointly by the Sauk County Historical society, with which it originated, and the State Historical and the State Arch-

aeological societies. Mr. Dawson, in an historical address showing much research, dwelt especially on the significance of the Fox-Wisconsin portage. Upwards of 200 people attended.

Fascinating indeed, he said, is the story connected with these two rivers through two centuries of trade and strife, and a certain solemnity gathers about the neighborhood, for it was on this portage that the tribes, ambassadors, traders, soldiers, missionaries and explorers halted on their adventurous careers—here they met, fought, organized, camped, counselled and traded.

To Marquette belongs the honor of having first given the world a description of the portage over which he passed in 1673 on his way to the Mississippi. He was the first of many other Jesuit missionaries, whose names have been written into our history.

The history of the portage, said Mr. Dawson, may be divided into two periods—the period of occupation and exploration, first by the French, and later by the British; and the period of American occupation. The first begins in 1673 and ends in 1796, the second begins in 1796 and ends in 1853 when Fort Winnebago was dismantled and sold by the United States government.

284 Years Ago!

Jean Nicollet was the first man in our history to make mention of the portage. In 1634 he came up the Fox as far as the village of the Mascoutins, and although he did not reach the portage, he makes mention of the portage reported to him by the Indians where he stayed. Radisson was undoubtedly the second white man to cross the portage on his way to the Mississippi in 1659. The third notable character to cross the portage was Marquette, and in company of Jolliet, the official leader of the expedition. In 1683 Le Sueur passed over the portage on his way

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from Green Bay to the Mississippi. In 1685 Nicolas Perrot, with an army of 20 men, was commanded by the Governor of New France to hold in subjection the vast territories explored and claimed for France by Nicollet, Marquette, Jolliet and La Salle. In the fulfilment of this order he traversed the two waterways and crossed the portage. Father Louis Hennepin, the Franciscan, crossed in 1680, and has described his trip in his series of letters entitled *The New Discovery*. Baron La Hontan, another French writer and traveler, crossed in 1687, and his journey is portrayed in his book edited by the late Reuben G. Thwaites, entitled, *New Voyages*. Another noted French priest, Father St. Cosme, a native of Quebec, in 1699, was ordered by his superior to journey to the Mississippi. When he arrived at Green Bay he found the route impracticable, owing to the opposition of the Foxes who controlled the waterway.

The Fox-Wisconsin was the main route from Canada to the Mississippi. While farthest from Montreal it was the first of the six great Portage highways between the great lakes and the great river to be used by the French, and because of the opposition of the Iroquois, it continued to be long preferred to many of the more convenient eastern portages. Many expeditions were sent out by the French to chastise the savages in the two river valleys. One of the most notable of these lieutenants was Charles de LaPoudre, who became the first white settler of Wisconsin. On one of the expeditions sent out to punish the recalcitrant savages was one under Langlade, when every wigwam and cornfield from Green Bay to the portage was burned. Langlade has been faithfully commemorated in an exhaustive biography by P. V. Lawson of Menasha.

In 1760 the French were driven out of Canada by the British. The Mackinac garrison retreated by way of this route, and crossed the portage on its way to the Illinois, a journey which took six months on account of being held at the Rock river during the winter.

Carver's Transit

Jonathan Carver was the first notable British traveler to cross the portage. This was in 1766. Peter Pond made an early visit to Wisconsin in 1774 in the interest of the fur trade. In 1778, the portage became the rendezvous of an expedition under Charles Gautier, a Frenchman, a nephew of Langlade, now in the

employ of the British. The St. Louis expedition passed the portage in 1780. Joseph Anisee held a council of the Indians at the portage in 1786, and here delivered a message to the savages from the governor of Mackinac. About 1800 a fur trade post was here established. This was the beginning of business in Portage. In 1810 the overland division of the Astorian expedition to the Pacific went westward by way of the portage.

It was the fur trade that wrested the west from savagery, said Mr. Lawson, and no great factor in human progress ever had such an insignificant beginning. For a century and a half the portage moor between the two rivers had been freely traveled by a motley procession of Indians, Jesuits, explorers, traders, voyageurs and soldiers. A well beaten path was formed here, each party doing its own work of transportation across the narrow neck of land, a mile and a half long, or employing Indians in the neighborhood.

First Forwarder

With the coming of the furpost we see the beginnings of permanent settlement by the white man. In 1793 Laurent Barth obtained permission from the Indians to set up business at the portage as forwarder. A horse and a rudely constructed barge on wheels, upon which was slung the canoes or batteaux. Barth was followed by Jean Ecuyer, a creole, who had married the sister of the resident Winnebago chief. He started this rival line in 1798. Later came August Grignon and Jacques Porlier of Green Bay in 1801 and a man named Campbell in 1803. Laurent Filly was the transportation agent in 1810, and during the war of 1812-15 Francis LeRoy carried on the business. Pierre Pauquette was the most notable of all the transportation men at the portage. A man of great strength and of splendid character, he was John Jacob Astor's agent, and the interpreter of the Indian tribes in the vicinity. His tragic death at 45 was mourned by all. An Indian shot him.

In 1827 occurred the surrender of the noted Indian chieftain, Red Bird, at the portage. This surrender marks the end of the Indian domination of the two river valleys and the beginning of the permanent white settlement under the protection of the United States government. Red Bird stands out as one of the most splendid types of the savage that roamed these river valleys for long ages, but whose reign now came to an end.

Fort Established in 1828

With the passing of Red Bird begins the history of Fort Winnebago, extending from 1828 to 1853, when the flag was lowered and the fort sold by order of Jefferson Davis, then secretary of war. It is notable that Major Twiggs who built the fort and Jefferson Davis who came there as a lieutenant with Twiggs both turned against the United States government in the war of the rebellion. Mrs. John H. Kinzie, the wife of the Indian agent at the fort, has described in Wau-Bun the life and doings at the fort in those early days. Jefferson Davis was the man who superintended the manufacture of the furniture of the fort, "and he was a better cabinet maker than a nation builder," as his after experience proved, said the Yanks. The fort was built by the soldiers, who went up the Wisconsin river and procured pine with which to build, and stone was gotten out of a local quarry. The bricks were burned two miles away.

Novelist Comes

Captain Marryat, the noted traveler and writer, visited the fort in 1837. The fort was evacuated in 1845, but a soldier took care of the fort until 1853 when it was sold at auction, and thus passed away, the most distinguished landmark of the portage. The old well is still there, and some of the buildings have been moved, and made into barns. The old agency house is the only building that remains intact.

All Allies Now

There is a divinity that shapes our ends not only as individuals, but as nations. "Today the flags of France, England and America float together on the world's battlefields, and will burn their terrific way to the sanctum sanctorum of despotism. It was in this vast arena of the northwest that these three great democracies underwent that training and education which gave to them the blood and sinew whereby they can wrestle down the mad beast of Berlin." The word that is written across the page of 200 years of the history of these waterways is America! The spirit of Nicollet, Marquette and La Salle all point Americaward, and their blood and spirit have passed into the 100,000 Wisconsin lads who have gone back to France to pay the debt we owe, declared Mr. Dawson in closing.

Incidents.

A picnic luncheon, the singing of

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America, a walk over the portage, now mostly a rural highway, a glance at the Joliet-Marquette tablet at the Wisconsin river end of the portage, a ramble over the fort site, now a farm, a peep into the old well, said to have been in the very center of the stockade, the last souvenir that remains, an inspection of the roomy agency house of two high stories, half a mile away, where Mrs. Kinzie was wont to entertain Jefferson Davis, then a young lieutenant of gaiety and affability, and numerous others, no doubt with all the wit and sensibility of which Wau-Bun is a convincing testimonial, the search for nails and iron scraps a-plenty in the sand where stood the blacksmith shop, ninety-and-more years ago, and a drink from the ancient spring where the canal joins the Fox, a few rods from the agency house—these were varied incidents of a delightful day.

Among Those Present.

Among those present from Madison were Rev. P. B. Knox, a curator of the State Historical society; Frank L. Gilbert, M. M. Quaipe and family, Miss Louise P. Kellogg, Professor A. S. Flint, C. B. Lester, A. O. Barton, S. E. Lathrop and several others.

Others present were P. V. Lawson, historian of the Menasha region, and family; Miss Deborah Martin of Green Bay, a daughter of Morgan L. Martin, foremost among the early pioneers of that region who traversed the state with Judge Doty in territorial days; A. C. Neville, head of the Historical society at Green Bay, and his wife; H. E. Cole of Baraboo, a curator of the State Historical society, and wife, and many others from that city; R. P. Perry and wife, Mrs. M. M. Rudd, D. O. Stine and wife, Miss Freda Meyer, Henry Verthein and wife, and Mrs. Estella Howland, all of Reedsburg, and many others from Oshkosh, Portage, and all the country roundabout.

E. S. Baker, who owns the Indian agency property, devoted the day to the visitors as guide, assisted by the people in the vicinity.