

Transcribed Excerpts from U.S. Supreme Court Report by Surveyors about the Iowa, Missouri Border, December 17, 1850

Supreme Court of the United States
December Term 1850

*The State of Missouri vs. the State of Iowa: Original Bill
and
The States of Iowa vs. the State of Missouri: Cross Bill*

... at the December term 1848 thereof, Henry B. Hendershott and Joseph C. Brown were appointed commissioners to run and mark the line in controversy between the States of Missouri and Iowa ...

“To the Hon the Supreme Court of the United States.

The undersigned appointed commissioners by this Honorable Court in the above cases to establish the boundary line between the aforesaid States respectfully

Report

... While in St. Louis we obtained from Major M. L. Clark Surveyor General of the State of Missouri and Illinois a copy of the field notes of the survey made by John C. Sullivan in the year 1816 ...

No precise trace of the “Old North West Corner” remained. The witness trees to it were on the margin of a vast prairies, and had apparently been destroyed by fire years ago, consequently its exact position could not be ascertained yet from the running of many experimental lines, diligently examing [sic] the evidences before us, together with the reports of the Surveyors, we became satisfied of its proper position and accordingly established it ...

At the corner so determined we planted a large solid cast iron pillar, weighing between fifteen and sixteen hundred pounds, four feet six inches long, squaring twelve inches at its base and eight inches at its top. This pillar was deeply and legibly marked with the words (strongly cast into the iron) “Missouri” on its South side, “Iowa” on its North side and “State Line” on the East ...

The survey on the line was commenced running due West on said parallel of latitude to the Missouri River, as divided by this Honorable Court, and at its terminus as near the bank of said Missouri River, as the perishable nature of the soil would admit, we planted a monument similar in figure, weight, dimension, and inscription to the one planted at the “North West Corner” the words “State Line” facing the East ...

Returning to the "North West Corner" the survey of the line was commenced, extending Eastwardly [page5] from said "corner" to the Des Moines River, as run and marked by said Sullivan in 1816, from said corner to said river. On this line by close examination we discovered abundant blazes and many witness trees which enables us to find and re-mark the said line as directed by this Honorable Court ...

Near the bank of the Des Moines river where the line terminated, we planted a cast iron pillar, similar in weight, figure dimensions and inscriptions to those planted at the "N.W. Corner" and near the bank of the Missouri River, the words "State Line" facing the West.

Solid pillars of cast iron weighing each between three and four hundred pounds and minutely described as to figure and inscriptions in the report heretofore made to this Honorable Court by Messers Wells and Hendershott commissioners we caused to be planted at every ten miles in the due West line extending from said "N.W. Corner" to the Missouri River, and also at every ten miles in the line extending East from the "N.W. Corner" aforesaid to the Des Moines River.