

## DR. J. L. WHITING'S HISTORIC SKETCH.

DETROIT, October 10, 1876.

A. A. DWIGHT, Esq.—DEAR SIR—In compliance with your request that I would give a "brief" statement of the military occupation of the Saginaw valley, I send you the following.

Very truly yours,

J. L. WHITING.

In the years 1821 and 1822 the Chippewa Indians of the Saginaw agency became restless and ill-tempered to such a degree that the war department, in the early part of 1822, ordered a detachment of the Third United States infantry (then stationed at Fort Howard, Green Bay), to proceed to the Saginaw river, under the command of Major Daniel Baker.

The companies were commanded by Capt. John Garland, company K; Lieuts. — Allen and Henry P. Bainbridge; and Capt. Stephen H. Webb, of company I; Lieuts. Edward Brooks and Benjamin Walker; Adjut. Nelson H. Baker, a brother of the major commanding.

On the site of the present city of Saginaw they erected a stockade fort, and within the stockade were the company quarters, the officers' quarters being on the north side of the quadrangle, and on the three sides were the barracks for the soldiers' quarters and their families and the hospital buildings.

There were about one hundred and twenty enlisted men, besides women and children—all told perhaps about one hundred and fifty souls, including surgeon Dr. Zina Pitcher and the sutler and his clerks.

The summer of 1823 proved a very sickly one, a very aggravated form of intermittent fever being the universal disease, as only one of the officers and men escaped an attack of greater or less severity, and he an old soldier of three enlistments of five years each. Among the sufferers by the disease was the surgeon, Dr. Pitcher, who for several days was carried from his quarters to the bedside of his patients, and for whom he was the only person to prescribe. In this state of things the commanding officer, Major Baker, having been laid on a sick bed, Capt. Garland, next in command, made a requisition on Quartermaster Samuel Stanton for a surgeon to relieve Dr. Pitcher.

On the 29th of August, 1823, about ten A. M., the major called on me and desired me to go at once to Saginaw and assume the duties of surgeon of the post.

It was a very busy season with me, and at a great personal sacrifice I consented to go, and at two P. M. of that day, mounted my horse and under the guidance of a soldier set my face towards and through the wilderness to the ill-fated "City of Saginaw," distant one hundred miles.

We left on Wednesday, 29th, and at eight, A. M., Friday, I sat down to a most superb breakfast at the quarters of Capt. Garland, with whom I staid for about three weeks, when I was taken sick myself and took quarters at the officers' mess-house, where I spent three of the most harassing weeks of my whole life, but through a kind Providence recovered sufficiently to leave with the other members of the command for Detroit on the schooner Red Jacket (Capt. Walker), about the 25th of October, and arrived in safety about the 30th of the same month.

I have given above the names of the officers in the detachment, of whom Lieut. Allen had died before I got to the fated city. Major Baker's wife, a daughter and a young son about fifteen years of age, (who was a cadet in Capt. Partridge's school at Norwich, Vermont, a most promising youth), and Lieut. Nelson Baker also died while I was at the post, and one enlisted man only.

The command reached Detroit in fair condition, and remained in the cantonments at the head of Wayne as it was, and north of Fort street. Dr. Pitcher continued so feeble that I continued to do his duty until the following spring.

While I was confined by sickness in the mess-house, attended by a Canadian soldier, there was a great Indian council held at Green Point,

according to Indian law, at which Kish-Kaw-Kaw, the usurping chief, (he was by birth a Sac), was present. A Delaware Indian, intermarried with a Chippewa woman, was on trial for the killing of a Chippewa Indian in a drunken brawl. The offender had compromised the matter, and bought his life by paying the relatives a certain amount in Indian currency, viz: furs, skins and a little cash, and the matter was amicably settled between the relatives and the criminal. But according to the custom of the Chippewa tribe it was necessary that the arrangement should be confirmed by a council—the council being assembled and seated in a circle on the ground, when the delinquent was required to walk around within the circle, and if unmolested by any of the relatives of the murdered man the matter was to be considered as finally settled, and not to be reopened forever after. He had quietly passed all the relatives, near or remote, and was therefore restored to his former standing in the tribe; but in passing the old villain Kish-Kaw-Kaw, he rose and struck the offender dead at his feet. The whole circle were amazed at this audacious act, and the usual "Waugh" was uttered by the council, and the hereditary chief, Min-non-equot, said: "What does this mean? It is contrary to Indian law." Old Kish-Kaw-Kaw only deigned the reply: "The law is altered!" The council then broke up, and the old rascal took the body of the man he had murdered into the canoe, covered it with skins and furs and carried it to his village at the mouth of Saginaw river, (now Bay City), where it was buried. This old rascal was, several years after this, arrested for a murder in Wayne county and sentenced to be hanged, but one of his four wives brought him a vegetable decoction with which he committed suicide in jail, thus depriving the sheriff of the pleasure of stringing him up.