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MAGAZINE OF HISTORY;
VOL. 1-1905, NO. 1-4**

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VARIOUS

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The Indiana Quarterly Magazine of History

Volume I--1905

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INDIANAPOLIS INDIANA
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John B. Dillon.

INDIAN'S FIRST CHIEF.

The Indiana Magazine of History

VOL. I

FIRST QUARTER, 1905

NO. 1

Our Reasons for Being.

BY way of introducing this magazine and justifying its existence we cannot, perhaps, do better than repeat, in substance, what was said in a *Prospectus* recently issued by us.

That the historical material of Indiana has never been adequately preserved and rendered accessible is a fact patent to all who have occasion to deal with such material. The dereliction of the State itself in the earlier days in caring even for its official documents exemplifies a neglect that has been general. By way of illustration, on the old statute books stand laws that require the preservation in the State Library of a number of copies of the general and local laws, and of the Senate, House and Documentary Journals; that require the careful indexing of the Documentary Journals; that require the alphabetical arrangement and binding into volumes of bills, petitions and other legislative papers. No efforts seem to have been made until later years to obey any of these statutory requirements, and so far as the culpable neglect has been rectified it was by the collections and clerical efforts of recent librarians. Even with these efforts complete sets of our State documents have not been secured, and much other matter of value has passed away beyond recovery.

Much material not within the jurisdiction of the State has also passed away and is daily passing. Old men who have had a part in the history of the commonwealth die, and with them is going the last dwindling remnant of first-hand knowledge of the phases of life that have been; they leave papers, journals and various documents of interest, and these, descending to indifferent heirs, become irretrievably lost. To gather from surviving pioneers their testimonies, and to save from oblivion documents still accessible is a thing to be desired.

An interest in these things in this State sufficient to support a magazine of local history is only a matter of time. Such interest is not a sporadic one but a natural growth. Already something like a score of States are represented by as many periodical historical

Early Neglect of
Documentary
Material

Present Preventable
Losses.

Awakening Interest in Other States.

publications, a number of them quarterly magazines, devoted to the preservation of local material. Some of these, such as Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, are younger States than ours with, perhaps, less history to record. Most of the publications mentioned have back of them the Historical Societies of their several States. We, unfortunately can look to no central organization for such support, but local societies are springing up in a number of counties, and if these will evince an interest proportionate to the service we can render them they can go far toward making our publication a success.

To the members of these societies and to others who think an interest in our past worth promoting as of value to the present, then, we make an appeal. We have launched the magazine at a venture and at some sacrifice in the faith that if we can make a worthy showing the support will be forthcoming. It is not our disposition to resort to any foisting or booming method. We assume that the class we desire and hope to reach will take our effort exactly at its worth, and that if every page we present to them is full of matter that justifies itself no better advertisement will be needed. For the first year, if need be, we are willing to make no account of managerial and editorial labors if the actual cost of publishing, distributing and associated expenses are covered.

This, of course, is experimental and is by no means the limit of our hope. If our success justifies it we shall certainly expand our scheme. One feature much to be desired, but prohibited in the start by cost, is the reproduction of old maps and cuts of interest, many of which exist but are lost to all but the delver.

The publication will be strictly what it purports to be at the start—a magazine devoted to the preservation and collating of matter that is of real value to the historical student.

Character and Scope of Publication.

There will be no space given to advertising "write-ups," and no cheap padding. Of matter within its legitimate field there is an abundance, and outside of this field it will make no bid for popular favor.

Its intended scope (subject to extension, as may seem advisable) is—

1. The seeking out and publishing of hitherto unprinted documents that have an historical value.
2. The re-printing of valuable and interesting matter that is buried away and practically lost in old newspaper files. Of this

there is much that is wholly forgotten, and, owing to the absence of any guide, to be found only after long and patient research.

3. The conducting of a department of bibliography of historical material now scattered through periodicals and local histories, and of an indexing system that shall comprehend all important official publications besides other matter of interest. We believe that this will at once commend itself to all who have had occasion to search out obscure information.

4. The binding together into a co-operative system (and this is one of the important and hopeful objects) the various local historical societies in the State, as well as the encouraging and promoting of other such societies. The needful thing in Indiana to-day, in this direction, is the historical "atmosphere," that shall stimulate work all along the line and inspire the student in history with a sense of the usefulness of such study. This once existing there is no reason why much should not be accomplished, and it is to those who have already started societies and otherwise manifested an interest that we must look for the creation of such an atmosphere by the uniting of their efforts.

5. The publication of original studies in Indiana history by careful and trustworthy students. Some of the best history work being done at present is intensive, dealing with special aspects and of limited compass, but, by a corresponding thoroughness, particularly illustrative of great principles. Of work of this character we can secure enough to add a desirable feature to our plan.

6. The promoting of history work, particularly State and local history, among teachers and in the schools. On this point we wish to be distinctly understood. The habit of "working" the schools as a lucrative field with many and various private enterprises is an evil conspicuous, we presume, to most school officials, and obvious to us. We have no intention of attempting to persuade teachers and trustees as to their needs—they themselves should know their needs better than we do—but this we have in mind: the interest in home history is making way in the schools; in the development of this interest and the directing of it to the most useful ends help and co-operation not available hitherto will surely be a need. Such help and co-operation we are ready to extend to the best of our ability.

To sum up, we feel quite satisfied that we can carry out acceptably and well our proposed venture if our friends encourage it, and we hope to receive this encouragement.

John Brown Dillon

The Father of Indiana History

IT is eminently fitting that we should begin this magazine with a sketch of the man who not only ranks as Indiana's first and best historian, but whose ideals, methods, character and accomplishment we deem worthy to keep continually in mind as a model to follow in historical work.

John B. Dillon may fairly be called "the father of Indiana history," for he was the first to enter that field with any seriousness of purpose, and his contributions exceed in value any that have come after. His real merit is best appreciated by those who seek historic truth and accuracy—who want facts authenticated by the evidences of thorough, conscientious research, and who like the same told in simple, direct language, with no sacrifices for the sake of a popular style. The sense of his perfect honesty and trustworthiness continually grows upon one that has occasion to use him much, and the student of the period and locality with which he deals inevitably comes to use him as the most satisfactory authority. No higher compliment than this can be paid to a historian. Bancroft, Parkman, Prescott, Motley were not more devoted to their chosen course than Dillon, nor brought to their tasks riper qualifications, and had he wrought in the broader field his name might have ranked with theirs in the world's estimation. He had certain noble ideas, severe and simple, as to the office of the historian, and no artist was truer to his art than he to this ideal. They were not ideas that catered in any sense to that popular taste that demands the picturesque whatever may be the fate of truth. It is quite safe to say that he would not, if he had been able, have heralded his works with a blast of trumpets; and that, perhaps, is why even his own friends, as has been affirmed, did not read his books and why he died in poverty.

Mr. Dillon, as a man, was modest to shyness, and so little disposed to talk about himself, even to his nearest friends, that something like a mystery seems to hang over his life. According to the best authority he was born at Wellsburg, West Virginia, in the year 1838. He learned the printer's trade when a lad, and drifted to Cincinnati, where he remained ten years, working at the case. During this period he brought himself into notice as a poet by verses contributed to

Birth, Early
Life and Work

Flint's *Western Review*, the *Western Souvenir*, the *Cincinnati Gazette* and other western periodicals; but this disposition evidently wore off with his youth. A few of these poems, among them "The Burial of the Beautiful," have been preserved in Coggeshall's collection of western poets. In 1834 he migrated to Logansport, Ind. Here he studied law and was admitted to the bar, but law was not to his taste, and he never practiced.

About this time he seems to have taken up with his historical studies and to be laying plans for his future "History of Indiana." His first work was issued in 1843 and was called "Historical Notes of the Discovery and Settlement of the Territory Northwest of the Ohio." This was introductory to and contained much of the material for a riper and more ambitious volume which, in 1859, appeared under the title of "A History of Indiana," from its earliest exploration to the close of the Territorial government in 1816; to which was added a general view of the progress of public affairs in the State from 1816 to 1856. It is this work on which Dillon's fame chiefly rests. The fruit of the next twenty years was a small volume entitled "Notes on Historical Evidence in Reference to Adverse Theories of the Origin and Nature of the Government of the United States," and a thick 8-vo. on the "Oddities of Colonial Legislation." These four volumes, together with a few addresses* and a little miscellaneous writing, represent more than forty years of research.

Few historians escape the charge of occasional mistakes, and Mr. Dillon, doubtless, was not an exception to the rule; but, as we have before said, a sense of his trustworthiness grows upon the student, and the seeker after authentic information learns to regard him as the most satisfactory authority on early Indiana affairs. It is not easy to define the quality that begets confidence in a historian—it is, indeed, somewhat akin to the mystery of personality. Suffice to say in this connection that Dillon's work throughout bears the internal evidence of immense industry, unflagging perseverance and an ever-present purpose to find and state the truth. Of his industry and its breadth of scope, too, we have other evidence. In the preface to his "Historical Notes" he refers to "many official documents, * * * a very great number of printed authorities, and many thousand pages of old manuscript records and letters;" and

*One of these addresses, "The National Decline of the Miami Indians," was delivered before the Indiana Historical Society in 1868, and is published in his collection.