

Early Times at Fort Winnebago

By Satterlee Clark

The subject which I have selected for this paper, is the "Early History of Fort Winnebago and its Surroundings." To give proper understanding of the history, not only of the fort, but of the persons connected with it, it will be necessary to detail my early recollections, from my arrival in what is now the State of Wisconsin. On the 14th day of April, 1828, I landed at Green Bay, then considered a small French settlement. Fort Howard was then situated near where the passenger depot of the C. & N. W. railroad now stands. On the opposite side of the river where the city of Green Bay is located, there was a wilderness. Three miles above on the river, was a small group of houses that could hardly be termed a village, but which was nevertheless called "Shanty Town." Residing there were several American families, among whom were Daniel Whitney, Henry S. Baird, Robt. Irwin, Alex. Irwin, Samuel Irwin, and quite a number of French and half-breeds. The fort contained three companies of U. S. Infantry, and was commanded by then Major, afterwards General Twiggs. The companies were severally commanded by Captain and his brother Major Buell, Captain Spence, and Captain, since General William Harney.

The same season, 1828, the 1st Infantry was ordered to the Portage to build a fort to be called Fort Winnebago. They were relieved at Fort Howard by four companies of the 5th U. S. Infantry under command of Col. William Lawrence. Previous to 1827 (the year of the Winnebago War under Red Bird, a Winnebago chief), the Indians had been in the habit of levying tolls on the goods of the American Fur Company, and others who were