

**THE BATTLE OF
TIPPECANOE;
FILSON CLUB-
PUBLICATIONS NO. 15**

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The battle of Tippecanoe; Filson Club-Publications No. 15 by Alfred Pirtle

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ALFRED PIRTLE

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CAPTAIN ALFRED FIRTLER,
Member of The Elison Club.

Handwritten scribble

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THE
Battle of Tippecanoe



READ BEFORE THE FILSON CLUB
NOVEMBER 1, 1897

BY
CAPTAIN ALFRED PIRTLE
Member of The Filson Club



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PREFACE.

BEGUN as a paper to be read at a meeting of The Filson Club, this history has reached such proportions that it may be termed a book. For more than three years it has been in hand—not worked upon constantly, but never out of sight. Much time has been consumed in making research after small details which add to the completeness of the work.

It is with great pleasure the names of the following friends are mentioned, who have assisted the author by affording opportunities for securing family histories: Messrs. John J. Harbison, Henry D. Robb, and James Henry Funk, of Louisville; Honorable John Geiger, of Morganfield, Kentucky; Judge B. B. Douglas and W. C. Wilson, Esquire, of Corydon, Indiana; Judge Charles P. Ferguson and Colonel John Keigwin, of Jeffersonville, Indiana, and Mrs. Susan E. Ragsdale, of Bowling Green,

Kentucky. Samuel M. Wilson, Esquire, of Lexington, Kentucky, gave valuable assistance in research. Colonel R. T. Durrett, The Polytechnic Society of Louisville, and Mr. W. E. Henry, Librarian of the State Library at Indianapolis, all offered free and unlimited access to the resources of their libraries. General Lew Wallace, at Crawfordsville, Indiana, was likewise very kind.

To all of these I tender my sincere thanks.

Colonel Durrett has, since reading the manuscript of this work, offered to write an introduction, and to no better hands could the task be committed. Therefore it remains for the author to only ask generous treatment from his readers, and with this brief *envoi* make his bow.

ALFRED PIRTLE.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Battle of Tippecanoe has been supposed by some to have been the result of the ambition of General Harrison for military glory. Others have thought that it was caused by the depredations of the Indians upon the life and property of the white settlers in the Indiana Territory. Yet others have believed that it was nothing more nor less than the traditional and the inevitable result of the contact of civilization with barbarism.

While all of these as well as other causes may have had their share in this battle, there was one supreme and controlling cause which brought the white man and the red man together in mortal conflict on the banks of the Tippecanoe. That cause was a struggle for the land on which the battle was fought, and for the adjacent and the far-away lands of the Indians. It was as essentially a conflict for the soil as ever existed between the Indians and the French, the Indians and the Spanish, the Indians and the British, or the Indians and the Americans. While

this may not readily appear upon the surface, a deeper view will hardly fail to disclose the fact. Behind the depredations and the thefts, and even the murders by the Indians, there was a hope and a purpose of regaining the Indians' lost lands or of arresting further intrusions upon them by the whites. Let us appeal to history and see if it does not establish the truth of this statement.

When the white man began settlements in America in the early part of the seventeenth century the whole country was occupied by the red man. This occupancy was not like that of the white man, but it was the red man's mode of occupancy—a spot for his wigwam and an empire for his hunting-grounds—which had thus existed from a time so far back that neither history nor tradition reached to its confines. Whence the Indians came into this occupancy, whether from older countries to the east or to the west of them, or whether created and located here as auctochthons of the land is a problem which has baffled learned attempts at solution. About the essential fact, however, that the white man found the Indian here when he discovered America, and that he was here when the colonization of the country began, and that he is still here, there is no dispute.

All along the Atlantic shore from Maine to South Carolina the great Algonquin family had located its

numerous tribes, and from Carolina to the southern limits of Florida the Mobilian family had distributed its tribal divisions. With the exception of the five sections occupied by the Huron-Iroquois, the Cherokees, the Catawbas, the Uchees, and the Natches, these two great nations extended their occupancy of the country not only from Maine to Florida, but from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. Their hunting-grounds extended beyond this great river, but with their trans-Mississippi possessions we are not now concerned. Their mode of occupying this vast territory differed essentially from that of the Americans. They were not cultivators of the soil, but left the land clothed with the original forests for the protection of the wild animals they used for food and clothing. A patch of ground for corn and vegetables, cultivated by the squaws in the most primitive way, was all of their vast territory they reduced to absolute use. They had no schools nor churches, and their dwelling-houses were rude structures of cane and bark. They were hunters and fishermen, and lived mainly upon the products of the forest and the stream. They had no fences around their lands nor any marked trees to show the limits of their territory, but depended upon the hills and valleys and streams to define their boundaries. Nothing more distinguished their savage life from that of civilized man than the quantity of land