PART II AND JOURNAL JUNIOR

THE MINNEAPOLIS JOURNAL.

PART II AND JOURNAL JUNIOR

SATURDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 1, 1902.

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE NATIVE SONS OF MINNESOTA

A New Organization Which Is Likely to Become Popular and Reflect Much Credit on the Commonwealth—It Is to Be Made Up Entirely of Those Born in This State.

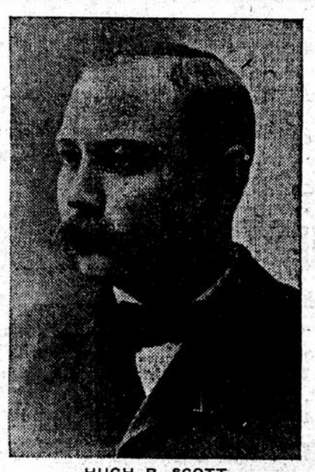
There has recently been formed in this city an organization whose objects and plans should bring about a rapid growth and a sure success. Reference is made to the Native Sons of Minnesota. The name itself is an epitome of the purposes of the organization and the qualifications for membership. It is founded largely on sentiment, but no doubt such an association can accomplish much in advancing the material welfare of the state, both directly and indirectly.

What the Ohio associations have done for the buckeye state, what the Native Sons of California have done for the golden state, the Native Sons of Minnesota purpose to do for the great north star state—inculcate and foster a spirit of loyalty and love for Minnesota, arouse a state pride, perpetuate the names and deeds of the early pioneers and make known the glorious history of Minnesota.

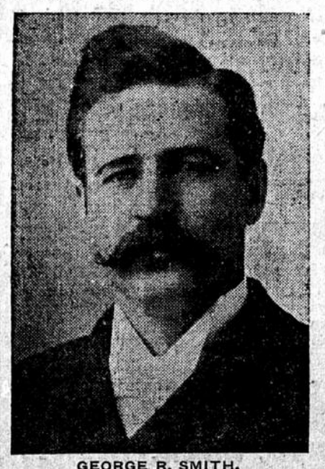
The beginning is somewhat humble, but Minnesota pluck and energy is behind the movement, and the Native Sons will soon be organized from the Iowa boundary on the south to the dominions of King Edward on the north.

Any native of Minnesota who has attained the age of 35 is eligible to membership. The purpose is a serious one, though the association is not formed along utilitarian lines.

The founders believe that there is a place for this organization. The pioneers who transformed the primeval forests of Minnesota into smiling fields had little time for sentiment as they attacked the wilderness and fought the Indians and wild beasts, but when their dangers and hardships had given place to comfort and



HUGH R. SCOTT.

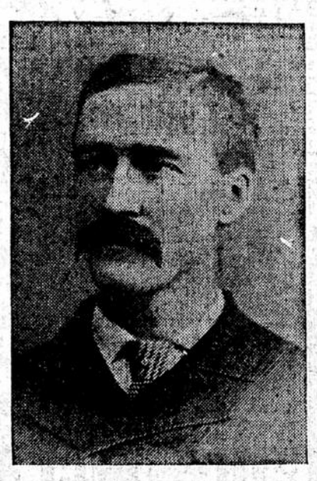


GEORGE R. SMITH.

prosperity they formed the Minnesota Territorial Pioneers. They were closely united by the common trials they had suffered and their association will live as long as there remain a handful alive. They are passing rapidly into the great beyond, but their work must go on. The Native Sons will be ready when the time comes and for the present they are proud to serve as a loyal auxiliary. They hope to join hands with the Junior Pioneers of St. Paul and kindred organizations in other parts of the state, if any there be, and hope for a hearty co-operation in their plans.

Forty years ago when the founders of the Sons were barefooted boys or infants, this state was a part of the fringe of civilization. Thriving settlements had been planted along the valleys of the Mississippi, Minnesota and St. Croix rivers, but the greater part of the state was still the hunting ground of the aborigines. Their parents met all the dangers of the Pilgrim Fathers and suffered all their trials. They encountered all the experiences that fell to the lot of Daniel Boone and Simon Kenton in Kentucky, but their deeds are yet unsung—their adventures yet untold. Some day, mayhap, fame will place their names on her tablet.

Monuments have been erected at Fort Ridgely and Birch Coulie and New Ulm proudly commemorates the heroic defense of that place in the bloody Sioux massacre, but nevertheless only a few of the people of Minnesota know aught of the stirring scenes, the bold deeds and the



H. E. DAY.

steady courage that stayed the advance of the red horde as it swept down on the tiny settlement, bent on murder and pillage.

A history of Minnesota should be in every schoolhouse in the state and it should be studied contemporaneously with the history of the union.

Virginia has a glorious history, so has Massachusetts, and every state of the original thirteen has a past of which its sons and daughters may be proud, but so has Minnesota and her children should learn of it in the schools.

To secure such a history is only one of the objects of the Native Sons of Minnesota. It is not enough to know that Father Hennepin discovered the Falls of St. Anthony and to learn that Du Lhut explored here. There are other names worthy of remembrance and their deeds would make a book.

The first formal reunion of the Native Sons of Minnesota will be held in the near future, when the association will hold a banquet at the Minneapolis Commercial club.

The first officers are as follows: Dr. P. M. Holl, president; Herbert E. Day and Hugh R. Scott, vice-presidents; Dr. Henry C. Aldrich, secretary; W. E. Johnson, treasurer.

Other well known members are W. Y. Chute, Dr. W. H. Leonard, Fred M. Powers, Senator E. E. Smith, George D. Craig, Martin McHale, Charles H. Babcock, Dan C. Brown, Dr. Leo M. Crafts, Frank Gowen, Senator Fred B. Snyder, George C. Andrews, R. H. Pratt, George A. Rose, George R. Smith.

DR. H. C. ALDRICH.

HE DISCOVERED IRON ORE IN MINNESOTA

GEORGE R. STUNTZ, WHO LIVED TO SEE OTHERS MAKE FORTUNES THROUGH HIS INSTRUMENTALITY, DIED IN POVERTY.

George R. Stuntz, who died in Duluth Oct. 24, at the age of 82, was really the discoverer of iron ore in Minnesota, and has therefore much credit for advancing the material resources of the state, which now leads all political divisions in the United States in its ouput of ore, and is surpassed by but two of the great nations of the world. Mr. Stuntz died in extreme poverty, never having benefited to any extent from the immense wealth he was the first to find, and living to see fortunes of millions upon millions made through his instrumentality.

In 1852 Mr. Stuntz came to the head of Lake Superior and settled in the new village of Superior. There was no Duluth in those days, but on the west side of what is now Rice's Point lived on his homestead a half-breed Scotchman, North Albert Posey. Now, Posey's brother, Joe, was a woodsman, a latter-day courier de bois, and he had been all through that region from the head of Lake Superior to the Hudson Bay posts on the trail to the Saskatchewan, and the upper northwest. These trails, debouching on Lake Superior at old Fort William, had been traveled as main roads for a hundred years or more by the traders, clerks, factors and guides of the two great rival fur companies, the Hudson Bay and the Northwestern. In the course of his travels to the north Joe Posey had crossed Vermillion lake and had seen what he took to be great mineral outcropping on its eastern side.

Search Commenced.

Stuntz knew the Poseys and heard of the find and at once the idea of valuable deposits of iron entered his mind. It was in October, 1865, that Stuntz and Captain Platt left Superior with two months' supplies and accompanied by Indian canoe men and guides, left for the lake. In those days the trip to what is now the city of Tower was not a three-hours' ride over the most solidly constructed railway in the United States. It was a trip of weeks. It meant a portage from the fond du lac, the "head of the lake," around the 600-foot rapids of the St. Louis, through bush and over windfalls, that had been the original path of the first discovers of the Mississippi river in the seventeenth century. Embarking on the St. Louis at the upper end of Grand Rapids, above the site of the city of Cloquet, the canoe clove its silent way for about 100 miles up the swift black waters of the St. Louis. Then a portage of five miles across to Pike river and a voyage down the northern watershed for thirty miles and the traveler reached the southern arm of Vermillion lake. It is a curious fact, and one affording interesting reflections, that in the portage these pioneer explorers made in crossing the watershed they passed the spots where the Biwabik and neighboring mines now are.

Arriving at Vermillion lake the party found that the Indian trader there was absent and that his post was under charge of one Captain Simonds, who endeavored to arouse the suspicions of the Indians against the newcomers. Stuntz and his companion were in great dread, but finally lay down for sleep in the trading post with a little American flag stuck on a stick at their heads, calling upon the assembled reds and the treacherous Simonds all the wrath of the great father should they be molested. "Needless to say," says Stuntz, "we were not troubled that night."

Found the Lee and Breitung.

The next day, after various maneuvers done to throw the jealous and watchful Simonds off the trail, they reached a small bay, west of what is now Stuntz bay, and proceeded through the country to look for the mountain of iron that Posey had told them of. They did not have to go far, they soon found the spot, which for years was called the "Lee mine" and was for years operated by the Minnesota Iron company under one of the large open pits. Later in the same day, while wandering alone, Stuntz found what was afterward known as the "Breitung" pit, and from which an immense amount of ore has been taken.

The men spent two weeks around this part of Vermillion lake, going as far east as the northeast end of the lake, where was what was known as the Pete Armstrong claim, and which has since been explored for ore under the name of the Armstrong mine. This is about six miles from the main finds. In November, with sixty pounds of iron ore knocked off with sledges, the party took its way back to civilization, reaching Superior after a lang tramp. The rivers had all frozen and a canoe could not be forced down. They shouldered their supplies and the bag of samples and tramped it for sixty miles through unbroken primeval forest, a trip of no small proportions, dangers and difficulties.

Specimens for Smithsonian.

Museum specimens of beautiful specular hematite were in the possession of and distributed by the Smithsonian Institution as early as 1867. They had come from Minnesota, but it has not been known how these were brought out. They were the sixty pounds of ore packed on their backs by the Stuntz party in November, 1865. The year before they had been sent by the institution to the Paris exhibition, where they created much interest on account of their remarkable purity and beauty.

There was then, by the way, a gold excitement in that region, and Stuntz, in going north in the fall of 1865, passed several prospectors bound for Vermillion lake and looking for gold. Among these was the then state geologist, H. H. Eames, now dead; Henry Mayhew, now living on the north shore of Lake Superior at Grand Marais, and J. J. Hibbard, now a resident of Duluth. The following year Stuntz went again to the lake, partly for gold, partly to interest capitalists in the iron he had found. But all efforts to so interest them were futile, as they considered the distance too great and the cost of building railways to be overwhelming, as it was.

Others Interested.

Nothing was done in the matter of these iron ores until 1875, when Stuntz succeeded in interesting W. W. Spalding, then of Ontonagon, later of Duluth, and now dead, and George C. Stone, then a Duluth banker. These men took with them Professor A. H. Chester, the first competent geologist who had ever visited that country in search of iron. He was professor of geology in Hamilton college, and is still an honored member of the profession. These men went in primarily to examine what had been reported to Spalding as immense iron ore deposits south and east of Vermillion lake, in what are now townships 60-12 and 60-13. It may be noted in passing that this was the first examination for iron ore ever made upon the Mesaba range, and the fact that it was made upon a part of that range that has so far proved of no economic value does not militate against the enterprise of these early discoverers. Stuntz endeavored to lead Chester to his former finds upon Vermillion lake, but the latter was skeptical. He did, however, furnish Stuntz two Indians and a keg of powder, and agreed that if they could bring out as good specimens as Stuntz claimed and taken within 1,200 feet of his original locations, he would visit the lake. Stuntz took John Mallman, still an explorer at Duluth, and went down Pike river to Vermillion lake and his former finds.

First Drilling by Stuntz.

They had a few tools and some supplies. Stuntz soon found ore at the required distance and commenced drilling. He had a 48-inch drill and it took them many days to make three holes 42 inches deep, for all *their blacksmithing was done at the trading* post, five or six miles away. Finally they filled their three holes with about eighteen inches of powder and shot them, making the first blast in the history of iron mining in Minnesota. This was in midsummer in 1875. These holes were about three feet from the south edge of the formation and several feet apart. When fired they made merely a crack some forty feet long and half an inch wide.

There was not enough powder left for another such blast and the only thing to be done was to work with wedges to loosen the ledge. They broke and dug away for a width of several feet, the perpendicular side of the formation. With ash wedges smeared with soap they widened this until it was considered safe to insert all their remaining powder, well mixed with sand to give it bulk. The resulting blast broke off about sixty tons of ore and exposed the vein for a width of thirteen feet. The ore, as was afterwards found, ran from 65 to 66 per cent in iron and was of Bessemer quality.

One of the Indians was at once sent down to Professor Chester, where he and the party was at work on the Mesaba. He arrived in due time and was astonished at the result. Said he, "Why, with three men you have opened more ore than I found down there with twenty-two." Although this excellent showing was then made, and though Stuntz called Chester's attention to the find further east at what became the Breitung pit, the persons backing Chester were so discouraged at the poor showing on the other range that nothing was done. The Vermillion was not to be opened then.

First Real Development.

It was five years later, in 1880, that George C. Stone succeeded in interesting Charlemagne Tower, Sr., father of the present United States minister to Germany, Mr. Munson and others, in these finds and in getting a second report from Chester, at their request. Tower immediately took hold with vigor. Stuntz was employed to survey the township 62-15, and did so in the summer of 1880. Sioux scrip was laid on the land, or part of it, and Chester, Stuntz and about twenty helpers began the first real development of the land now embraced in the Minnesota mine. They dug a series of trenches across the formation, from what was later known as the Stuntz to the Breitung shaft and collectively made what was at that time probably one of the greatest surface showings ever known in an iron ore location. In the following year Breitung and his Marquette associates became interested with Tower, through the report of one Wright, an expert from that district, and the following year the construction of the Duluth & Iron Road was commenced.

Stuntz remained in charge of work there till 1883, when he was succeeded by John Armstrong, who in turn was followed by E. Morcome, still a resident of Tower, and who gave way to D. H. Bacon in 1887. Mr. Bacon remained in charge of the affairs f the Minnesota Iron company until it had become a vast concern with mines and operations on the Vermillion, Mesaba and Menominee ranges, and left it to take the management of the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railway company, two years ago.

Defective Page