

CELEBRATION OF THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL OF
THE STATE, AT BURLINGTON, OCT. 1-8, 1896.

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Historian of the Celebration by appointment of State Commissioners.

The establishment of the State of Iowa was the work of the people of the Territory of Iowa, as set forth in the opening sentence of the Constitution of 1846, as follows:

“We, the People of the Territory of Iowa, grateful to the Supreme Being for the blessings hitherto enjoyed, and feeling our dependence on Him for a continuation of these blessings, do ordain and establish a free and independent government by the name of the STATE OF IOWA.”

The work was not that of a single day, but of the whole year, and was carried forward by successive stages from month to month, in chronological order as follows:

1. January 18, 1846. Act of the Eighth Legislative Assembly of the Territory providing for the election of Delegates to a Convention which should form a Constitution for the future State.

2. April 6. Election of Delegates to the Convention.

3. May 4-19. Meeting of the Convention and adoption of a Constitution.

4. August 3. Ratification of the Constitution by vote of the people of the Territory.

5. August 5. Act of Congress defining the same boundaries as in the Constitution, and entitling the State to two representatives in Congress, and repealing the parts of the Act of March 3, 1845, which prescribed different boundaries and entitled the State to only one representative.

6. September 9. Proclamation of the Governor of Territory that the Constitution had received a majority of votes, and was ratified and adopted by the People.

7. October 26. Election of State officers, of members of the First General Assembly, and of two representatives in Congress.

8. November 5. Proclamation of the Governor of the Territory convening the General Assembly.

9. November 30. Meeting of the First General Assembly.

10. December 3. Ansel Briggs, first Governor of the State, took oath of office, administered by Charles Mason, Chief Justice of the Territory.

11. December 15. The Constitution of the State presented in the House of Representatives by Augustus C. Dodge, Delegate of the Territory in Congress.

12. December 17. Bill for the admission of Iowa into the Union reported in the House of Representatives by S. A. Douglas, of Illinois, Chairman of the Committee on Territories.

13. December 28. Act of Congress, "That the State of Iowa shall be one, and is hereby declared to be one, of the United States of America, and admitted into the Union on an equal footing with the original States in all respects whatsoever."

14. December 29. S. C. Hastings and Shepherd Leffler, representatives from Iowa, took their seats in Congress.

Up to the year 1846 the population of Iowa was confined to twenty-seven counties, all in the eastern portion of the State; the rest of the soil had remained in the occupancy of various Indian tribes. The census of that year reported a population of 102,388.

In the course of fifty years the population has increased more than twenty fold, and two millions of people as active and intelligent as any upon the globe, a large proportion of them owners of the soil and tillers of their own acres, are now spread over the surface of the whole State in ninety-nine counties. The increase of agricul-

ture, of commerce and trade, the diffusion of the arts and sciences and of the comforts and blessings of civilization, the multiplication of homes and schools and churches and of busy towns and cities, and the new creation of wealth, that has here been effectuated, were never before equalled in a similar space of time in the whole history of the world.

Nothing then could be more fitting than that a people thus favored should honor the semi-centennial of the State with an appropriate celebration. To make it a Jubilee Festival was a commanding duty of the Present in memory of the Past for the instruction of the Future, and the whole Commonwealth concurred in the action of the Twenty-Sixth General Assembly appropriating ten thousand dollars for such a celebration, to be held at Burlington, provided that an equal amount was raised for the purpose by subscription or otherwise. This proviso was met by the citizens of Burlington, and under the direction and with the indefatigable exertions of the State Commissioners (Philip M. Crapo, of Burlington, John Scott, of Nevada, George C. Henry, of Burlington) and of the City Commissioners (Carl A. Leopold, John Blaul, Seymour Jones), the arrangements were completed for a grand gala-festival of eight days, which was held with pomp and pageantry, with music, oratory and poetry, with industrial shows, with ten thousand flags and banners, with decorated arches, with brilliant illuminations of streets and buildings, with a resplendent glare and blaze of fireworks three nights upon the Mississippi river, with balloon ascensions by a lady aeronaut, and other innumerable forms of instruction and amusement, from the first to the eighth day of October inclusive, with an entire change of program in the public exercises from day to day.

The President and Vice-President of the United States, the members of the cabinet, the Governors of all the States, the Iowa members of Congress, the Executive

and Judicial officers of Iowa, the former Governors, the members of the General Assembly, the officers of Des Moines County and of the City of Burlington, and many eminent citizens received special invitations to be present, while the Festival was free and open to all, and the whole people were invited to join in the Celebration and share in the joy. Every portion of the State responded, and all sorts and conditions of people and all employments and pursuits were represented in the crowds that came to Burlington, and thronged the streets and Crapo Park, and filled the Coliseum which had seats for five thousand persons, and in which on some days every foot of standing room was also occupied. Upon the wall back of the platform were placed the portraits of the Governors, Chief Justices, and other eminent men of the Territory and State, most of them from the "Aldrich Collection," in the State Historical Department at Des Moines. It was the first time these Historical Portraits have been exhibited together in one group. It required but little imagination to conceive of the venerable characters as looking down with benediction upon the vast assemblages that were gathered to honor their work in the building of the State.

The limits of this paper admit only a bare outline of the proceedings.

The first day was Governor's Day. It opened with a salute of twenty-nine guns, recalling the fact that Iowa became the twenty-ninth state of the Union fifty years ago. The "March of Progress" was indicated in a magnificent parade, conspicuous in which, and observed of all observers as recalling the days of old, was a band of Mus-quakee Indians, the aborigines of the soil, and a float bearing a faithful representation of "Old Zion," where the first Legislative Assemblies of the Territory of Iowa convened, 1838-'40. At the head of the procession were Governor Drake, Vice President Stevenson, followed by long lines of carriages containing former Governors

(Newbold, Gear, Sherman, Larrabee), State, County, and City officials, etc., etc., supported by a brilliant array of State troops, with bands of music, and veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic. In the afternoon the formal opening of the Celebration took place in the Coliseum with addresses by P. M. Crapo, President of the Commission, Mayor Naumann, in behalf of the City of Burlington, Governor Drake, and by S. H. M. Byers, poet, and Lafayette Young, orator of the day.

In the evening after a brilliant carnival of fire-works upon the river, a banquet was given at Hotel Delano to the Governor of Iowa, the Vice President of the United States, and other visitors. The Vice President said:

“Fellow citizens—I am confident that I voice the deep feeling of the people of the great State which lies across the Mississippi, when I say that Illinois rejoices with Iowa upon this her fiftieth anniversary. We rejoice with you in your wonderful development and prosperity, in the glory that is yours, as to-day you round out your first half-century as a State of the Federal Union. The twenty-ninth to seek admission, this historic day finds Iowa the ninth upon the list of commonwealths that make up the American republic.

“In all the steps that antedate admission you had the earnest cooperation of Illinois through her delegation in Congress; and fifty years ago, at her capital, twenty-nine guns voiced Illinois’ congratulations to Iowa—her glad welcome into the Union; no longer a Territory, but a State; henceforth among all the ages ‘an indestructible State of an indivisible Union.’ How wonderful the progress of State and Nation during the half-century! How inspiring to those who in old age behold the glory of this day as memory brings before them the event we commemorate! Back through the vista of years is the frontier village upon the Mississippi, and the sparsely populated State whose western limit marked the border

line of civilization. To-day a splendid city—a magnificent State.

“This is the fitting place for the august ceremonies in which we are permitted to take part. Another half-century, and what wonders will meet the eyes of those who upon this historic ground shall celebrate the first centennial of the State! What has been wrought out amid the conflicts of the past is but an earnest of the achievements of the coming century. The American spirit is one that knows no rest. In the words of Macaulay, ‘The goal of to-day is but the starting-post for to-morrow.’ Grateful to God for the successes, the achievements, the blessings of the past, the people of this great Commonwealth to-day turn their faces resolutely, hopefully to the future.”

The Second day was “Old Settlers’ Day,” for which elaborate preparations had been made by the Committee of Arrangements, Charles Beardsley, Chairman. There was a large company of those whose residence in Iowa dated back to the Territorial period, and a few were present who came to Iowa prior to that period, when the Black Hawk Purchase was first opened to settlement in 1833-4. There was a generous rivalry for the honor of being the “first comer,” or of having been the “first white child born in Iowa.” Hon. James Harlan was President of the Day. Prayer was offered by the Rev. Michael See, a pioneer of 1836. An address in answer to the question, “Who made Iowa?” was delivered by T. S. Parvin, a pioneer of 1838, whose life-long devotion to Iowa history is unique, illustrious, and of inestimable value. Addresses followed by Governor Drake, Samuel Murdock, a representative in the Seventh and Eighth Legislative Assembly of the Territory, E. W. Lucas, son of the first Governor of the Territory, Miss Nannie M. Briggs, granddaughter of the first Governor of the State, Isaac W. Griffith, hero of the “Missouri War,” of the Mexican War, and the War for the Union, E. S. Huston, W. W. Dodge,

Rev. C. E. Brown, a pioneer at the Forks of the Maquoketa in 1842, and other speakers. Many letters were received from old settlers unable to be present, containing incidents of Pioneer history.

The Third day was Educational Day, and was celebrated by parades and marches of school children, their musical and gymnastic exercises, a three part chorus of scholars from 8 to 12 years of age, etc. S. N. Fellows, of Fayette, was president of the Day, and delivered an address, followed by L. F. Parker, of Grinnell, Wm. F. King, of Mt. Vernon, and other speakers. A paper on the "Future of Iowa Schools" by Henry Sabin, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, was published in the *Hawk-Eye*.

The Fourth day, Sunday, was devoted to religious services. A sermon was preached at the Coliseum by Hiram W. Thomas, D. D., of the People's Church, Chicago, and a sacred concert was given in the evening.

The Fifth day was Republican Day. Speeches were made by Senator Foraker and D. D. Woodmansee, of Ohio, Clark E. Carr, of Galesburg, Ill., W. P. Hepburn, of Clarinda, and others. In the evening a torch-light procession marched through the principal streets, and Roman candles and balls of colored fire, and fusilades of rockets were kept coursing through the air.

The Sixth day was opened with an industrial parade, representing all branches of manufacture and trade, the wares of commerce, the work of farm and garden, and the ways and means of business. The fire companies of Burlington headed the procession, the traveling men following one hundred strong.

The rest of the day was Woman's Day, under the direction of the Burlington Federation of Woman's Clubs, Mrs. J. J. Seerley, President. The stage at the Coliseum was occupied by the Ladies' Chorus, 100 strong, and by ladies of cultured voice, and of exquisite skill upon instru-

ments. Mrs. Lucy A. Burkhalter, of Cedar Rapids, offered prayer, and addresses were made by Rev. Mary Safford, of Sioux City, Miss Mary Rogers, of Dubuque, Miss Emma Fordyce, of Cedar Rapids, and Mrs. Pauline Swalm, of Oskaloosa.

At 5 p. m. tea was served at the Federation Headquarters, in Crapo Park, to the visiting ladies, each one's place at the table indicated by a card with her name, and decorations of a stalk of corn in water-colors, a log-cabin in india-ink, and the date 1846.

At 6 p. m. a large company gathered in a romantic dell west of the Corse Statue where the Shakespeare Club rendered "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Dense crowds covered the adjoining slopes. The soft music, the calcium lights, the wierd shadows, the dainty fairies, made a bewildering scene. The red Musquakies, gliding about the grounds like lost spirits of the ancient forests, enjoyed it as much as the pale faces.

At 8 p. m. the Coliseum was again filled with a vast audience who were entertained by the Ladies' Musical Club, by Mrs. Bertha Cranch Ernst with a reading of Longfellow's "Launching of the Ship," and by the Rev. Caroline J. Bartlett with an address upon "The Wealth of a State."

The Seventh day was Fraternity Day, and was celebrated with a procession and parade of nineteen Secret Societies, with the regalia and emblems of their respective orders, and by addresses in the Coliseum by Mayor Naumann, R. L. Tilton, of Ottumwa, and John W. Geiger, of Marion. In the afternoon of this day there was a Grand Musical Festival under the direction of Professor Sheetz, with seven hundred voices from Cedar Rapids, Davenport, Ft. Madison, Iowa City, Keokuk, Oskaloosa, Mt. Pleasant, Ottumwa and Burlington. Classic compositions of the Fatherland were rendered by one hundred and sixty-six German singers, Th. Reed Reese, of Davenport, Conductor.

At night there was an illuminated parade of *Historicus* in the "March of Progress," after which a river carnival again irradiated and blazoned the sky.

The Eighth day was Democratic Day, and the Semi-Centennial Celebration was brought to a close with an oration by William J. Bryan, of Nebraska, and addresses by other speakers, and a parade at night.

Through the whole eight days the weather was perfect. A fine enthusiasm for the history of Iowa and for the future of Iowa animated every one. A thousand grateful memories were awakened, and generous impulses were enkindled toward still better things in the coming half-century.

With the joy and happiness of the Celebration there was also distress and grief upon the first day, from the falling of the Review Stand, by which a number of persons were injured. Enoch S. Burrus, treasurer of Des Moines County, died, November 11th, from the effect of his injuries. He was a native of the County, born in Territorial times, May 31, 1840, and a credit to human nature and to the State that produced and nurtured him.

APPREHENDED INDIAN TROUBLES.

UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF GOV. J. W. GRIMES.

BURLINGTON, IOWA, January 3, 1855.

GENTLEMEN: I beg to ask your cooperation at the proper department at Washington, to secure protection to the frontier settlements of our State against the depredations of Indians now within our borders. I have written to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and to the Indian Superintendent at St. Louis on this subject, and trust that you will unite with me in pressing the matter upon their

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