

CAPTAIN ALEXANDER GRIGGS *From Compendium of N.D.*

Captain Alexander Griggs, the "Father of Grand Forks," is one of the most widely known and highly esteemed men who cast their lot with North Dakota. He is now a resident of the state of Washington, but until recent years was engaged in navigation throughout the Red river district, and was identified with the financial growth of the city of Grand Forks and vicinity.

Our subject was born at Marietta, Ohio, in October, 1838, and was a son of William and Esther (McGibbon) Griggs. He removed with his parents to St. Paul, Minnesota, when a boy, and later his family removed to Grand Forks, where his parents died. Our subject was reared and educated in St. Paul, and at an early age began running on the boats of the Mississippi river, and at the age of twenty years was given command of a boat. He continued there until 1870, and then, in company with others, went up the Red river to Fargo with a view of establishing a line of boats, and during that year the Hill, Griggs & Company Navigation Company was formed. In 1871 Mr. Griggs went to where Grand Forks is now located and he entered a claim to the land on which the old town is located, and named the place Grand Forks on account of the junction of the two rivers. He continued to operate a line of boats between Grand Forks and Winnipeg for many years and continued in command until 1890. He was always active in the upbuilding of the town of Grand Forks and was one of the founders of the Second National Bank, of which institution he was president for many years. He also acted in the capacity of president of the First National Bank of East Grand Forks for some years, and established the gas works in company with William Budge, and was also a large owner in the Grand Forks Roller Mill. He served as railroad commissioner for some years, and was the third postmaster of Grand Forks and was mayor of the city. He assisted in building the two bridges across the river, and by his hearty support and influence endeared himself to the people as a man of active public spirit. In December, 1892, Mr. Griggs left Grand Forks on account of failing health, and is now engaged in boating on the Upper Columbia river.

Our subject was married December 27, 1865, in Minnesota, to Miss Ettie I. Strong, a native of Brooklyn. Eight children, seven of whom are now living, have been born to Mr. and Mrs. Griggs, named as follows; Lois, now Mrs. W.H. Pringle; Ansel; Jennie; Esther; Bruce; James and Clifford. The family all reside in the state of Washington at present. Mr. Griggs is an ardent Democrat and is a man who keeps pace with the times.

CAPTAIN ALEXANDER BER GRIGGS

The county of Griggs received its name from Capt. Alexander Griggs during a session of the territorial legislature in 1881, when few settlers were located in this community.

Because Mr. Griggs was a well known character in the territory his name was chosen for the new county as then designated.

Griggs County was at first called Ole Bull County. Griggs Co. was organized June 16, 1888. The county seat is Cooperstown.

Bibliography: Spokerfield's History of Wells County

Griggs County was at that time (1888) composed of its present territory together with the addition of two western tiers of townships in Steele County.

It was on account of the County seat fight which later developed between Cooperstown and Hope that this part of Griggs County together with a tier of two townships along the west end of Traill Co. were taken to form the county of Steele, thus settling the county seat fight in this county and giving both contending towns the advantages of being county seats.

Bibliography: Nov. 28, 1936 issue of the
Griggs County Sentinel - Courier
Cooperstown, N.D.

CAPTAIN ALEXANDER GRIGGS

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Capt. Alexander Griggs, called the father of Grand Forks was engaged in the navigation thro out the Red River district and was identified with the city of Grand Forks and vicinity.

He was born in Marietta, Ohio in 1858. When a boy he moved with his parents to St. Paul and later his family removed to Grand Forks. He was educated in St. Paul and at an early age began running on the boats of the Mississippi river and at the age of twenty three years was given the command of a boat. He continued there until 1870 and then in company with others went up the Red river to Fargo with a few of establishing a line of boats and during that year the Hill, Griggs, and Co. Navigation Co. was formed. In 1871 Mr. Griggs went to where Grand Forks is now located and he entered a claim on the land on which the old town is located and named the place Grand Forks on account of the junction of the two rivers. He continued to operate a line of boats between G.F. and Winnipeg for many years and continued in command until 1890. He was President of the First Natl Bank at Grand Forks for some years and established the gas works in company with Wm Budge and was also a owner in the Grand Forks Roller Mill. He served as R. R. commissioner for some years and was the third postmaster of Grand Forks and was mayor of that city. He assisted in building the two bridges across the river. In December 1892 Mr. Griggs left Grand Forks and was engaged in boating on the upper Columbia river.

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Bibliog: From Compend of Hist. & Biog¹⁹²⁰ pp 159-160 -
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