

Gibson County in the Civil War

An Address by

Col. Gil. R. Stormont

At the Dedication of the
Gibson County Soldiers
Monument at Princeton
Indiana on Nov. 12, 1913



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Gibson County

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STORMONT, GIL R.

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**History of Other Monuments in
Gibson County**

WM. MOWRY PRINTING COMPANY
PRINCETON, IND.



E. J. Sturmont

Explanatory.

The record of Gibson County in the Civil war was the subject of an address which I had the honor to deliver at the dedication of the Gibson county soldiers' monument in Princeton, November 12, 1912. This was published in the local papers at the time and met with such general interest and approval, because of the historical matter presented, that the suggestion came from various persons that the address should be published in a convenient form for preservation. In compliance with these suggestions, and as an acknowledgment of the compliments of friends as to the merits of the address, this publication is made. And this is offered for whatever apology or explanation may seem necessary for this booklet.

As an additional matter of interest the history of the 58th Indiana regimental monument is included in these pages. This monument stands in the court house square, in Princeton, and is conceded to be one of the most unique relics of the civil war. The history of the monument erected at Oakland City, by the surviving members of Company F, 42d Indiana, also finds appropriate place in these pages.

With the belief that this record of the loyal and patriotic spirit manifested by the people of Gibson county in the war of the rebellion is one that should be regarded with pardonable pride by every citizen, this little booklet is respectfully submitted.

GIL. R. STORMONT.

Gibson County in the War.

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On that April morning in 1861, when the Confederate batteries in Charleston harbor opened fire upon the flag of Fort Sumter, and when a few hours later that flag was lowered, and its gallant defenders marched out in surrender, there was marked an epoch in American history. When the news of this indignity and treasonable outrage upon our flag was flashed over the country the loyal people were thrilled as with an electric shock. Everywhere there was manifested the greatest indignation at the insult to the nation's flag. Everywhere there was manifested an eagerness to resent this insult by an appeal to arms.

In no part of the country was there a more determined manifestation of this loyal, patriotic spirit than was shown among the people of Gibson county. The people of this county were largely descendants of a long line of hunters, frontiersmen, soldiers, Indian fighters, and were by nature and early training imbued with a spirit of patriotism and love of home and country. By instinct and training they were ready to resent every affront, and especially every insult to the national flag and the national union.

On the morning of the 15th of April, 1861, immediately after the news of the firing upon Fort

Sumter had been received, Governor Morton wired President Lincoln, making a tender of ten thousand men for the defense of the nation. On the same day President Lincoln issued his proclamation calling for 75,000 volunteers from the several states in the union, for the suppression of the rebellion. Under this call Indiana's quota was six regiments of infantry, or about six thousand men, to serve three months.

Within five days after this call was promulgated more than 12,000 men had been enrolled in Indiana, and were pressing Governor Morton for acceptance and muster into the United States service.

Among these early enlistments was a company from Gibson county. The day following President Lincoln's proclamation a recruiting office was opened in Princeton and the fife and drum was heard for the first time calling for volunteers to defend the flag. The first man to put his name on the roll of volunteers in Gibson county was Dr. Samuel E. Munford, then a promising young physician of Princeton. He became regimental surgeon and later medical director of Wilder's Brigade.

The roll of this first company was soon made up, and the company was ready for orders to go to Indianapolis for muster into the service. But the quota for the state, under the President's call, had been filled by this time and the Gibson county company, like many others, had to stand aside. The company was disbanded, but only for a short time.

Within a month an additional call for volunteers, to serve three years or during the war, was made by President Lincoln. Under this call Indiana's quota was four regiments of infantry and one regiment of cavalry, and this gave the Gibson county company the opportunity to enter the service. The muster roll was opened and enlistments for three years or during the war called for. George W. Gorman and Jacob G. Vail

were the most active in recruiting this company, and, early in May, 1861, the organization was completed and the company departed for Indianapolis to report for duty. It was mustered into the United States service and assigned to the 17th Indiana, as Company H, of that regiment. Vail was commissioned as captain of the company and Gorman was commissioned major of the regiment. At the close of the war Vail held the commission of colonel and brevet brigadier-general, the highest rank attained by any one from Gibson county during the civil war. The greater part of the service in the field of the 17th Indiana was as mounted infantry, a part of Wilder's brigade.

Under this call other enlistments from Gibson county were made in the 14th Indiana, organized at Terre Haute, by Col. Nathan Kimball, afterwards major general. Another full company from this county became a part of the 24th Indiana, organized at Vincennes, by Col. (afterward major-general) Alvin P. Hovey. There were also a number from this county enlisted in in the 25th Indiana, being organized at Evansville by Col. (afterward brigadier-general) Veach.

As the war progressed another call for 300,000 volunteers was made by President Lincoln. This was after the battle of Bull Run, when the people of the North became conscious of the fact that the suppression of the rebellion was an undertaking of serious magnitude. It was realized then that this was to be a real war, and not a 'breakfast spell,' as some at first foolishly asserted.

Under this call there was abundant opportunity for the boys of Gibson county, who were so inclined, to enter the service. A company was enrolled in Princeton in the month of August, 1861, by James M. Henderson, who had been engaged in teaching in what was then the Morton Academy (now belonging to the Seth Ward estate), Burr H. Polk and Joseph T. Fleming.

This company become part of the 33d Indiana, organized at Indianapolis by Col. John Coburn.

In the month of September two more companies were enlisted in Gibson county, one in Princeton by Nathaniel B. French and D. F. Embree, and the other in the eastern part of the county by Samuel G. Barrett and William M. Cockrum. These companies became part of the 42d Indiana, organized at Evansville, by Col. James G. Jones.

In October, 1861, Dr. Andrew Lewis was commissioned by Governor Morton to organize a regiment from the counties then composing the First congressional district, the organization camp to be at Princeton.

This camp was established in the county fair grounds in October, 1861, and was known as Camp Gibson. The regiment was designated as the 58th Indiana, and, after the preliminary work of organization by Dr. Lewis, H. M. Carr was regularly commissioned as colonel; George P. Buell, lieutenant-colonel; James T. Embree, major; Samuel Sterne, quartermaster; Dr. W. W. Blair, surgeon; Rev. John J. Hight, chaplain. In addition to the field and staff officers, four full companies, with several enlistments in other companies in this regiment, in all about 400, were from Gibson county. After a few months service in the field Col. Carr resigned and Geo. P. Buell was commissioned colonel, and James T. Embree lieutenant-colonel. For the greater part of the service Buell commanded a brigade, Embree commanded the regiment and Dr. W. W. Blair served as medical director of Gen. T. J. Wood's division.

Under the call of July, 1862, the 65th Indiana was organized in Princeton, and was mustered into the service on the 20th of August, with John W. Foster as colonel. In this regiment was one company, with W. T. Stilwell as captain, and parts of other companies from Gibson county.

In the month of September, 1862, the 80th Indiana regiment was organized in Camp Gibson. In this regiment was one company largely composed of men from Princeton and immediate vicinity. Another company was recruited from the southwestern part of the county, and there were Gibson county representatives in several other companies of this regiment. Lewis Brooks was lieutenant-colonel of this regiment at the organization; George T. Simonson, major; Dr. W. P. Welborn, surgeon; Charles Brownlee, Captain Co. A. (the Princeton company). Some of the very best citizens and business men of Princeton enlisted in this regiment. In just one month after the regiment left Camp Gibson it was engaged in the battle of Perryville, and suffered severely in killed and wounded. After the battle of Perryville Charles Denby was transferred from the 42d Indiana and commissioned colonel of this regiment.

In September, 1863, the 120th regiment was organized with one company from Gibson county. This regiment, with the 123d, 124th; 128th, 129th and 130th Indiana regiments composed an Indiana division under command of General Alvin P. Hovey. These regiments were largely composed of young men and boys, and the division carried the name of 'Hovey's Babies.' The division was immediately placed on the firing line in the Atlanta campaign and the 'babies' acquitted themselves as veterans in the many severe engagements in which they participated.

In May, 1864, the 136th Indiana, a hundred days' regiment, was organized. In this there was one company from Gibson county, of which William Kurtz was captain.

The last regiment organized in which there was one or more companies from Gibson county was the 143d Indiana. This regiment was largely composed of veterans who had seen service in other commands. It was organized in February, 1865. It was fully equipped

for service, but the war was practically over and they did not get within sound of hostile guns.

In addition to the regiments mentioned, Gibson county soldiers found service in other regiments of this state, and in other states. Among the other Indiana infantry regiments in which Gibson county soldiers were enlisted were the 15th, 51st, 60th, 63d and 91st, and the 1st, 4th and 10th cavalry, and the 8th Indiana battery and 21st heavy artillery.

From first to last there were more than 2,000 volunteer enlistments from Gibson county. There were no drafted men, though there was, in 1863, an enrollment of those subject to military duty, preparatory for a draft, if this course should be necessary to fill the county's quota in subsequent calls. As an inducement for volunteers to meet these calls the county offered liberal bounties for enlistments in 1864 and '65. For this purpose the county paid the total amount of \$104,014.15 to those who enlisted in some of the later companies. The county also paid for the relief of soldiers' wives and widows during the war the sum of \$20,227.01.

It is difficult for the present generation to realize that the officers and men who composed the army in the greatest war of modern times were boys and young men; that the average age of the rank and file of those who enlisted from Gibson county was less than twenty years. It is a mistaken impression that the army that fought to a successful conclusion the war of the rebellion was composed of old and decrepit men, who, weary with life's burden, flung the smoking wick of an expiring life into the trembling balance of their country's scales, and sought rest of death and oblivion in the fire and smoke of battle.

Let the fact be indelibly impressed on the minds of the present generation that it was from the flower and

youth of the land that the more than two thousand soldiers of Gibson county came. Behind them were doors of opportunity. Behind them were homes and friends, and home comforts, where 'Plenty had her court, and Joy and Peace saluted every morn.' It was from all this they turned away. They gave up their hopes, their ambition, their world, their life and all for the sake of others. They suffered privation and endurance that others might have ease and comfort. They exiled themselves from home that others might have a home. They gave up life that this generation and the generations to come might have life and enjoy life more abundantly. 436456

Gibson county soldiers faced death and mingled in the strife and carnage of nearly all the great battles of the civil war. They contributed their part in the first great victory of the Western army at Fort Donelson. Some have lived to tell of their experience in the bloody conflict at Shiloh, at Perryville and at Stone's River. Gibson county soldiers fought with Hovey at Champion Hills, and with Grant in the siege and capture of Vicksburg. Gibson county soldiers were with Burnside when he stormed the rugged hills of Fredericksburg, and they fought among the burning pines of Chancellorville. Gibson county soldiers stood with the men who resisted the desperate valor of the veterans under Lee and Longstreet, at Gettysburg.

Gibson county soldiers stood with General George H. Thomas on Snodgrass hill, at Chickamauga, on that September Sabbath afternoon, and contributed of their might and valor and made it possible for that grim old chieftain to declare, to the impetuous and almost victorious hosts under Hill and Longstreet, "Thus far shalt thou come and no farther."

Gibson county soldiers were among those who scaled the heights of Lookout Mountain and fought with Hooker in his famous battle above the clouds;

they were among those who, with unparalleled courage, charged the rifle-pits, blazing with cannon and musketry, and climbed to the heights of Mission Ridge. And it was a Gibson county soldier who carried the flag of the 58th Indiana in that charge. He carried the flag unfurled and in full splendor floating to the breeze, and planted at Bragg's late headquarters, on the summit, the 'banner of beauty and glory.'

There were Gibson county soldiers in these and scores of other great battles of the war. They were with Sherman in his march to the sea. They followed Sherman through swamps and across the rivers of Georgia, and through the Carolinas, until they joined hands with other comrades from Gibson county, who had followed Grant through the Wilderness, to Richmond and Petersburg, on to the final victory and surrender of Lee's army at Appomatax. They participated in that greatest military pageant the world has ever seen, when the veteran regiments under Sherman and Grant, with bullet-ridden and battle-scarred banners, marched down Pennsylvania avenue, in Washington, amid the plaudits and cheers of thousands of admiring spectators.

Not all those who went to the army from Gibson county were privileged to join in that triumphal march; not all were permitted to see the full fruition of their dearest hopes—a country saved, a nation redeemed. Several hundred of these boys fell by the wayside. Some died of disease in camp or prison pen. Some in fire and smoke of battle, fell with their country's full armor on. Many others in the days of peace, have 'passed the lonely way,' and have joined their comrades on the other side. As a slight tribute to their memory we dedicate this monument today.

May this monument stand as a memorial to Gibson county's honored dead, 'until the trumpet of the morn-

ing breaks the challenge of the night.' When, on that great day for which all other days are made, there shall sound for them, and for those who shall soon follow them, the Grand Revellie, where,—

“Through the gloaming of the twilight,
 'Tween the valley and each star,
They shall see the fisher's rush-light,
 Set to guide them o'er the bar.
There to lift a bright new banner,
 Where the light of peace is shed,
In the green fields of the living;
 Not the bivouac of the dead!”

Fifty-Eighth Regiment Monument.

Strangers who visit Princeton are attracted by the modest marble shaft that stands in the southwest corner of the court house square, and there is a very natural desire to know what it is and what it represents. Frequent inquiries are made of citizens and business men for information as to its history, and there are frequent visits to the monument by the seeker after knowledge of its origin and meaning. But with all this inquiry and investigation, incorrect information and erroneous ideas are often obtained by these seekers after knowledge, for the reason that there are comparatively few of the citizens and business men of the town who are sufficiently informed to give correct answer to the inquiring stranger. And there is nothing on or about the monument itself to explain its origin and history. What little history that has been written about it is vague and misleading. Some of the historians of Gibson county have referred to this monument as evidence of the patriotic regard entertained by the people of the county for the soldiers who laid down their lives in defense of their country, whereas, the people of the county had nothing whatever to do with the erection of this monument. Neither had the people of Princeton, except to furnish a committee to superintend its construction and secure a place for its erection.



FIFTY-EIGHTH INDIANA REGIMENT MONUMENT.

Dedicated July 4, 1865.

The money for the erection of this monument came from the survivors of the 58th Indiana regiment, in honor of whose dead it was erected, and all this money was raised by voluntary donations and subscriptions from members of the regiment while in the service. A considerable part of this fund was obtained by appropriating certain money due the members of the regiment on account of an allowance for unused rations, supplemented by liberal subscriptions by officers and men of the regiment. The contract for the construction of the monument was made in 1863, and it was completed, erected and dedicated before the regiment was discharged from the service. In the manner of its conception, as well as in the manner and conditions under which it was erected and dedicated, it is in a class by itself. It was the first regimental monument erected in the state in memory of soldiers of the civil war, and it is the only one in this state, or in the United States, that was erected and dedicated by a regiment in honor of its deceased soldiers while that regiment was still in the service. History has been challenged to show its counterpart in the world and this challenge has not been answered.

In view of these facts, that the truth of history might be preserved, and the present generation and generations to come might have wherewith to make answer to the inquiry, "What mean these stones?" we submit the following historical sketch, written by the late Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Moore, of the 58th Indiana, who was secretary of the regimental monument association:

"In the early months of 1863, the 58th Indiana regiment was encamped near Murfreesboro, Tennessee, as a part of the Army of the Cumberland, under General Rosecrans. During part of this time Lieutenant-Colonel Embree and myself occupied the same tent as quarters, and by us and Quartermaster Samuel Sterne, was conceived the idea of erecting a monument by the surviv-

ors of the regiment, to perpetuate the memory of our deceased comrades. The plan was matured and it was made known and explained to our comrades of the regiment and was heartily approved by them. A plan of organization was drawn up and adopted. Lieut-Col, Embree was elected president, and myself, then major, elected secretary and treasurer. Liberal subscriptions to meet the expense of the proposed monument were made by officers and men of the regiment at the time of the organization. It was stipulated that the cost of the monument should not exceed \$5,000, and that no subscription should be solicited nor received from any source outside of the regiment, as it was intended to be a monument of the regiment and erected by the regiment.

“It was determined by the voice of the regiment that the monument should be erected in the court house square, in Princeton, where the regiment was organized. A local committee was appointed, consisting of Dr. Andrew Lewis, Joseph Devin, William Kurtz and John Kell, to carry out the wishes of the regiment. This committee advertised for designs with probable cost of erection, and these designs were forwarded to the regimental organization, then in the field, near Hillsboro, Tennessee. The design of C. Rule and Coleman, of Cincinnati, Ohio, was adopted as the choice of the regiment, and the local committee was instructed to close a contract with this firm. It was stipulated in the contract that the monument should be completed by the time the regiment returned from the field at the expiration of its term of three years’ service. This time, was, however, extended for nearly a year on account of the re-enlistment of the regiment as veterans.

“The design of monument adopted and as erected was an elegant marble shaft about thirty-three feet in height. On the north side are crossed swords and wreath. On the east side a small shield resting upon oak and myrtle. Underneath is a large wreath encircling the words, “Erected by the Survivors of the Fifty-eighth Regiment Indiana Volunteers; to the Memory of their Deceased Comrades.” On the south side is a knapsack supporting crossed muskets and flags, and a soldiers cap. On the west side is the coat of arms of the state of Indiana. On the front in large raised let-

ters are the words, "Honor the Flag." On the several sides of the caps of the dies are the following names of battles in which the regiment engaged, "Stone River," "Lavergne," Chickamauga," "Mission Ridge." The American eagle, made of the finest Italian marble, surmounts the shaft, holding in his beak and talons the National ensign."

The names of all deceased members of the regiment were inscribed on the shaft at the time of its construction. Names of those who died in the service after its completion were added later. It was not intended that the names of those who died after the regiment was discharged should be inscribed on the monument.

The monument was formally dedicated on Tuesday, July 4th, 1865. As has been stated the regiment was still in the service at this time, but they were at Louisville waiting for their discharge. Many of the officers and men received furloughs and were present at the dedication. Addresses were made by Dr. Andrew Lewis, Rev. John McMaster, D. D., Chaplain John J. Hight, of the 58th, and others. The dedication of this monument was a great day in Princeton. Thousands of people were present, including many of the Gibson county soldiers who had returned from the war, all rejoicing in victory and peace.

But amid this rejoicing there were many in sorrow and tears because of the absence of loved ones whose names were inscribed on the monument to be dedicated. Those names are still there, but most of those who mingled tears with rejoicing at the dedication of this monument bearing the names of loved ones, have passed away. The monument itself is yielding to the ravages of time and is crumbling away, but it is none the less entitled to the highest honor, reverence and respect from the citizens of Princeton, young and old, and from the stranger as well, who comes within our gates. For nearly half a century this monument has stood in this most public place, a silent testimony of

the cost of the priceless heritage that is enjoyed by this generation. It stands as a memento of the patriotism, love, sacrifice and comradeship of soldiers, who, from their small pittance in the army created the fund for its erection. Time has dimmed its artistic beauty. As an object of the sculptor's art it has lost much of its former attractiveness. As compared with other monuments of modern construction it may appear obscure and insignificant. But in its meaning, in sacrifice, sentiment and comradeship, it looms far above and beyond them all.

Co. F, 42nd Indiana Monument.

On a little tri-angular piece of ground near the track of the Southern railroad, in Oakland City, there stands a modest appearing shaft that attracts the attention of



DEDICATED SEPTEMBER 1893

people passing by on the train. If these passing people are interested enough and inquisitive enough to ask some one what this modest shaft represents, or "What meaneth these stones?" and if the person to whom the inquiry is directed is able to answer the question, the information will be given that this is a monument erected by the surviving members of Company F, 42d Indiana, as a loving tribute to the memory of their comrades who gave up their lives in defense of the flag during the civil war.

This monument was erected during the summer of 1893, and was dedicated in September of that year. The initial steps were taken at a reunion of the Company a year prior to that time, when a committee was appointed to raise the necessary funds. This committee was composed of Col. W. M. Cockrum, John W. Corder, James T. Bell, John P. Simpson and Washington Strickland. Dr. George C. Mason acted as an advisory member and gave much financial and advisory aid which was greatly appreciated by the company. Col. W. M. Cockrum executed a deed to Gibson county for the lot on which the monument stands.

The contract for the monument was awarded to Wm. Kelley, of Oakland City at a cost of near one thousand dollars. The material used was oolitic limestone. The monument stands on a base seven feet square and is twenty-eight feet in height. On the top is the figure of a soldier carved in stone. On the several sides of the dies are the names of all the original members of the company and the recruits, 143 in number.

On a panel for that purpose are the names of the original field and staff officers of the regiment. On another side of the shaft there is a scroll in which is inscribed, "Starved to death at Andersonville," and underneath are the names of eleven members of the company who gave this supreme test of their devotion to their country. Following are the names:

Chesterfield P. Dill, Alford Farmer, J. M. Hunter, H. H. Hunter, John H. Martin, Adam Canon, Wm. A. Reavis, W. W. Oliver, A. H. Mariner, Jacob Strickland and A. C. Coleman. These all were taken prisoners at the battle of Chickamauga and died at Andersonville.

In appropriate places on the shaft appear the names of battles in which the company participated. These are as follows:

Perryville, Stone's River, Stevenson, Flint River,

Chickamauga, Lookout Mountain, Mission Ridge, Ringold, Buzzard Roost, Big Shanty, Snake Creek Gap, Chattahoochie River, Bentonville.

As stated, this monument was dedicated in September, 1893. At the dedication there was a large assemblage of the surviving members of the company and regiment, soldiers from other regiments, citizens and friends. These all gathered around the monument where an appropriate address was delivered by Captain A. J. McCutchan, of Co. A, 42d Indiana. It was a proud day for the veterans of this company when they could look upon the completion of this monument as the crowning triumph of months of labor and sacrifice. They could rejoice in the triumph of the cause for which they fought, even though this rejoicing was mingled with tears in memory of those whose names were inscribed on the monument who had given up their lives for that cause.

“For their cause was the cause of the races,
That languished in slavery’s night,
And the death that was pale on their faces,
Has filled the whole world with its light.”

circa 1920's postcard



Monument to the Fifty-eighth Indiana Regiment
at Princeton, Indiana