BENNINGTON'S GREAT DAY

ALL READY TO DEDICATE THE BIG BATTLE MONUMENT.

PREPARATIONS FOR A CELEBRATION THAT WILL ECLIPSE ANYTHING VERMONT HAS EVER SEEN—DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT.

BENNINGTON, Vt., Aug. 16.—When the Legislature, last Fall, passed an act providing for the ceremonies attending upon the dedication of the Bennington Battle Monument and the centennial celebration of the admission to the Union of the State of Vermont, they probably realized in small measure the great proportions which the celebration would assume. To-day Bennington is decked from its eastern boundary to old Bennington on the hill, and is one complete wave of bunting and flags. Midway in this panorama stands the triumphal arch, lighted to-night with more than 200 electric lights. This arch bears on its eastern side the motto:

"1791—The best legacy Vermont's first century is her sons and her daughters—1891."

On the opposite side are the following:

"1777—You see the red coats. They are ours or Mollie Stark sleeps a widow to-night."

These were the historic words uttered by Gen. Stark as he rallied his men to fight on the field of Bennington. The other half of the same side of the arch has these words:

"Peace hath her victories, no less renowned than war—1891."

These are the mottoes that were used on the arch of 1877. This is a living arch, and will represent on both sides the thirteen original States by young ladies in costume, with banners. The arch is built to represent the stone of the monument in coloring and general appearance. As the President passes under this arch in the great procession of Aug. 19, a choir of 200 voices will sing "America," "Hail Columbia," "Star-Spangled Banner," and other patriotic songs. This is the only arch erected by the Centennial Commission, and its cost, decorated, is over $1,000.

Preparing for the great celebration, the Vermont militia are now in camp, named "Vermont" in honor of the finish of the first century of Statehood. Yesterday was marked by the arrival of Cushing's Battery B, United States Army, accompanying Fuller's Battery of the Vermont National Guard. They madea warlike and imposing appearance, and were greeted with cheers along their line of march, com overing the Green Mountains from Brattleborough. These are all the troops that will be here before Tuesday.

Prominent guests of the State are expected to begin to arrive to-morrow. Among them will be Col. Wheelock G. Veazey and wife, Col. Aldace F. Walker and wife, Gen. Russell A. Alger and wife, Gen. A. S. Webb and son, B. B. Smalley and wife, and ex-Gov. Rice of Massachusetts. All of these are to be the guests of Frederick B. Jennings of New-York, who has a fine Summer residence at North Bennington.

Gen. J. G. McCullough will entertain the Presidential party, who will arrive Tuesday evening. The Hon. E. J. Phelps, orator of the day, and his wife, are already in town, the guests of Gen. McCullough. Arriving at about the same time Tuesday will be Horatio Loomis and wife, Gen. John King of the Erie Railway, his wife and daughter, Senator Morrill of Vermont, and Dr. W. S. Webb of New-York, President of the National Sons of the American Revolution. Secretary of War Proctor and several other prominent gentlemen are expected to arrive with the Presidential party.

Gov. Page and staff arrived this morning and went into camp with the Vermont National Guard. It is expected that the guests of the State will number fully 1,500, and ample preparations have been made for their entertainment.

The Centennial Commission, consisting of the State Committee and the local Committee of Fifty, will hold its final meeting to-morrow evening. Vermont has never seen a celebration arranged upon such a grand and magnincent scale. It will be a credit to the State and an honor to the gentlemen composing the Centennial Commission.

This celebration is the culmination of a long series of events covering a century. The 16th of August, the anniversary of the Battle of Bennington, is to the people of Southern Vermont what the Fourth of July is to the Nation. For nearly fifty years there has been more or less preparation for the building of a suitable monument, and the dedication of this will take place this week.

The first organized effort was in 1853. The Legislature of Vermont in that year appropriated $3,000, with the condition that the cornerstone of the proposed memorial be laid on the 16th of August following, and that the sum of $7,000 be raised by private subscription. While these conditions were not fulfilled and the appropriation lapsed, the agitation continued. In 1875-6, the Bennington Historial Society and, subsequently, the Bennington Battle Monument Association, were organized, the latter chartered by the State of Vermont, with an appropriation of $15,000, conditional on the raising of $5,000 more. The celebration of 1877 followed.

These events and the subsequent action by the States of New-Hampshire and Massachusetts and the National Government, have contributed to cause the erection of the noble shaft on the site of the Continental Storehouse, the objective point of Col. Baum's expedition in 1777.

The cost of the monument and site has been, in round numbers, $100,000. Massachusetts contributed $10,000, New-Hampshire $7,500, the National Government $40,000, and Vermont $15,000 and a supplemental appropriation for the site. The balance has been raised by private subscriptions.

The monument stands on a commanding site, 283 feet above the Walloomsac River, which flows through the Village of Bennington. The foundation of the monument is the solid rock of the mountain, on the top of which was situated the Bennington of the Revolution. The structure is an obelisk, built of native stone and faced with Sandy Hill dolomite. The height from the base to the top of the capstone is 301 feet 10½ inches. The monument at the base is 37 feet 4 inches by 37 feet 4 inches, running to a point at the top.

The walls are thick at the base, but decrease gradually to a thickness of 2 feet at the apex. The outside stone is laid with "stretchers and headers." The inside walls rise to the height of 260 feet, after which the stones extend through the wall. Inside the walls are left in the rough rock, outside the stone is rough finished, and at the right angle corners of the shaft and also at windows and other openings the stone is finished in quarter-inch draught lines or arris. This gives the structure a finished and artistic appearance.

The lookout room is 188 feet above the foundation, and is reached by an iron staircase. This room is marked on the outside by two entablatures encircling the monument. These hemmed faces offer a contrast to the rough face of the remainder of the structure. From this lookout the battlefield is plainly visible seven miles away.

The first room in the monument contains four tablets, three of them inscribed, respectively, to the States of Massachusetts, New-Hampshire, and Vermont. The fourth is blank. The lookout room contains four historic granite tablets placed there by the Vermont Historical Society, the Masonic Fraternity, which laid the cornerstone in 1827, the Order of Odd Fellows, and the Grand Army of the Republic.

In front of the monument, commanding a fine view of Monument Avenue and the old First Church, has been erected the grand stand where the dedication services will take place as follows: Introductory address by Wheelock G. Veazey, President of the day; prayer by the Rev. Charles Parkhurst, Chaplain, Boston; address of welcome by Gov. C. S. Page; address and transfer of the monument to the State by ex-Gov. B. F. Prescott of New-Hampshire, President of the Bennington Battle Monument Association; address of acceptance on behalf of the State by Gov. Page; music; oration by the Hon. Edward J. Phelps of Burlington; remarks by President Harrison; music; benediction.

Among the prominent persons connected with the Bennington Battle Monument Association are Benjamin F. Prescott of New-Hampshire, President; ex-Gov. Rice of Massachusetts, E. J. Phelps, Gen. J. G. McCullough, ex-Gov. Hiland Hall, Prof. A. L. Perry, Major A. B. Valentine, H. G. Root, and H. C. Huling. The architect of the monument is J. Philip Rinn of Boston, and the contractor is William H. Ward of Lowell.

The late George W. Robinson, noted for having a large collection of Revolutionary relics, including the very camp kettle used by Col. Baum, was the gentleman who in 1853 moved in the matter of erecting a monument at Bennington. Charles M. Bliss was for many years Secretary of the association, took an active interest in its affairs, and may be said to be one of the fathers of the enterprise.

Brig. Gen. Greenleaf will be Chief Marshal, and Marcus D. Green his chief of staff.

In Camp Vermont to-day the First Regiment was inspected by Brig. Gen. William T. Greenleaf, Commander of the National Guard, and Capt. R. W. Hoyt of the Eleventh United States Infantry. The reports of the Brigadier Commander show 738 officers and men in camp out of a possible 762. This shows that the muster is becoming a special feature of the celebration.

This morning in each of the eight churches in Bennington special mention was made of the event of which Aug. 16 is the anniversary. At 3 o'clock Chaplain Hill held services in camp, at which patriotic songs were sung by the regiment. This evening in Bennington Village there were choral services in St. Peter's Church, a union service of the Baptist and Second Congregational churches in the latter's church, and a special monument exercise at the Methodist Church. Gov. Page and staff attended the Second Congregational Church, accompanied by Adjt. Gen. Theodore S. Peck and others.

The union services this afternoon were held at the Old First Church, which had been profusely decorated with the flags of all nations. A feature of the service was the exhibition of the sword captured from Col. Baum at the battle of Bennington. Gov. Page and staff and several officers of the First Regiment were present and participated in the exercises. The music was furnished by a large chorus choir, and patriotic hymns were sung. The invocation was by the Rev. C. B. Peck of North Bennington, Scripture reading by the Rev. A. S. Gilbert of North Bennington, prayer by the Rev. Z. Marten of Bennington, and the memorial sermon by the Rev. M. L. Severance of the Old First Church, his subject being "The Providence of God in History."

The speaker referred to the battle of Bennington as being one of the seventeen decisive conflicts of the world. His text was, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom He hath chosen for His inheritance." The closing prayer was made by the Rev. C. R. Seymour of Bennington.

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