

Henry Rowe Schoolcraft

(28 Mar 1793 – 10 Dec 1864)

Schoolcraft. On Saturday the 10th inst., H.R. Schoolcraft aged 72 years. The friends of the family are invited to attend the funeral this Monday afternoon at 2 o'clock from his late residence, No. 256 F street between 13th and 14th streets.



The Evening Star, January 30, 1865

Orphans' Court, Judge Purcell

The will of the late Henry R. Schoolcraft was fully proved, and letters testamentary issued to Mary A. Schoolcraft. He leaves his property, a large portion of which is in the West, to his wife, to which also he leaves the copyright of his works: Expedition to the source of the Mississippi, Scenes and Adventures in the Ozark Mountains, Legends of Hiawatha.

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Schoolcraft, Henry Rowe (1793-1864), U.S. explorer and ethnologist, born in Guilderland, N.Y.; U.S. agent in Lake Superior region for nearly 20 years; 'Indian Tribes of the United States', 6 volumes published by order of Congress, provided background for Longfellow's 'Hiawatha',

Martha Coleman Bray, *Nicollet and His Map*

p. 62 -- General Alexander Macomb, commander in chief of the Army, invited him (Nicollet) to read with him before its publication the report of Lieutenant James Allen who had that summer accompanied the expedition of Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, Indian agent of Michilimacinac, to find the true source of the Mississippi [Journal of an "Expedition into Indian Country" to the Sources of the Mississippi, made under the authority of the War Department in 1832 (23rd Congress, 1st Session, House Documents, 323 -- serial 257 (Washington, 1832))]. Thirteen years before, Schoolcraft had been with Lewis Cass, then governor of Michigan Territory, on an expedition to the same country and his narrative had enormous impact on the reading public both in the United States and abroad. Its most valuable passages were then, as now, about the Chippewa nation with whom he had much contact. Allen was the engineer and mapmaker of the second expedition in 1832 who's purpose was largely geographical. He had used only a chronometer, and to Nicollet his results left much to be desired. But the report's very existence and the fact that Nicollet was invited to study it indicated the interest of the government in other more exact explorations.

P. 167 -- Taliaferro (Indian agent to the Dakotas at Fort Snelling) was more than pleased to have his guest (Nicollet) go north, but his reasons were not entirely scientific. Schoolcraft was now Indian agent at La Pointe on the south shore of Lake Superior, and, much to Taliaferro's disgust, the Chippewas had been placed under his jurisdiction. There were rumors that a powerful chief had been encouraged to say that Taliaferro was inciting the Dakotas to war against the Chippewas, and the Major hoped Nicollet

would find out the truth of these machinations against himself. He had, in fact, burned the midnight oil as he drove his pen across the pages of his diary in uncontrolled rage against some of the statements made in Schoolcraft's book which, surprisingly enough, he had not seen until Nicollet had given it to him.

Appletons' Cyclopedia of American Biography

Schoolcraft, Henry Rowe (Mar. 28, 1793 - Dec. 10, 1864)

Explorer, ethnologist, was born in Albany County, N.Y., the son of Lawrence and Margaret Anne Barbara (Rowe) Schoolcraft and the great-grandson of James Calcraft, as the name was then spelled, who emigrated from England to Albany County, N.Y., in 1727. Henry enjoyed the opportunities of the common school in Hamilton, N.Y., and was able to matriculate in Union College at fifteen. Later he attended Middlebury College. He favored language and natural science, especially geology and mineralogy. His father was a glass maker, and the boy studied this industry and in 1817 started at Utica, N.Y., a book on glass making. He began his explorations with a visit to the mineral regions of southern Missouri and Arkansas in 1817-18, then Indian country. His report, "A View of the Lead Mines of Missouri," was published in New York in 1819. By this time he was considered a competent geologist, and he was sent on the Cass exploring expedition in 1820 to the upper Mississippi and the Lake Superior copper region. His "Narrative Journal of Travels through the Northwestern Regions of the United States . . . To the Sources of the Mississippi River" appeared in 1821. Later, in 1832, he made another expedition to the sources of the Mississippi, which he described in "Narrative of an Expedition through the Upper Mississippi to Itasca Lake, the Actual Source of the Mississippi" (1834), reissued as "Summary Narrative" in 1855 with an account of the earlier expedition of 1820 and an appendix of official reports and scientific papers. His wide acquaintance with the Indians led to his appointment in 1822 as Indian agent for the tribes of Lake Superior. Thereafter his predilections were for those Algonquin tribes inhabiting the vast forests around the great lake. In 1823 he married a quarter-blood Chippewa girl, who, though educated in Europe, understood and shared much of the primitive Indian culture. She died in 1842.

The importance of the Indian subject was firmly fixed in his mind, and for the remainder of his life he pursued his chosen work in season and out of season. Encouraged by the government, whose need was data on the Indian problem, he was given official promotion as superintendent of Indian affairs for Michigan in 1836 and served in the department until 1841. During this period he negotiated several treaties with the Chippewa, probably most important of which was the treaty of Mar. 28, 1836, whereby the United States obtained title to the northern third of the lower peninsula and the eastern half of the upper peninsula of Michigan. Always active in forwarding study of Indians, he helped to found the Historical Society of Michigan in 1828 and the Algic Society of Detroit in 1832. In many ways he promoted the study of the ethnology of the Indian, both at home and abroad. His literary remains are of impressive bulk. They consist of descriptions of his explorations, writings on the manners and customs of the Indians, and tales and legends. Of these perhaps the most important are "Algic Researches (2 vols., 1839) concerning Indian mental characteristics, "Oneota," originally issued in eight paper covers (1844-45) describing the Indian history and prospects, "Notes on the Iroquois" (1847), a popular account, and "Personal Memories of . . . Thirty Years with the Indian Tribes" (1851). Most of these works were literary rather than scientific, as is characteristic of the unspecialized anthropological science of the period. Realizing that the scientific material he had collected should be set in order, he projected an Indian encyclopaedia; but this was set aside for the great work on which his reputation as an ethnologist must rest. Subverted by the government, he began in 1851, "Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States" (6 PTAs., 1851-57). This work, six folio volumes, excellently illustrated with steel engravings from paintings by Seth Eastman, was a collaboration dominated by Schoolcraft. In spite of shortcomings, it

contains valuable and indispensable material on the Indians and is a monument to a great American explorer and ethnologist.

Schoolcraft was fluent, interesting, convincing, and made a good public appearance. He traveled much and received many honors. He published nothing after 1857, and it is said that rheumatism and paralysis put an end to his work. He was survived by his wife, Mary (Howard) Schoolcraft of Beaufort District, N.C., to whom he was married in 1847.

["Sketches of the Life of Henry R. Schoolcraft," in *Personal Memories*, ante; G.W. Samson, *Henry R. Schoolcraft* (1864?); J.V. Brower, "The Mississippi River and its Sources," *Minn. Hist. Soc. Colls.*, vol. VII (1893); J.H. Baker, "The Sources of the Mississippi," *Ibid.*, vol. VI (1894); information from the files of the Office of Indian Affairs through the courtesy of Brent Morgan]

Dictionary of American Biography

Schoolcraft, Lawrence, soldier, b. in Albany county, N.Y., in 1760; d. in Verona, Oneida Co., N.Y., 7 June, 1840. His grandfather James, came from England in the reign of Queen Anne, settled in Albany county as a surveyor, and in later life was a teacher, and adopted the name of "Schoolcraft" in the place of his original family name of Calcraft. The grandson served during the Revolutionary war, and as a colonel in the second war with Great Britain. He was the superintendent of a large glass-factory ten miles west of Albany.

His son, Henry Rowe, ethnologist, b. in Albany county, N.Y., 28 March 1793; d. in Washington, D.C., 10 Dec., 1864, was educated at Middlebury College, Vt., and at Union, where he pursued the studies of chemistry and mineralogy, learned the art of glass-making, and began a treatise on the subject entitled "Vitreology," the first part of which was published (Utica, 1817). In 1817-18 he traveled in Missouri and Arkansas, and returned with a large collection of geological and mineralogical specimens. In 1820 he was appointed geologist to Gen. Lewis Cass's exploring expedition to Lake Superior and the head-waters of the Mississippi river. He was secretary of a commission to treat with the Indians at Chicago, and after a journey through Illinois and along Wabash and Miami rivers, was in 1822 appointed Indian agent for the tribes of the lake region, establishing himself at Sault Sainte Marie, and afterward at Mackinaw, where, in 1823, he married Jane Johnston, granddaughter of Waboojeeg, a noted Ojibway chief, who had received her education in Europe. In 1828 he founded the Michigan historical society, and in 1831 the Algic society. From 1828 till 1832 he was a member of the territorial legislature of Michigan. In 1832 he led a government expedition, which followed the Mississippi river up to its source in Itasca lake. In 1836 he negotiated a treaty with the Indians on the upper lakes for the cession to the United States of 16,000,000 acres of their lands. He was then appointed acting superintendent of Indian affairs, and in 1839 chief disbursing agent for the northern department. On his return from Europe in 1842 he made a tour through western Virginia, Ohio, and Canada. He was appointed by the New York legislature in 1845 a commissioner to take the census of the Indians in the state, and collect information concerning the Six Nations. After the performance of this task, congress authorized him, on 3 March, 1847, to obtain through the Indian bureau reports relating to all the Indian tribes of the country, and to collate and edit the information. In this work he spent the remaining years of his life. Through his influence many laws were enacted for the protection and benefit of the Indians. Numerous scientific societies in the United States and Europe elected him to membership, and the University of Geneva gave him the degree of LL.D. in 1846. He was the author of numerous poems, lectures, and reports on Indian subjects, besides thirty-one larger works. Two of his lectures before the Algic society at Detroit on the "Grammatical Construction of the Indian Languages" were translated into French by Peter S. Duponceau, and gained for their author a gold medal from the French institute. His publications include "A View of the Lead-

Mines of Missouri, including *Observations on the Mineralogy and Geology of Missouri and Arkansas* (New York, 1819); a poem called "Transallegania, or the Groans of Missouri" (1820); "Journal of a Tour in the Interior of Missouri and Arkansas" (1820); "Travels from Detroit to the Sources of the Mississippi with an Expedition under Lewis Cass" (Albany, 1821); "Travels in the Central Portions of Mississippi Valley" (New York, 1825); "The Rise of the West, or a Prospect of the Mississippi Valley," a poem (Detroit, 1827); "Indian Melodies," a poem (1830); "The Man of Bronze" (1834); "Narrative of an Expedition through the Upper Mississippi to Itasca Lake" (New York, 1834); "Iosco, or the Vale of Norma" (Detroit, 1834); "Algie Researches," a book of Indian allegories and legends (New York, 1839); *Cyclopedia indianensis*, of which only a single number was issued (1842); "Alhalla, or the Land of Talladega," a poem published under the penname "Henry Rowe Colcraft" (1843); "Oneota, or Characteristics of the Red Race of America" (1844-5), which was republished under the title of "The Indian and his Wigwam" (1848); "Report on Aboriginal Names and the Geographical Terminology of New York" (1845); "Plan for Investigating American Ethnology" (1846); "Notes on the Iroquois," containing his report on the Six Nations (Albany, 1846; enlarged editions, New York, 1847 and 1848); "The Red Race of America" (1847); "Notices of Antique Earthen Vessels from Florida" (1847); "Address on Early American History" (New York, 1847); "Outlines of the Life and Character of Gen. Lewis Cass" (Albany, 1848); "Bibliographical Catalogue of Books, Translations of the Scriptures and other Publications in the Indian Tongues of the United States" (Washington, 1849); "American Indians, their History, Condition, and Prospects" (Auburn, 1850); "Personal memoirs of a Residence of Thirty Years with the Indian Tribes on the American Frontiers, 1812 to 1842" (Philadelphia, 1851); "Historical and Statistical Information respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States, with illustrations by Capt. Seth Eastman, published by authority of congress, which appropriated nearly \$30,000 a volume for the purpose (five volumes 1851-55); "Scenes and Adventures in the Semi-Alpine Region of the Ozark Mountains of Missouri and Arkansas, a revised edition of his first book of travel (1853); "Summary narrative of an Exploratory Expedition to the Sources of the Mississippi River in 1820, resumed and completed by the Discovery of its Origin in Itasca Lake in 1832 (1854); "Helderbergia, or the Apotheosis of the Heroes of the Anti-Rent War," an anonymous poem (Albany, 1855); and "The Myth of Hiawatha, and other Oral Legends" (1856). "The Indian Fairy-Book, from Original Legends" (New York, 1855), was compiled from notes that he furnished to the editor, Cornelius Mathews. To the five volumes of Indian researches compiled under the direction of the war department he added a sixth, containing the post-Columbia history of the Indians and of their relations with Europeans (Philadelphia, 1857). He had collected material for two additional volumes, but the government suddenly suspended the publication of the work.

His wife, Mary Howard, b. in Beaufort, S.C., was his assistant in the preparation of his later works, when he was confined to his chair by paralysis and unable to use his hands. They were married in 1847, five years after the death of his first wife. Mrs. Schoolcraft was the author of "The Black Gauntlet, a Tale of Plantation Life in South Carolina" (Philadelphia, 1860).

McMahan, Virgil E. *The Artists of Washington, DC, 1796-1996*. The Artists of Washington, Washington, DC, 1995.

SCHOOLCRAFT, HENRY ROWE

Topographical artist born in Albany County NY in 1793, he attended Union and Middlebury Colleges. Following two trips to the Mississippi region, he decided to devote himself to ethnological studies, the results of which were essentially embodied in his six-volume, *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States* (1851-57). He spent much of his time in DC, where he died in 1864. Examples of his work as an artist may be seen in

his Scenes and Adventures in the Semi-Alpine Region of the Ozark Mountains of Missouri and Arkansas (1853). REFS: GROCE; PROVINE.