

First Grave in Watertown

By D. W. Ballou, Jr.

The first white man's grave, ever made within the limits of the present city of Watertown, Wisconsin, has just been broken in upon, destroyed and obliterated by the steady march and ceaseless changes of time, and its almost forgotten tenant, after peacefully resting in it more than twenty-two years—heedless of the life and activity surging above and around him—removed to a spot, where his wasting form will be disturbed no more forever, by the thoughtless intrusions of the living, who, in the calm hour, when, sooner or later, they meet the “common lot,” will desire the dreamless repose of the dead. I have indulged the hope, that a slight sketch of this pioneer incident, in the early history of one of the most prominent and prosperous of the many places in the interior of the State, drawn from the fresh and vivid recollections of some who were witnesses of the whole scene, might be interesting, not only to such as will now first learn them, but also to those who retain a clear and distinct remembrance of what happened at that primitive day, in the history of a city, whose foundations they were about to commence, and yet survive to behold the wonderful results of their youthful foresight, perseverance, and enterprise. And as we give a brief account of the first death, curious fancies more than half arise in the mind as it casts a hurried glance along the long line, and suggest the question, as to whose hand shall record the last one, and when shall it be done?

In the spring of 1837, aside from the red men, the entire population of Watertown did not exceed fifteen—men, women