

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

MORE ABOUT "A NEW YORKER IN THE GREAT WEST"

Readers of this magazine will doubtless recall a narrative that appeared in the March issue in the section devoted to "Minnesota as Seen by Travelers" under the heading "A New Yorker in the Great West" (*ante*, 43-64). This was a reprint of part of a booklet entitled *My Diary: or Three Weeks on the Wing. A Peep at the Great West*, written by one C. N. Brainerd of New York City during a pleasure jaunt to Minnesota in 1867 and published in the following year. Seldom has a contribution to the magazine aroused so much interest as did this narrative of travel into southern Minnesota. This doubtless was partly due to the rarity of the pamphlet from which the account was reprinted; last March members of the staff of the Minnesota Historical Society knew of only one copy, — that in the Library of Congress, — and from this copy a photostat had been made for the society. Furthermore, almost nothing was known about Brainerd, and the identity of the friend whose Martin County farm he visited was likewise unknown.

Since last March, however, not only has much been learned of Brainerd's life and of his Minnesota friend, but several copies of his *Diary* have been located. The March issue of the magazine had scarcely had time to reach members of the society when the following communication was received from Mr. Edward C. Gale of Minneapolis:

You may be interested to know that I have recently acquired Brainerd's *My Diary*, which you republished in interesting fashion in the March number of MINNESOTA HISTORY. I obtained it from Newhall of New York City just prior to the issuance of the magazine and without knowing anything about your forthcoming article — quite a coincidence.

Shortly thereafter the society's librarian found the *Diary* listed in the catalogue of a Chicago dealer, and this copy was promptly purchased for the society's library. Thus two of these rare booklets are now to be found in Twin City collections.

The portion of Brainerd's *Diary* that relates to Martin County naturally aroused considerable interest among readers living in that section. One question in particular intrigued them: who was the resident of Pleasant Prairie Township described by Brainerd as "an old and valued friend who had emigrated from 'York,' and whom I shall call Z—— for convenience"? With the hope of finding an answer to this question, Judge Julius E. Haycraft of Fairmont, president of the Martin County Historical Society, visited the state society's library in St. Paul. His search led to an examination of the manuscript schedules of the census of Martin County for 1870. The only Z—— found listed there was J. T. Ziegler, a native of Pennsylvania who had settled on a farm in Pleasant Prairie Township.

It might never have been proved conclusively that Ziegler was the Z—— of Brainerd's narrative, had not Miss Gracie Brainerd Krum, librarian of the Burton Historical Collection of Detroit, read the extracts from the New Yorker's diary in the March issue of the magazine. In a letter to the Minnesota Historical Society, written on July 8, Miss Krum offers the interesting information that "Chauncey Niles Brainerd was my maternal grandfather," and she presents the following statement about his printed *Diary*:

The remainder of the edition of the diary which Grandfather had printed describing his first visit to the great west (and I think his only trip to Minnesota) was in our attic for many years, till about five years ago when moving from the house which he bought here in Detroit, I disposed of it . . . to the Smith Book Company of Cincinnati.

With her letter Miss Krum sent an informing sketch of Brainerd, in which she includes some material about his

Minnesota friend, "John T. Ziegler, a native of Manayunk, Pennsylvania." Since readers of Brainerd's narrative would undoubtedly be interested in an account of the life and career of this enthusiastic traveler who spent *Three Weeks on the Wing* in the West in 1867, portions of Miss Krum's sketch are herewith presented.

B. L. H.

CHAUNCEY NILES BRAINERD

Chauncey Niles Brainerd was born in Haddam, Connecticut, of pioneer and revolutionary stock. . . . His father, William Chauncey, with others of the family was in the quarry business. He married Ruth House, daughter of Jeremiah House of East Hampton and Glastonbury, Connecticut. On January 14, 1826, their eldest child, Chauncey Niles Brainerd, was born.

He received only such limited instruction as was offered by the district school. His father needed him, so he had to lay aside all thought of college and possible success as a lawyer. While he was still a youth his father moved to Saugerties on the Hudson, where other members of the family had stone quarries. From there William Chauncey with his second son, George Martin, took the first load of bluestone to New York City and vainly tried to sell it. Later, "the sidewalks of New York" were practically all of bluestone. George afterwards became president of the Bodwell Granite Company at Rockland, Maine.

Chauncey Niles married on December 24, 1845, at Esopus, New York, Rhoda Maynard Beaver. . . . Mrs. Brainerd's share in her father's estate was a small farm in the hill country of Esopus, and she and her husband removed thither some time before August 14, 1851, with their first-born child, Charles Edwin. . . . Their second child, Ethalind, was born at the farm. Some time after her birth, probably about 1855, they removed to Williamsburg, Long Island, where Chauncey's cousin, Silas, was a member of the firm of Lamy and Brainerd, stone merchants. A little later Chauncey and his brother George went into the stone business at Portland, Maine, but the outbreak of the Civil

War ruined their prospects, and in 1863 Chauncey went to New York and became a clerk in the executive office of the New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb, located on Washington Heights. He was made assistant steward, probably about the time of his western trip. In 1875 he was given the office of steward, which he held for fifteen years, and he was appointed superintendent in 1890. In 1893 he resigned, having served the institution for thirty years. . . . Brainerd occupied his new leisure in compiling a brief genealogy of his wife's family, which was privately printed. Mrs. Brainerd died on July 9, 1896.

In 1897 Brainerd removed with the family of his daughter, Mrs. Album H. Krum, to Detroit, Michigan, where he lived until his death on June 26, 1913. Every year, however, he made two trips, one westward to see old friends in Illinois and Wisconsin, the other eastward to various places in New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. "Those old people will miss me if I don't go," he said, when, past eighty, it was felt that he should not undertake such a pilgrimage alone. But go he would and did, and it kept him young. Through the years, especially those latter years, he kept up a lively correspondence with a wide circle that reached to the Pacific coast, whither some of the children of old Wisconsin friends had migrated. He was a life-long member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Soon after removing to Detroit, he joined the Detroit chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution.

Brainerd was a tall, fine-looking man of unusually attractive personality. Following the fashion of his young manhood he wore a rather long, full beard. His hair was dark brown, and he became very bald. His eyes were a lovely mild blue. He was the kindest, most gentle of men, though he could be stern enough, if necessary, and the fact that he administered successfully for so many years the feeding, housing, and general affairs of the huge family at the institution is sufficient evidence of his perfect honesty and fair dealing. He was well read on current business and political topics, loved music, and was passionately fond of roses, having gardens at both his New York and Detroit homes.

The friend Z—— whom Brainerd visited in Minnesota was

John T. Ziegler, a native of Manayunk, Pennsylvania, who lived for a while in New York, and who married on April 24, 1856, Cornelia Ann Southworth, a cousin of Mrs. Brainerd. Ziegler took up land in Minnesota, but after some years of western life he returned to New York and was for a time in charge of a farm owned by the New York Institution for the Deaf and Dumb at Tarrytown-on-the-Hudson. . . . Ziegler had two children, Chauncey J., born on July 31, 1867, and Nettie, who was born in Minnesota on October 20, 1869.¹

GRACIE BRAINERD KRUM

BURTON HISTORICAL COLLECTION
DETROIT

¹ According to the manuscript schedules of the Martin County census for 1870, both of Ziegler's children were born in Minnesota. Chauncey's age is given as three years and Nettie's as seven months. *Ed.*



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