

S. F. No. 636.

CHAPTER 375.

Fort Ridgely monument.

An act for an appropriation for the erection of a suitable monument to mark the site of Fort Ridgely and to commemorate the siege of the same by the Sioux Indians in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two.

Preamble—
history of the
fight.

Whereas, about the year one thousand eight hundred and fifty-one Fort Ridgely was erected by the United States government on the upper waters of the Minnesota river, in the then territory of Minnesota.

Said fort when erected was an extreme frontier post, and was in the heart of the country occupied by the Indians.

It was designed as a protection to the inhabitants of Minnesota from such Indians, as the said territory was then being rapidly settled by the whites and had promise of a large future growth.

In August one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two part of one company of the Fifth Regiment of Minnesota volunteer troops, which had been mustered into the United States service for the suppression of the rebellion, was stationed there.

When the great Sioux outbreak occurred at the Sioux agencies, a short distance up the Minnesota river from the fort, and Capt. John F. Marsh who was in command at the post, was, on August eighteenth, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, killed with twenty-four of his men on a march to relieve the agencies.

On the twentieth of August, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, the fort was attacked by a large body of Indians, who were repulsed with one hundred and one men of companies "B" and "C" of the Fifth Minnesota regiment and eighty citizens, under the command of Capt. T. J. Sheehan, who continued in command of said fort during the trying occurrence following.

On the twenty-first of August, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, two further attacks were made on the fort, one in the morning, and the other in the afternoon, in both of which the Indians were repulsed.

On the twenty-second of August a desperate assault was made on the fort by the combined forces of the Indians, which lasted for five hours and, as related by an official historian of the war, "was bitterly fought and courageously and intelligently resisted," and resulted in the defeat of the savages.

The stubborn resistance offered by Fort Ridgely was

largely instrumental in saving the state of Minnesota from devastation and destruction by the Sioux.

After the war was over the fort was totally abandoned and fell into private ownership.

All its buildings were either burned or dismantled by surrounding settlers and not a vestige of it remains.

The site of the old fort is historical, and the recollections of the events which transpired there are endeared to our state, and it is the great desire of the people of the state of Minnesota that the memory of the important part it played in the early settlement of the state should be perpetuated to future generations, which can best be done by the purchase of a piece of land embracing the actual locality where the buildings once stood, together with the parade grounds, which would not require more than ten acres.

This can be obtained from the present owner.

On this land should be erected an appropriate monument with suitable inscriptions similar to those which have been erected on the Custer and other battle fields by the United States government. Therefore,

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Minnesota:

SECTION 1. That the sum of three thousand dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated from any funds in the state treasury not otherwise appropriated, for the purpose of purchasing not to exceed ten acres of land, which land shall embrace the site of the buildings which constituted Fort Ridgely, in the county of Nicollet, together with the parade ground of said fort and for the erection thereon at some appropriate point within said parade ground, as near the site of the flagstaff of said fort as possible, a suitable monument of stone and bronze, with appropriate inscriptions thereon, to commemorate the attacks on said fort by the Sioux Indians in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, and to protect said monument when erected.

Appropriation.

SEC. 2. The governor of this state is hereby directed to appoint a commission of seven persons, two of whom shall reside in the city of St. Paul, two in Nicollet county, one in Winona, one in Renville county and one in Redwood county, who shall have full power to purchase said land in the name of the state of Minnesota and to design and erect said monument thereon, and to place thereon such inscriptions as in their judgment will carry out the spirit and intent of this act.

Commission to purchase site, &c.

SEC. 3. That the treasurer of this state shall pay any moneys not exceeding the sum of three thousand dol-

How paid.

lars for the purposes aforesaid, on the warrant or order of said commission or a majority of it.

SEC. 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.

Approved April 25th, 1895.

S. F. No. 789.

CHAPTER 376.

Birch Coulie.

An act appropriating money for the purchase and conveyance to the state of a portion of the battlefield of Birch Coulie, in Renville county, the removal thereto of the Birch Coulie monument, and the correction of certain inscriptions on said monument.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Minnesota:

Appropriation.

SECTION 1. That the sum of twelve hundred dollars (\$12,000), or so much thereof as shall be necessary, is hereby appropriated out of any sum or sums in the state treasury not otherwise appropriated for the purchase of a portion of the land in Renville county, not less than five nor more than ten acres, on which the battle of Birch Coulie was actually fought, and for the removal to and thereupon of the monument known as the Birch Coulie monument, now standing about one mile and a half distant from said battle ground, and for the correction of certain inscriptions on said monument as hereinafter prescribed.

Purchase of site.

SEC. 2. The adjutant general of the state is hereby directed to purchase, either by himself or by his duly appointed agent, the said portion of land, which, as nearly as can be determined, shall include at least a part of the actual battleground known as the "corral," whereon certain soldiers and citizens of the state contended so long and so heroically against a vastly superior force of Sioux Indians, Sept. second and third, eighteen hundred and sixty-two, and whereon so many of said soldiers and citizens gave up their lives or were stricken with wounds.

Provided, however, that if the adjutant general or his agent cannot procure the said land from its owner or owners at its fair and reasonable value, then it shall be and is hereby made the duty of the attorney general of the state to institute condemnatory proceedings and conduct the same to a determination according to law, and have the said land condemned to the state for the uses and purposes herein mentioned.