

Foote
Family

ZIBA FOOTE.

Ziba Foote was born in Newtown, Conn., July 4, A. D. 1785, of poor but honest, upright parentage. He taught school to raise money to pay his way into Yale College, and graduated, with distinction, in 1805. In early life he had a strong friendship for a young man by the name of David Sanford, of Newtown, his native place. David was a little older and farther advanced, in 1803, than Ziba. He graduated at Yale College in 1804, the year that Ziba entered. They were so much alike in disposition that their friendship bound them together so that they, at that time, loved as David and Jonathan did.

Jared Mansfield, the surveyor-general, had full control of all the surveys in the northwestern territory, to wit: Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas and Michigan Territory, with his headquarters at a village on the Ohio river known as Cincinnati.

Wishing to procure the services of some scientific young men from Yale College to assist him in the public surveys, David Sanford was recommended to him, and was engaged. As Sanford had already graduated, he was ready to start at once. Foote, not yet through college, expected soon to follow. Sanford, after completing a contract in Indiana Territory, near Vincennes, was sent north to survey a reserve of four townships at the foot of the rapids of the Maumee river, waiting and hoping for his friend, Foote, to come.

About the first of August, 1805, Ziba Foote started from Newtown, Conn., and, on the 5th day of September, he arrived at Cincinnati, after a long and troublesome journey. Soon afterward the following letter was received at Newtown by his friends:

“FORT WAYNE [date not given].

“On arriving at General Mansfield's I found that Elias Grover and David Sanford had gone up to the northern lakes, surveying, just nine days before my arrival. I presented General Mansfield my letters, and he told me that from my youth and inexperience, prudence would dictate that it would be best for me to go one trip as assistant surveyor, after which he would make me a deputy.”

Mr. Foote started, the day after his arrival at General Mansfield's, in pursuit of his friend Sanford, and found him at Fort Wayne, waiting for Mr. Wm. Wells, the Indian agent, to give him directions about surveying, and from here they went down to Fort Miami, on the lake, Mr. Foote on horse-back and Sanford in a canoe.

Sanford, being much exposed, when he arrived at the Fort, was sick. Foote, in a letter to his father, said:

“Mr. Sanford would not permit me to go into the woods, but kept me to nurse himself. I took very strict care of him until I got sick myself. As there was no one but myself to take care of him, I was compelled to give him what attention I was able. The accommodations were wretched. Mr. Sanford had a tolerable bed. As to eating, he had no appetite, so that lack of these materials was not felt. My fever came on generally at evenings, and I was obliged to lie on the floor, which made my bones ache very badly. In a few days Mr. Sanford died, and I was just able to sit up to see him breathe his last. He was speechless four days before his death. He died on Friday, October 11th (1805), about two hours before day, and was buried the same day about sunset. I determined to go

back to Cincinnati with all speed, for if I stayed there I thought I should die too. The next day there came along four men, with but two horses, who were going almost to Cincinnati. I thought this as good an opportunity as I should find, so I packed up and was just ready to start with them when the fever came on, so I was obliged to stay, and they went on.

“The next morning, feeling fresh and resolute, I got up my horse (one of Sandford's) and pursued after and overtook them before night. That night we all slept in the woods. Next morning we started two hours before day on our journey; we traveled on, and arrived about noon at Fort Defiance. Here I was taken with the fever again, and stayed all night, but they left me and went on. The next morning I set out after my company. I went on about three miles, lost my road, and went back; hired a man for three dollars to pilot me eighteen miles. He went the distance and turned back; I kept on, expecting every minute to overtake the company, knowing, if I failed, I must sleep in the woods alone. It rained very hard constantly. Well, I spurred on till dark, and yet had not overtaken them. I could go no farther, but must spend the night alone in those dark woods. In the first place, I knew that I should want considerable water in the night, but had nothing but my boots to hold it; so I climbed down the river bank and filled one boot with water and placed it so that I could drink out of it during the night. I turned out my horse with a bell on, and hampered him, and all was well so far. I then took out my fire-works and tried for a long time to get a fire, but could not, as it was raining very hard. I begged, prayed, and cried, but all did not make me a fire, and I was obliged to give it up. So I took my two blankets and lay down in the woods, almost doubting if I should ever rise up again. The rain poured down until twelve o'clock. I lay till daylight,

tackled up my horse, hurried on and overtook my company, and at evening we reached a house. The lady's name was Mrs. B. I stayed there ten days, and called her mother; but I had not found the right one yet."

Mr. Foote having returned to Cincinnati quite discouraged, but still determined to work somewhere, he found General Mansfield and informed him of the death of his friend, Sanford. The General, being a man of very tender feelings, could not refrain from weeping when he received the sad intelligence.

Ziba Foote now brought his own case before the General. He was without friends and without money in a strange land, and no work. His high spirits now seemed to be perfectly under a cloud, and he was almost in despair; he knew not where to go or what to do. But relief came to his mind when General Mansfield informed him that he would give him every assistance in his power. He advanced him money, and gave him as much to do in his office as he could do; also assured him that he would give him as much lucrative business in the future as the nature of the case would admit of, and as he became able to perform it. Ziba spent the winter in Cincinnati.

The last letter that he wrote to his friends in Connecticut was dated March 20, 1806, on the Ohio river, off against Fort Massie, and contained the following extract:

"On the 4th of this month I set out to survey with Mr. William Rector, a gentleman with whom I am well pleased."

Next in order is a letter from Wm. Rector to Surveyor-General Mansfield, giving an account of poor Foote's tragic death. It is dated: "Surak's Ferry, Ohio River, May 16th, 1806," and reads as follows:

"Sir, I am extremely sorry to inform you, that about twelve o'clock on Wednesday, the 30th of April, Mr. Ziba Foote was drowned. The circumstances attending this

melancholy accident were as follows: The overflowed country that I was compelled, last winter, to leave unfinished, he was surveying on the east side of the Wabash. He came to a pond, about thirty chains wide, which, from its appearance, he supposed he and his companions could pass through without swimming; but, being uncertain, he fastened his compass and Jacob-staff to his belt, in order to be able to go through at any rate. In this encumbered condition, he went into the pond, and had gone but a short distance when he got over his depth. As soon as he began to swim he called out to his chainmen, and directed them to follow him, for he said he was determined to swim through. They did so, and all swam on very well until they had nearly passed the deep part of the water, when, all of a sudden, Mr. Foote began to sink, and said he was drowning. Mr. Gilkerson, one of the chainmen, who is a very good swimmer, swam to him; but he had sunk so low that he was unable to get hold of him, except by his hat, which was on his head. By this means he kept him up for a short time; but his hat came off, when he at once sank, and never rose again.

“Mr. Gilkerson then went out on the pond, on some logs they had TIED together, and endeavored to raise him with a long pole and a hook, in time to save his life; but the logs, unfortunately, separated, and he was obliged to swim to shore. They then made a raft, on which Mr. Gilkerson went out a second time, and raised Mr. Foote and brought him out; but it was too late. He had been under water about two hours, and life was extinct. His company then made a wooden spade, with which, and an ax, they dug a grave on a small hill near the pond. They then made a bark coffin, and buried him late that evening. His burial was as decent as circumstances would admit of, for the place is remote from all settlements.

“Mr. Gilkerson at once came here to communicate to

me the melancholy intelligence. Sincerely do I regret Mr. Foote's untimely death, for he was a young man who possessed many amiable virtues, among which were industry, perseverance, candor and good *nature*. Often has he expressed to me the most lively gratitude for the friendly treatment he had received at your house. He had endeared himself to all my company in such a manner that, had each one lost a dear relative, they could not have expressed more sorrow at his loss. When I parted with Mr. Foote, at the mouth of the Wabash, I told him he would meet with great difficulties in surveying among the ponds, and requested him not to hurry himself, and in all cases to work around the ponds by offsets. He observed that he would take as much time as would enable him to do the work in the most accurate manner, but said he had been informed that some of his friends at Cincinnati had predicted that he would not stand the fatigue of the woods, and that he was determined to exert himself to accomplish what he had to do as soon as possible, in order to convince his friends that he did not want fortitude to go through with what he was willing to undertake.

"I am yours, etc.,

WM. RECTOR,

"*Deputy Surveyor.*"

The following is from Prof. E. T. Cox:

"When on a visit to Bedford, in Lawrence county, to examine the stone quarries, I came across the tomb of Ziba Foote and Winthrop Foote, M. D., his brother. Dr. Foote was a very learned man and noted for his eccentricities. A very large block of limestone had broken off from the face of a projecting cliff and lay at its foot, in a deep, narrow and secluded valley, close to the town of Bedford, and on Dr. Foote's land.

He had a hole cut into this stone for a vault, in which to entomb the remains of his brother and himself. Many years ago he made a journey on horse-back to Posey

county, to hunt for the grave of Ziba Foote. John Waller, who was then living near Foote's Grave Pond, conducted him to the grave. Ziba Foote's body had been wrapped in the bark of a tree, which served as shroud and coffin.

The bones were gathered up and were carried to their present resting place. On the flat top of the stone sepulcher is a triangular-capped monolith, which bears the epitaph of the two brothers. I was so struck with this singular burial place that I made a sketch of the stone and copied the following memorial:

ZIBA FOOTE, A. B.,
BORN IN NEWTOWN, CONN.,
July 4th, 1785.
DIED
April 30th, 1806.

He graduated at Yale College, with great honor, at the age of 20 years, was drowned in Foote's Grave Pond, Gibson county, Indiana, while conducting government surveys.

His remains lie here.

"And by the buried bones of him whom living I loved best,
See me at last laid quietly, then leave me to my rest."

On the other side of the shaft was:

WINTHROP FOOTE, M. D.,
BORN NEWTOWN, CONN.,
November 30th, 1787.
DIED BEDFORD, IND.,
August 2d, 1856.

By unsurpassed energy he educated himself and graduated in law and medicine with great distinction early in life. Having selected for practice the latter profession, his mental and physical energies secured him success equaled by few of his contemporaries. He emigrated to Palestine in 1818 and to Bedford in 1823.

"And so farewell my dear, good friends,
And farewell world, to thee,
I part with some in love,
With all in peace and charity."

SKETCH OF SAMUEL MORRISON.

Samuel Morrison, the author of the preceding biography, was in many respects a most remarkable man. He was born at Aurora, Indiana, March 1, 1798, and was the first white child born in Dearborn county, which at that time included all of Indiana lying east of the Fort Greenville treaty line. The story of his life presents a picture of the hard experience of the early settlers of the state—especially hard to him because of a lameness which made manual labor difficult for him—and it is given here as he related it to the writer a few months before his death :

“My parents,” he said, “were Pennsylvanians. My father was a soldier in the Revolution, and was wounded at Brandywine. After the close of the war they moved to Kentucky, and in 1796, on St. Valentine’s day, they settled at Petersburg, Ind., then known as Tanner’s Station. There was an old Indian hut there, without any roof or floor, and my father had come over before and fixed it up so that it could be inhabited until he could get something better. My father kept a ferry there. It was just a canoe in which he carried passengers; they made the horses swim alongside. Before 1798 my parents moved to the site of Aurora, where I was born. Both my father and my mother died before I was eight years old. While at Aurora my father assisted Benjamin Chambers. He was a brother-in-law of Israel Ludlow, and they two did the first surveying in southeastern Indiana. They lived near Dayton, O., at the time. Chambers soon afterward came to Indiana and was appointed one of the judges of Dearborn county by Governor Harrison.”

“Where did you go after the death of your parents?”

“I went to Dayton to live with my uncle, Samuel Morrison, who was a wagon-master in the Revolutionary army.

While here I got my first schooling from Thomas Brown, a Quaker. Before I went to school, however, my uncle's oldest daughter, who had some education, used to give out spelling to us younger children, and I learned to spell in words of five syllables before I knew a letter of the alphabet by sight. When I went to school my cousin gave me a piece of an old Dillworth's spelling-book. It was the first half. When we got through it I used to borrow the books of the other children and copy out the lessons for the next day. I copied it in print because I had not learned to write, and so by the time we were through the book I could make very good letters."

This skill in lettering is one which Mr. Morrison developed until he was able to produce work scarcely distinguishable from print. One of his most remarkable productions in this line is a book of the songs which have been favorites with him. He made it, as music is commonly written, with one verse printed under the staves and the others placed below. Every part of it was done with a pen.

"After some months' stay at Dayton," continued Mr. Morrison, "I returned to Lawrenceburg and lived with Eli Girrard and 'Squire Foster, who had married half-sisters of mine. While looking about for employment there I met Captain Crandall, an old sea captain, who hired me to do chores for him. He was the man who took the first ship built at Marietta down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. When he came to Twelve Mile Island, about Louisville, the water had become so low that he had to anchor and wait until the river raised. While he was there he met Betsy Dorsey, a very pretty girl, who lived in Clark county, Indiana, and they were married. He took her with him down the river, and after the ship was fitted out at New Orleans they went with it to Russia and back again. They were both very kind to me. The cap-

tain had a great many books and was skilled in everything relating to navigation. I asked him to loan me a geography that he had—I think it was Morse's large geography. He did so and I took it home and copied all the maps that were in it. By that I learned a great deal of geography and became a fair draughtsman. Captain Crandall also taught me arithmetic as far as the single rule of three, and something about astronomy. He used to take me out at night and point out the constellations of the fixed stars and explain the motions of the planets."

"Did you go to school while at Lawrenceburg?"

"Very little. My brothers-in-law were poor, and they did not appreciate the advantages of education. They said I knew enough already; that I could read and write and cipher, besides being able to print letters and make maps. In those days there were no free schools, and a boy could not go to school unless some one paid his tuition or gave security for it. I had one quarter's schooling, though. My brother Ephraim paid for it. The teacher was David P. Shook. He could only cipher as far as the single rule of three, however, and so I only went over my old work.

"After a time my brother came up from Clark county on a visit, and I went back with him. He was poor, too, but I was old enough to do manual labor and support myself. I quarried stone and chopped and scored timber. The wages paid were twenty-five cents a day, and board and washing cost a dollar a week. In 1820 I opened a school at Utica, in Clark county. The way a school was started was this: The teacher would take an article of agreement about the neighborhood, and the people would agree to send their children and contribute to pay the rent of the building and the cost of fuel. I had fifty or sixty pupils in my first school.

"The last schooling I had was in 1821. I had saved up a little money and went over to Louisville where a

Presbyterian preacher named Dow was teaching. I agreed to take care of the building for my tuition, but even then my means were so limited that I had to use great economy. I obtained permission from Dow to stay in the school-room at night. I slept on a bench with my books for a pillow. I used to buy bread and sugar, which I kept in my desk, and for three months I ate nothing but bread and drank sweetened water, except on a few occasions when I was invited out to a meal. I felt no bad effects from it, and my head was as clear as a bell. After that I taught school for three years at Utica, and in 1824 went to Lawrenceburg. I taught school in that vicinity until 1832. In vacation I used to go to Dayton and write in the clerk's office and on the supreme court records.

“ In 1833 Micajah T. Williams, of Cincinnati, surveyor-general of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa, sent for me and told me that he had a place for me at \$500 a year. I was just about closing a contract with the clerk and auditor at Dayton to work for them at \$600 a year, but as Williams said he would increase my salary if I gave satisfaction, I went with him. He soon raised my salary to \$625. While here I was elected trustee and visitor of the city schools. I did not know I was a candidate until I was elected, and at first I decided to decline. I remember a friend of mine told me I had better not. He said there was \$10 fine for refusing an office in this country. I thought it over and concluded to accept. I must confess that I felt gratified that I, a poor orphan boy, should have been selected by my fellow-citizens for a public trust, especially as I received more votes than E. D. Mansfield, whom I considered one of the greatest men in the West while he lived. He was elected from the same ward that I was, at the same time. Joseph Ray, the author of Ray's Arithmetic, was also a trustee and visitor during my term. I remained in the surveyor's office for

thirteen years, and then went to live on a farm on the high land back of Lawrenceburg, which is called 'the ridge.' I lived there until 1871, and then came to Indianapolis."

"You made several maps that were published, did you not?"

"Yes, I drew the first map of Indiana that was published. That was in 1816, and there were only thirteen counties in the new state. It was engraved on copper plate and printed at Cincinnati. I also made a map of Indiana in 1845, which was published at Cincinnati. I circulated it widely, together with a pamphlet giving a synopsis of our land system and our school laws. In 1835 I published the first map of Wisconsin that was ever made. That was before it was set off as a territory. I changed the orthography from Ouisconsin to its present form. The winter before, Congress had a squabble about the name of the proposed territory, but the next winter they made the law giving the name as I had printed it. In 1836-7 I published a map of Iowa and gave the present orthography. Before that it was written Ioway."

"Did you not make some military maps that were used during the rebellion?"

"Yes, sir, I did. I shall always believe that I originated the plan for the capture of Vicksburg. I had been over the country in that vicinity when I was a young man, and knew it well. I made a map showing fifty miles square, including Port Gibson, Grand Gulf and Jackson. Some of my friends advised me to send it to General Grant. I wrote on the margin: 'Grand Gulf and Bruinsburg are the places to capture and hold; then destroy the bridges over Big Black river and Bayou Pierre; these streams will guard your flanks; then march out and capture Jackson; this done, you can take Vicksburg at your leisure.' I sent this to General Grant, and afterwards the canal project on which he was working was abandoned, and my

plan was adopted. I also made a map of eastern Virginia for secret war movements. It was laid off in sections on a base line drawn through Fortress Monroe, and a meridian line through Richmond. By means of this an officer could be ordered to occupy any section as it appeared on this map, and if the instructions fell into the hands of the enemy they would not be understood. General Butler told me that his movements in eastern Virginia were planned and carried out by this map."

Although Mr. Morrison's story is in many particulars stranger than fiction, its accuracy can not be questioned. The struggles of his early life, in which he "breasted the blows of circumstance" and forced his way to an honorable position among his fellows are well known to many old residents. As to his war maps he had the following letters in his possession, which are of much historical interest:

"NEAR VICKSBURG, March 10, 1863.

"*S. Morrison, Esq.:*

"DEAR SIR—Your note enclosing a map of Vicksburg and surroundings was duly received; also, your second letter.

"The canal across the point will undoubtedly prove a success, and would now have been ready for use, or nearly so, but for an accident resulting from the great rise of water. The river has broken in the upper dam to the canal and filled it with water, making a crevasse in the canal levee about midway of the point. This will set us back probably ten days.

"I am supplied with all the engineers and other staff officers provided for by law, and have not the authority to accept your services as you request.

"Yours, etc.,

"U. S. GRANT, Major General."

“FT. MONROE, VA., March 6, 1864.

“MY DEAR SIR—I have received your very excellent war map of Eastern Virginia, and will have it framed on rollers so that it can be used. From the cursory examination I have been able to give it I think it will be of use, and am much obliged for it.

“Respectfully, your obedient servant,

“BENJ. F. BUTLER, Maj. Gen. Army.

“SAMUEL MORRISON, Esq.”

“BOSTON, May 25, 1884.

“MY DEAR SIR—The map of yours, after I got to Bermuda Hundreds, along in the summer, was lost, and I don't know that I ever regretted the loss of any one thing more than that, and I am very glad to hear from the author of it, and am grateful for expressions of confidence and regard.

Yours truly,

“BENJ. F. BUTLER.

“SAMUEL MORRISON, Esq.”

While in the land office, Mr. Morrison made several discoveries and improvements in the systems of work which have since been used in the department. He originated the system of printed sheets for drawing township maps, and had the first plate engraved from which they were printed. He discovered a principle for the calculation of fractional sections, by which the old mode of calculation by latitude and departure was superseded and much time and labor were saved. He also discovered that the relations between the fractional tracts in such fractional sections were such that when the dimensions of one were known the others could be determined by a short and simple process without separate calculation. Although these discoveries have been of great service to the government, Mr. Morrison received no greater reward than the clerks

who did ordinary work by his side. After removing to Indianapolis he suffered financial losses, in consequence of which he petitioned Congress for special compensation, but no action was taken on his memorial.

Although in reduced circumstances, Mr. Morrison's later years were passed in comfort and tranquility. His personal acquaintance with Indiana history was extensive, and he furnished much information to students in that field, as well as writing occasional articles for the newspapers. He died March 1, 1888—the ninetieth anniversary of his birth—respected by all who knew him.