

ILLUSTRATIVE MAPS  
OF THE  
BOUNDARY HISTORY OF IOWA

BY  
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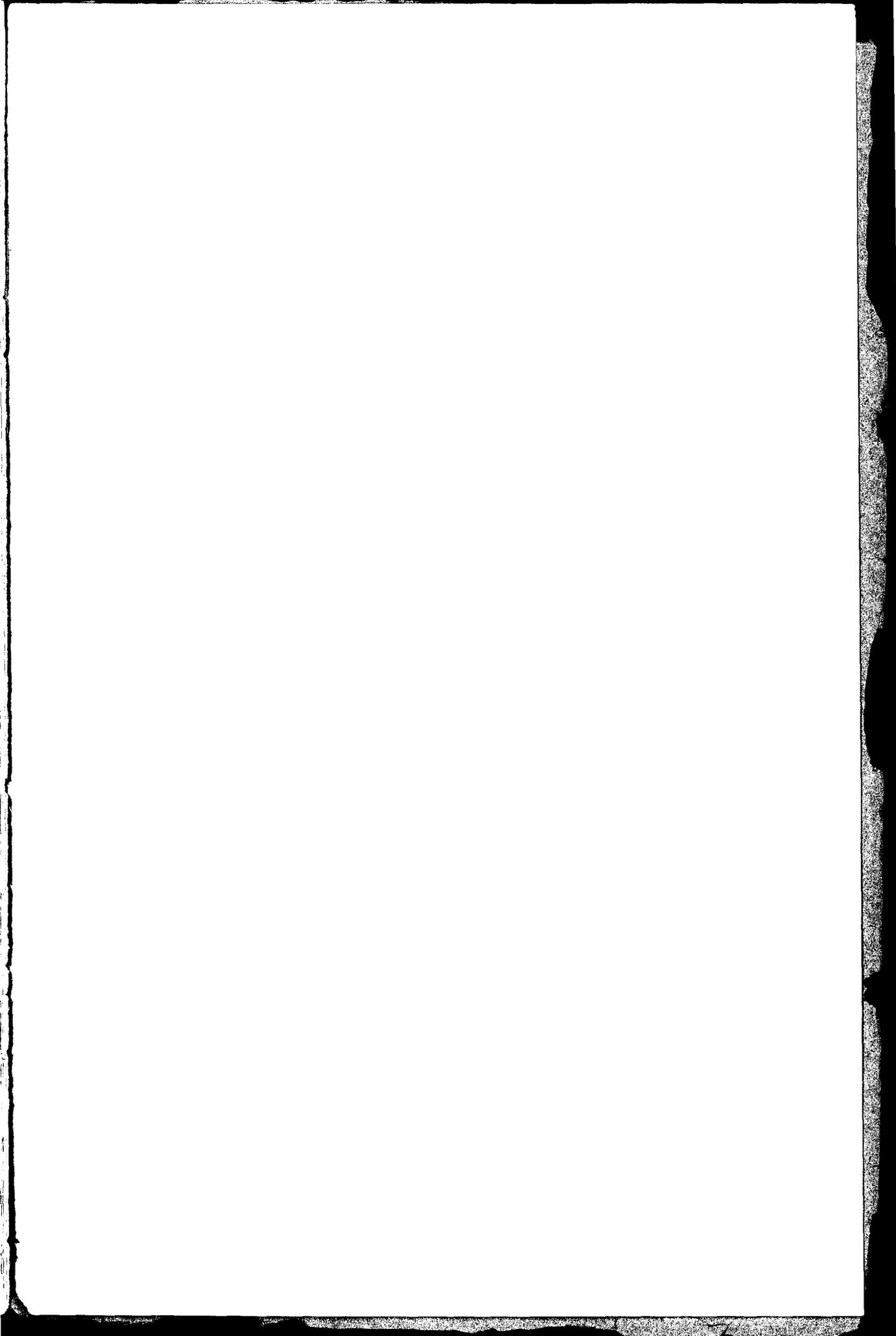


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*MAPS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE BOUNDARY  
HISTORY OF IOWA*



## MAPS ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE BOUNDARY HISTORY OF IOWA

The following maps were compiled to illustrate certain leading facts in what may be termed the boundary history of Iowa. It is not, however, intended to discuss in this connection the history of boundary changes. And yet a general review of some of the main points in that history is necessary to the proper understanding of the boundaries illustrated by the maps which are here published for the first time.

It is of course well understood that Iowa was carved out of what was earlier known as the Province of Louisiana. In 1803 this Province was acquired by the United States. Its boundaries were at that time not definitely described; but it certainly included all of what came to be known later on as the Iowa country. Before and at the time of its purchase by the United States, the Province of Louisiana was divided for administrative purposes into Upper Louisiana and Lower Louisiana. The former was turned over to the United States in December, 1803, while the latter was not formally taken possession of until March, 1804.

By the act of March 26, 1804, Congress divided the whole Province of Louisiana into the Territory of Orleans and the District of Louisiana.<sup>1</sup> The Territory of Orleans comprised the country which was afterwards erected into the State of Louisiana. The District of Louisiana was more extensive

<sup>1</sup> *U. S. Statutes at Large*, Vol. II, p. 283.

and included all of the remaining parts of the newly acquired country. The former was constituted a separate and independent Territory; but the latter was placed under the jurisdiction of the Governor and Judges of the Territory of Indiana. (See map I for the boundaries of the Territory of Indiana at this time). It should be remembered that the area of the future Iowa was a part of the District of Louisiana.

By the act of March 3, 1805, Congress changed the name of the District of Louisiana to the Territory of Louisiana, and provided for the organization of the same as a separate Territory.<sup>1</sup> No changes, however, were made in the boundaries. Again in 1812, by the act of June 4, Congress reorganized the Territory of Louisiana under the name of the Territory of Missouri.<sup>2</sup> The boundaries of the Territory of Missouri were the same as those of the Territory of Louisiana. In 1819 the Territory of Arkansas was carved out of the Territory of Missouri.<sup>3</sup> But the area out of which Iowa was in time to be carved remained a part of the Territory of Missouri until the State of Missouri was admitted into the Union in 1821. Then all of the Missouri country not included in the new State was left without a local constitutional status until 1834.<sup>4</sup>

Congress, by the act of June 28, 1834, provided for the enlargement of the Territory of Michigan as follows:—

All that part of the territory of the United States bounded on the east by the Mississippi river, on the south by the state of Missouri,

<sup>1</sup> *U. S. Statutes at Large*, Vol. II, p. 331.

<sup>2</sup> *U. S. Statutes at Large*, Vol. II, p. 743.

<sup>3</sup> *U. S. Statutes at Large*, Vol. III, p. 493.

<sup>4</sup> Shambaugh's *Documentary Material Relating to the History of Iowa*, Vol. I, p. 45.

and a line drawn due west from the north-west corner of said state to the Missouri river; on the south-west and west by the Missouri river and the White Earth river, falling into the same; and on the north, by the northern boundary of the United States, shall be, and hereby is, for the purpose of temporary government, attached to, and made a part of, the territory of Michigan, and the inhabitants therein shall be entitled to the same privileges and immunities, and be subject to the same laws, rules, and regulations, in all respects, as the other citizens of Michigan territory.<sup>1</sup>

(See Map I for the Territory of Michigan as enlarged by this act of Congress).

Steps having been taken for the admission of the State of Michigan into the Union, Congress, by the act of April 20, 1836, established the original Territory of Wisconsin with the following boundaries:—

Bounded on the east, by a line drawn from the north-east corner of the State of Illinois, through the middle of Lake Michigan, to a point in the middle of said lake, and opposite the main channel of Green Bay, and through said channel and Green Bay to the mouth of the Menomonie river; thence through the middle of the main channel of said river, to that head of said river nearest to the Lake of the Desert; thence in a direct line, to the middle of said lake; thence through the middle of the main channel of the Montreal river, to its mouth; thence with a direct line across Lake Superior, to where the territorial line of the United States last touches said lake north-west; thence on the north, with the said territorial line, to the White-earth river; on the west, by a line from the said boundary line following down the middle of the main channel of White-earth river, to the Missouri river, and down the middle of the main channel of the Missouri river to a point due west from the northwest corner of the State of Missouri; and on the south, from

<sup>1</sup> *U. S. Statutes at Large*, Vol. IV, p. 701.

said point, due east to the northwest corner of the State of Missouri; and thence with the boundaries of the States of Missouri and Illinois, as already fixed by acts of Congress.<sup>1</sup>

(See Map II for the boundaries of the Territory of Wisconsin from 1836 to 1838).

Owing to the rapid increase in the population of that part of the Territory of Wisconsin which lay west of the Mississippi, the separate Territory of Iowa was established by the act of Congress of June 12, 1838, with boundaries as follows:—

All that part of the present Territory of Wisconsin which lies west of the Mississippi river, and west of a line drawn due north from the head waters or sources of the Mississippi to the territorial line, shall, for the purposes of temporary government, be and constitute a separate Territorial Government by the name of Iowa.<sup>2</sup>

Probably the most interesting phase of the boundary history of Iowa is that connected with the definition of boundaries for the State at the time of its admission into the Union. The boundaries first proposed have come to be known as the *Lucas Boundaries*. They were adopted by the Constitutional Convention of 1844 and incorporated into the Constitution of 1844. They were originally suggested by Robert Lucas, the first Governor of the Territory of Iowa,<sup>3</sup> and were generally acceptable to the people. Their definition in the Constitution of 1844 is as follows:—

Beginning in the middle of the main channel of the Mississippi river opposite the mouth of the Des Moines river; thence up the said river Des Moines in the middle of the main channel thereof, to

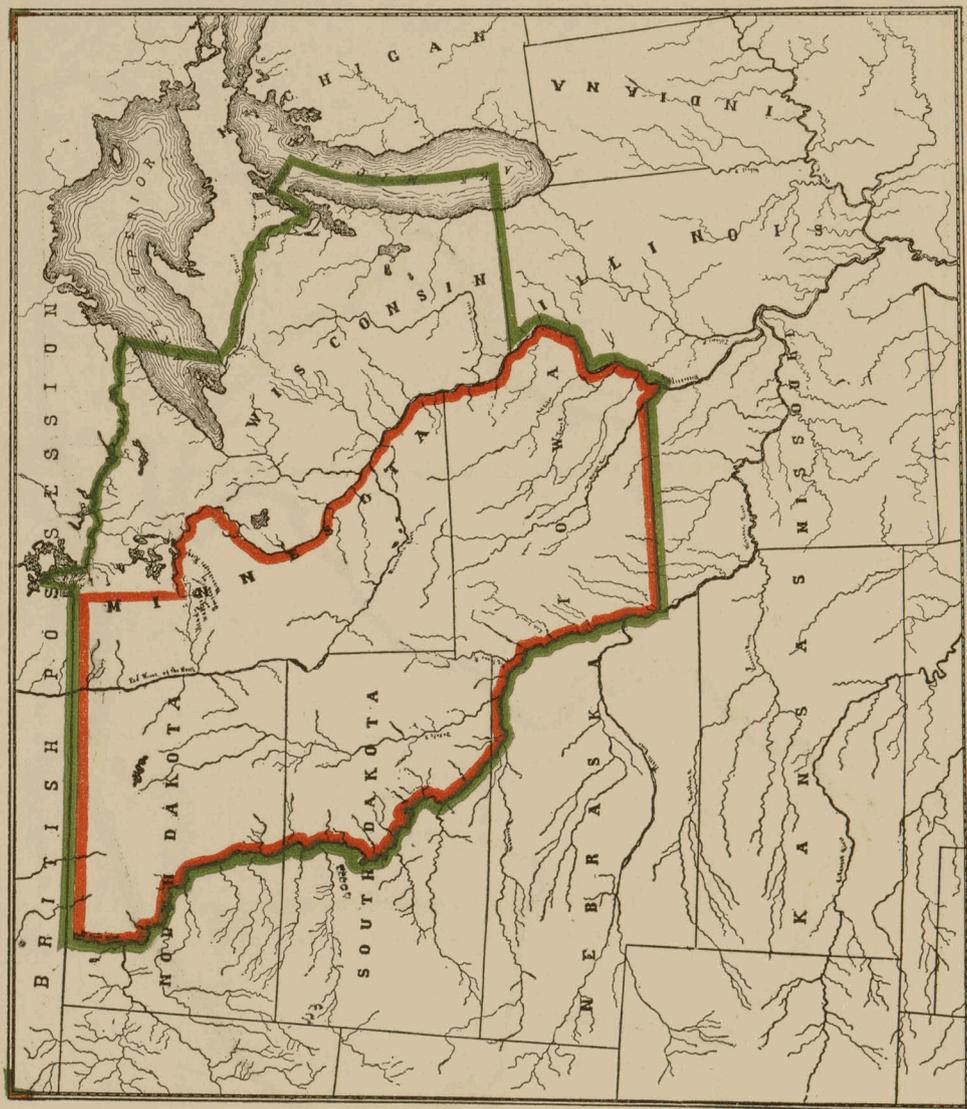
<sup>1</sup> *U. S. Statutes at Large*, Vol. V, p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *U. S. Statutes at Large*, Vol. V, p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> Shambaugh's *History of the Constitutions of Iowa*, p. 235.

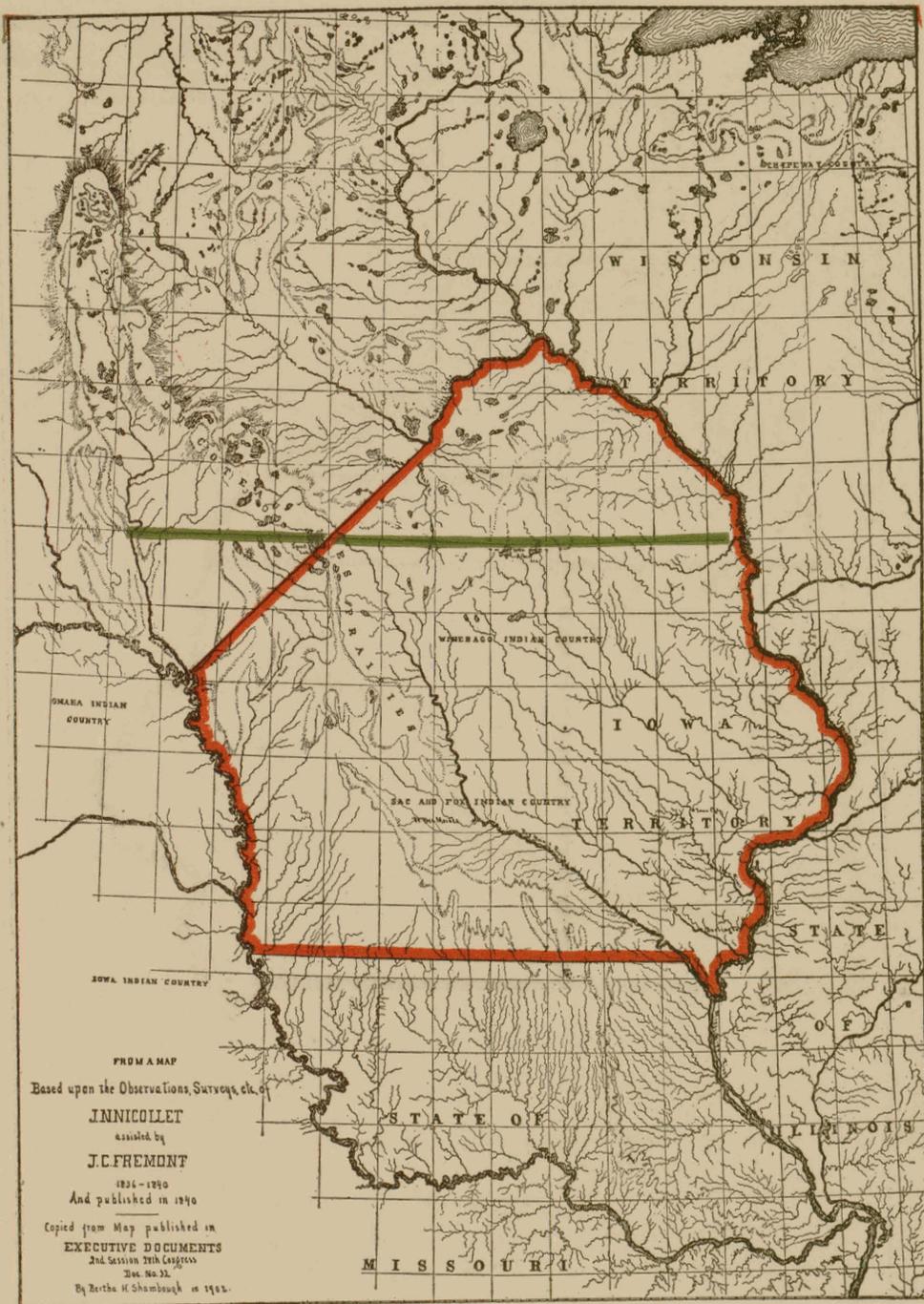


MAP I. — Northwest Territory, 1787 — Territory of Indiana, 1804-1805  
— Territory of Michigan, 1834-1836



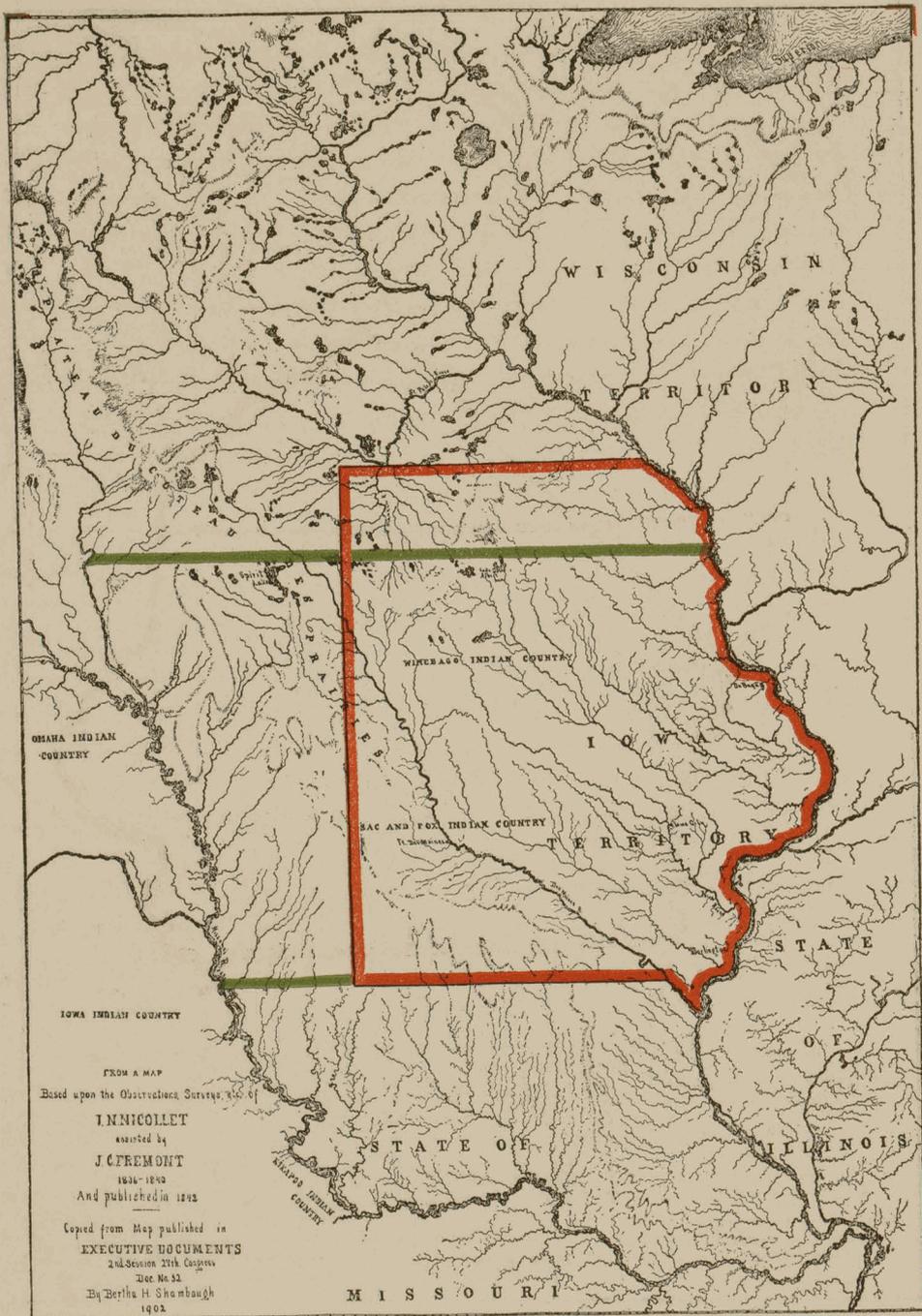
MAP II. ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE BOUNDARIES OF THE ORIGINAL TERRITORY OF WISCONSIN AND THE SEPARATE TERRITORY OF IOWA

- Territory of Wisconsin, 1836-1838
- Territory of Iowa, 1838-1846



MAP III. ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE LUCAS BOUNDARIES

— Lucas Boundaries      — Present Boundaries



MAP IV. ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE NICOLLET BOUNDARIES

— Nicollet Boundaries

— Present Boundaries

a point where it is intersected by the Old Indian Boundary line, or line run by John C. Sullivan in the year 1816; thence westwardly along said line to the "Old North-west corner of Missouri;" thence due west to the middle of the main channel of the Missouri river; thence up in the middle of the main channel of the river last mentioned to the mouth of the Sioux or Calumet river; thence in a direct line to the middle of the main channel of the St. Peters river, where the Watonwan river (according to Nicollet's map) enters the same; thence down the middle of the main channel of said river to the middle of the main channel of the Mississippi river; thence down the middle of the main channel of said river, to the place of beginning.<sup>1</sup>

(See Map III for the Lucas Boundaries).

Congress, however, did not favor the *Lucas Boundaries* and proposed instead to admit Iowa into the Union with the so-called *Nicollet Boundaries* which were as follows:—

Beginning at the mouth of the Des Moines river, at the middle of the Mississippi, thence by the middle of the channel of that river to a parallel of latitude passing through the mouth of the Mankato, or Blue-Earth river, thence west along the said parallel of latitude to a point where it is intersected by a meridian line, seventeen degrees and thirty minutes west of the meridian of Washington city, thence due south to the northern boundary line of the State of Missouri, thence eastwardly following that boundary to the point at which the same intersects the Des Moines river, thence by the middle of the channel of that river to the place of beginning.<sup>2</sup>

It will be interesting to note briefly the discussion in the House of Representatives which led to the adoption of the *Nicollet Boundaries*.

In the bill for admission, as reported by the House Com-

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the Constitutional Convention of 1844*, p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> *U. S. Statutes at Large*, Vol. V, p. 742.

mittee on Territories, the boundaries asked for by the Iowa Convention in the Constitution submitted by them were retained without alteration. But Mr. Duncan, of Ohio, had other limits to propose. He preferred the *Nicollet Boundaries* because (1) they were "the boundaries of nature" and (2) at the same time they left sufficient territory for the formation of two other States in that Western country.

On the other hand, Mr. Brown, Chairman of the Committee on Territories, said that the question of boundaries had been carefully investigated by his Committee, "and the conclusion to which they had come was to adhere to the boundary asked for by the people of Iowa, who were there, and who had settled the country, and whose voice should be listened to in the matter."

Mr. Vinton, of Ohio, was the most vigorous champion of the Duncan amendment. He stood out firmly for a reduction of the boundaries proposed by the Iowa Convention because the country to the North and West of the new State, "from which two other States ought to be formed," would be left in a very inconvenient shape, and because of the formation of such large States would deprive the West of "its due share of power in the Senate of the United States."

Mr. Vinton was "particularly anxious that a State of unsuitable extent should not be made in that part of the Western country, in consequence of the unwise and mistaken policy towards that section of the Union which has hitherto prevailed in forming Western States, by which the great valley of the Mississippi has been deprived, and irrevocably so, of its due share in the legislation of the country." As an equitable compensation to the West for this injustice he

would make "a series of small States" on the West bank of the Mississippi.

The arguments for restriction prevailed, and the Duncan amendment, which proposed to substitute the *Nicollet Boundaries* for the *Lucas Boundaries*, passed the House of Representatives by a vote of ninety-one to forty.

(See Map IV for the Nicollet Boundaries).

Unwilling to accept the *Nicollet Boundaries* which were proposed by Congress, the people of Iowa twice rejected the Constitution of 1844.<sup>1</sup> In 1846 a second Constitutional Convention met at Iowa City. The members at first resolved to stand by the *Lucas Boundaries* as defined in the Constitution of 1844.<sup>2</sup> Congress was inclined to make concessions. Finally the Committee on Territories in the House of Representatives proposed the following compromise boundaries<sup>3</sup> which were accepted by the Constitutional Convention of 1846:—

Beginning in the middle of the main channel of the Mississippi River, at a point due east of the middle of the mouth of the main channel of the Des Moines River; thence up the middle of the main channel of the said Des Moines River, to a point on said river where the northern boundary line of the State of Missouri, as established by the constitution of that State, adopted June twelfth, eighteen hundred and twenty, crosses the said middle of the main channel of the said Des Moines River; thence, westwardly, along the said northern boundary line of the State of Missouri, as established at the time aforesaid, until an extension of said line intersects the middle of the main channel of the Missouri River; thence up the middle of the main channel of the said Missouri River, to a point opposite

<sup>1</sup> Shambaugh's *History of the Constitutions of Iowa*, pp. 256-284.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of the Constitutional Convention of 1846*, p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Shambaugh's *History of the Constitutions of Iowa*, pp. 306-317.

the middle of the main channel of the Big Sioux River, according to Nicollet's map; thence, up the main channel of the said Big Sioux River, according to said map, until it is intersected by the parallel of forty-three degrees and thirty minutes north latitude; thence east, along said parallel of forty-three degrees and thirty minutes, until said parallel intersects the middle of the main channel of the Mississippi River; thence, down the middle of the main channel of said Mississippi River, to the place of beginning.<sup>1</sup>

These are the present boundaries of the State of Iowa. Their precise definition is the work of the Constitutional Convention of 1846, although they were originally suggested by the Committee on Territories in the House of Representatives.<sup>2</sup>

The original maps from which the accompanying cuts are taken, were made by Bertha H. Shambaugh for the Department of Political Science of the State University of Iowa. In order to bring out more clearly the ideas of the men who took part in defining the boundaries of the State of Iowa, the two maps illustrative of the *Lucas Boundaries* and the *Nicollet Boundaries*, respectively, were copied from Nicollet's map which was the one generally used and referred to at the time. For a full treatment of the boundary dispute of 1844-1846 the reader is referred to chapters XIII, XIV, and XVII of the writer's *History of the Constitutions of Iowa*.

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<sup>1</sup> *U. S. Statutes at Large*, Vol. IX, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen A. Douglas was chairman of the committee at this time.

