

**HISTORY OF WINNESHIEK
COUNTY WITH
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES
OF ITS EMINENT MEN**

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History of Winneshiek county with biographical sketches of its eminent men by Chas H. Sparks

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CHAS H. SPARKS

**HISTORY OF WINNESHIEK
COUNTY WITH
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TO THE
OLD SETTLERS OF WINNESHIEK COUNTY,

THIS VOLUME IS

MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

The present work is the outgrowth of a series of articles written for the *Republican* during the spring of 1875. That spring I came to the county, with the intention of working for the railroad company, at Decorah. One week in its employ served to convince me that I was not fitted for the duties assigned me. I threw up my situation, and having had experience in the newspaper business, I sought the *Republican* office with a desire to obtain a situation. Messrs. Bailey & Bro. took me into their employ, with the understanding that I should make collections, and in my rounds, collate material and write historical sketches of the early settlement of the county. This last proposition—to write historical sketches—was my own, held out as an inducement to the publishers of the paper to give me a situation. I entered upon my duties in the vicinity of Fort Atkinson, and here struck a mine of historical information regarding the early days of the county, that in a few years more would have been irretrievably lost.

From facts collected regarding this locality, I wrote the first papers published in the *Republican*. These were warmly received by the reading public. So great was the interest manifested over the resurrection of a history that had so long slept, that the editor of the *Republican*, afterwards, picked up the pen where I had dropped it, and contributed several very excellent and interesting chapters regarding the early history of the county, and which, through his kindness, I have been permitted to use in this book.

The friendly reception which these several articles met with on their publication, and the deep interest felt in the subject by the early settlers, led me to believe that a history of the county, published in book form, would meet with that hearty appreciation and support such an enterprise would justly merit. I therefore carefully collected and preserved everything pertaining to the history of the county, within my reach, with the intention of publishing such a work when I thought that the proper time had arrived. During the present almost universal depression of business would seem anything but the proper time for its publication, yet, from force of necessity, I was compelled to issue now, if ever. This I do at the risk of a severe loss to myself, and with a knowledge that imperfections may thereby mar its pages that might otherwise have been prevented, by taking longer time in its preparation.

The present work has been pursued and carried through under many disadvantages, and in the face of many difficulties. I did not undertake the compilation of the book until the middle of January, 1877, and my pecuniary circumstances were such that I could not throw up my situation, and therefore evenings were the only time left for labor. But these were faithfully employed, and as a result, in less than three months time, evening work, the HISTORY OF WINNESHIEK COUNTY was completed.

I have endeavored, as best I knew how, to make the work as complete, concise and interesting as possible, and hope that I am rightly deserving a verdict from my severest critics that I have not labored in vain.

I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to the many estimable gentlemen who have furnished me encouragement, both by deed and word, in my present undertaking.

To Mr. A. K. Bailey I am under many obligations, for access to the files of the *Republican*, from which I gleaned much valuable information, and for the material aid he has furnished me. The interesting chapter on Moneck is his.

To Mr. Cyrus Wellington I return my thanks, for the beautiful poem which closes the military history.

To the following gentlemen, all of whom have either been consulted regarding the facts herein contained, or have contributed to its pages, I return my sincere thanks: Jehu Lewis, M. D. Hesper, J. T. Atkins, O. J. Clark, J. E. Simpson, E. I. Weiser, G. R. Willett, C. W. Burdick, J. B. Kaye, Calmar, for the sketch of Calmar; S. Pike, Ridgeway, for the chapter on Ridgeway; John O. Porter and J. Fisher, Ossian; and Helge Langland.

I would speak a word for the advertisers whose advertisements appear in the back part of the book, as the success of the undertaking is in a great measure owing to their liberal patronage. These men were actuated by a desire to aid a deserving enterprise.

To Andreas' Atlas of Iowa, I am indebted for information regarding Decorah, and biographies of some of the eminent men that appear herein.

With these brief explanations and acknowledgements, "THE HISTORY OF WINNESHIEK COUNTY" is placed before the public, with the hope that it will meet the expectations and approbation of even the most critical.

DECORAH, IOWA, April 1st, 1877.

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