

Charlie told me sometime ago, that he was the best versed in Society etiquette of any young man in the city, I think he's sweet and I enjoy conversing or dancing with him, he is so affectionate, Dr. James is.

In my next, dear Nell, I will tell you about a couple of engagements in high life. I might mention one this week. Will Battell has engaged a new washerwoman. The reasons are obvious.

Nell, dear, you have no idea how much I think of Charlie. I would be almost willing to forsake Society for the sake of becoming his wife — if he would only ask me, but Charlie is wedded to Society.

But I must draw this epistle to a close, dear Nell. You must write me soon. Tell me all about who your fellows are and maybe I'll get your letter inserted in the FLAT CAR.

Take care of yourself. Bye, bye.

Your's more than anybody else's

Jessie.

That Was The Day That Was

BY LIDA L. GREENE

The Day promised to be pleasantly ordinary. In First Floor West long tables were stacked with books and brief cases; heads were bent over page and manuscript. Once in awhile someone stopped in the door to look up at the Little General on his horse. We were beginning to feel complacent. All was peace and usualness—until the phone rang, that is.

Mr. Jack Musgrove, the Curator, was calling. The office of the Secretary of State had phoned Mr. Musgrove with the information that a New York book firm was offering the 1844 Iowa constitution for sale at three thousand five hundred dollars. The document was an original, they believed. Shouldn't the State of Iowa buy it, they wanted to know.

The Library had known about the sale. As a matter of fact we had read the descriptive blurb and had gaped at the price. What Iowa historical librarian could even dream of spending that kind of money on a publication. Even a rare (and rejected) 1844 proposed Constitution.

We laid the catalogue, slick white cover with red and blue lettering, on Mr. Musgrove's desk: *American Constitutions*, Offered for Sale by Edward Eberstadt & Sons, New York. On page 24 it read:

THE SUPERLATIVELY RARE FIRST CONSTITUTION: IOWA CITY, 1844

[57] [IOWA.] Constitution for the State of Iowa, Adopted in Convention, Nov. 1, 1844. 24 pp. (small repair in title), 8vo, sewn, uncut and partly unopened, laid in morocco case. Iowa City: Printed by Jesse Williams, 1844. 3500.00

Not in Kuhlman or the Harvard Tercentennial Exhibition, and a book of the most extreme rarity and importance; Fitzpatrick, *Iowa Territorial Documents*, p. 23. Fitzpatrick states: "But few copies of any of the Territorial publications are known to exist, and in some cases the actual number is one." While no census of copies has been taken, it is thought that not more than two or three copies survive; we have never had another nor seen one on the market in more than fifty years. In 1844 the people of this newly settled frontier clamored for statehood and produced this lofty document. It was a model code for free, enlightened self-government, indeed it served as such in Monterey in 1849 and elsewhere, yielding provisions common today in many State Constitutions. Yet the makers were perhaps too ambitious, taking into their boundaries most of southern Minnesota. Congress could not accept this and insisted that Iowa settle for a somewhat curtailed domain.

[See illustration]

THE CONSTITUTION UNDER WHICH IOWA ENTERED THE UNION

[58] [IOWA.] Constitution for the State of Iowa, Adopted in Convention, May 18, 1846. 20 pp., 8vo, sewn, laid in morocco case. Iowa City: Printed by Abraham H. Palmer, 1846. 950.00

Harvard Tercentennial Exhibition 18: "First printing of the first constitution accepted by the voters." Fitzpatrick, p. 24; not in Kuhlman. The convention found little to change from the earlier effort. A section is added that disqualifies from holding office any citizen who has been engaged in a duel; the article on County Organization is dropped; and other minor variations could be pointed out. The only significant difference is the yielding to Congress on the matter of boundaries which are here set forth to include the present area of 56,147 square miles. Maybe that ain't hay, but it's one whale of a lot of corn!). This, being acceptable, Iowa was admitted to the Union December 28, 1846 under this Constitution.

[See illustration]

Mr. Musgrove wanted to know exactly what the Department of History and Archives had on the 1844 Constitution. Did we have a copy? There was a phone call to Sandra

Knapton, editor of *The Annals*. Another to Audrey Benson, Census Division, where part of the earliest Iowa Archives are stored. The Library delved in the card catalogue, searched shelves and the files of manuscript holdings. Fifteen minutes later three people were converging on the Curator's office with arm loads of books, archival and manuscript listings and, incidentally, a thin pamphlet in gray nondescript cover entitled, *Constitution of the State of Iowa, Adopted in Convention, November 1, 1844, Printed by Jesse Williams, 1844.*

It looked as though we might have helped to save the State of Iowa three thousand five hundred dollars. Or perhaps it was four thousand four hundred and fifty dollars. You see, there was a copy of the 1846 Iowa Constitution on sale for nine hundred and fifty dollars. That was under consideration also. And yes, the Department of History and Archives had a copy.

Would you like to know what happened to the thin pamphlet in gray nondescript cover? Of course, you are quite right. Anything as valuable as that must go directly into the Curator's vault.

Come by and see it sometime!

FROM THE RED OAK EXPRESS, JULY 21, 1880

There has been a great flood in the Mississippi river recently. At Clinton the water was ten inches higher than in the memorable flood of 1870, submerging much of the town, destroying much property. We have no report of the aggregated loss, which must be very large; but individuals and firms lost heavily, some as high as \$20,000. The streets had more the appearance of a river than of land thoroughfares. The railroads and bridges were entirely under water, so that it was somewhat hazardous to occupy them; and many private parties lost heavily from inundated cellars containing valuables.

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