

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

A RAMSEY PORTRAIT

Governor Ramsey was abroad in the summer of 1869 when he received from Frank B. Mayer, the artist whose Minnesota diary the Minnesota Historical Society published in 1932, a letter in which Mayer made the following request: "I may solicit of you a small favor, which is to let me have one or two of your carte de visite portraits, for altho' I have a careful drawing of your profile made at the time of the Treaty [*of Traverse des Sioux*] I would prefer something more detailed—one nearly 'profile' and another near 'full-face.'" ¹ At the time Mayer was planning to paint a huge canvas of the signing of the treaty of Traverse des Sioux, which he attended in 1851. There he had made hundreds of sketches of scenes and people, including one of Ramsey. Since the governor was one of the commissioners who negotiated the treaty with the Indians, his figure would occupy a central place in a picture of the scene, and Mayer was particularly anxious to portray his features with accuracy.

Nearly fifty of the sketches that Mayer made during his western journey of 1851 were reproduced from the originals, now in the Ayer Collection of the Newberry Library in Chicago, to illustrate his published diary, which appeared under the title *With Pen and Pencil on the Frontier*. When these illustrations were selected, an unsuccessful effort was made to find the sketch of Ramsey that the artist mentions in his letter of 1869. The sketch proved, after all, to be in the possession of the Minnesota Historical Society, and it is reproduced herewith. The original, which is on a sheet measuring about seven by four inches, probably

¹ Mayer to Ramsey, September 7, 1869, Ramsey Papers.

was taken from one of the sketchbooks that Mayer filled with drawings during his western journey. On the reverse side are some rough sketches of Henry Belland, a well-known voyageur. This little sheet of yellowed paper with its interesting drawings was presented to the society in 1903 by Edward E. Ayer of Chicago, who then owned the Mayer Sketchbooks and who added them to the remarkable collection of Americana that bears his name.²

B. L. H.

A PIONEER CEMETERY

This is the story of a cemetery that was "lost" and has been restored through the loving care of relatives of the hardy pioneers who sleep their last long sleep there. It is known as "Gravesbacken," and is located in the southern part of Vasa Township on a knoll in the center of a large grain farm about two miles north of White Rock and ten miles southeast of Cannon Falls. The first burial was made there in 1859 and the last in 1881. So far as is known, between seventy and eighty persons are buried in the plot. With the gradual settlement of the Vasa community, other cemeteries were provided; and as relatives of those buried at Gravesbacken left the community, the hallowed ground was all but forgotten. The plot was untouched by the plow, and soon brush and trees covered the mounds and the place became a habitat for snakes and wild animals.

In June, 1930, Mr. Ole Zackrison of Woodenville, Washington, a son of Jens Zackrison, one of the pioneers who rests in the cemetery, visited Vasa. Although he was nearly eighty years old, Mr. Zackrison went to Vasa especially to see that the cemetery was restored and placed on record, so that the remains of those buried there might never be dis-

²Warren Upham to Edward E. Ayer, October 21, 1903; to Charles M. Loring, October 21, 1903, Minnesota Historical Society Letter Books.



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