

ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT COPIES OF THE CONSTITUTIONS OF IOWA.

As the importance of "origins" in history is often unduly emphasized, so the value of certain original manuscripts is sometimes over-estimated. Not every old manuscript is worth preserving any more than every old book is significant in the history of human thought. There are manuscripts and books that are hardly worth the space they occupy in the library. Indeed, it may be said that the reverence (frequently understood) which many time-stained pages command is of far more importance than their matter-of-fact contents. And yet there are some manuscripts, the importance of which is rarely over-estimated. Prominent among these are the original copies of Constitutions. It is, therefore, with no slight degree of interest and anxiety that we look into the archives at Des Moines for the original copies of the several Constitutions of the Commonwealth of Iowa. The results of such an investigation are the following:

The original manuscript copy of the Constitution of 1844, with the signatures of the members of the constitutional convention, has been preserved in the office of the Secretary of State. This Constitution, it will be remembered, was twice rejected by the people.

No complete manuscript copy of the Constitution of 1846 seems to have been preserved. This, of course, is unfortunate. For the Constitution of 1846 was the instrument under which Iowa was admitted into the Union. However, there is in the office of the Secretary of State an *incomplete* manuscript copy of this Constitution. Upon careful examination it would seem that this incomplete manuscript contains all of the Constitution from the "Preamble and Boundaries" to the article on "Amendments of the Constitution." The articles entitled "Amend-

ments of the Constitution," "Miscellaneous," "Schedule," and the signatures of the members of the constitutional convention, are wholly wanting. But the copy of the articles preserved bears intrinsic evidence of its genuineness as the original copy as adopted in the convention. The articles in this manuscript are not numbered.

The original manuscript copy of the Constitution of 1857 (the present constitution), with the signatures of the members of the constitutional convention, has been well preserved in the office of the Secretary of State.

B. F. S.

HISTORICAL VALUE OF IOWA NEWSPAPERS.

If there has been at any time a doubt as to the wisdom of securing for the State to the utmost extent, files of our Iowa newspapers, and especially of bygone years, an experience during the month of July would have banished that doubt from the mind of any fair-minded person. During a period of three weeks four intelligent gentlemen were daily at work in the Historical Rooms compiling information touching the prices of farm produce, and sundry articles of general merchandise, during the past thirty-one years. True, the purpose was political, but search was made for historical facts and figures—such data as underlie large portions of the great historical works of Green and McMaster. The nearly complete files of three newspapers, which their publishers with great liberality had presented to the State, were the only accessible repositories of these facts and figures. We refer to *The Dubuque Herald*, *The Ottumwa Courier* and *The Charles City Intelligencer*. There are scores of other journals throughout the State from which like information would gladly have been derived, but unfortunately their files

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