

TRIBUTES FROM THE PRESS.

Mr. Aldrich was a journalist, editing and publishing newspapers for many years, himself, and contributing to them as long as he lived. Many newspaper men were numbered among his personal friends. He never overlooked the vast influence wielded by the press of the State and sought to enlist it in favor of the development of the Historical Department. He felt deep gratitude for the almost uniform support he received from the press and realized that therein lay much of his strength and success.

The following paragraphs are selected from the many beautiful and appreciative editorial tributes paid by the press:

Anita Republican, March 11, 1908:

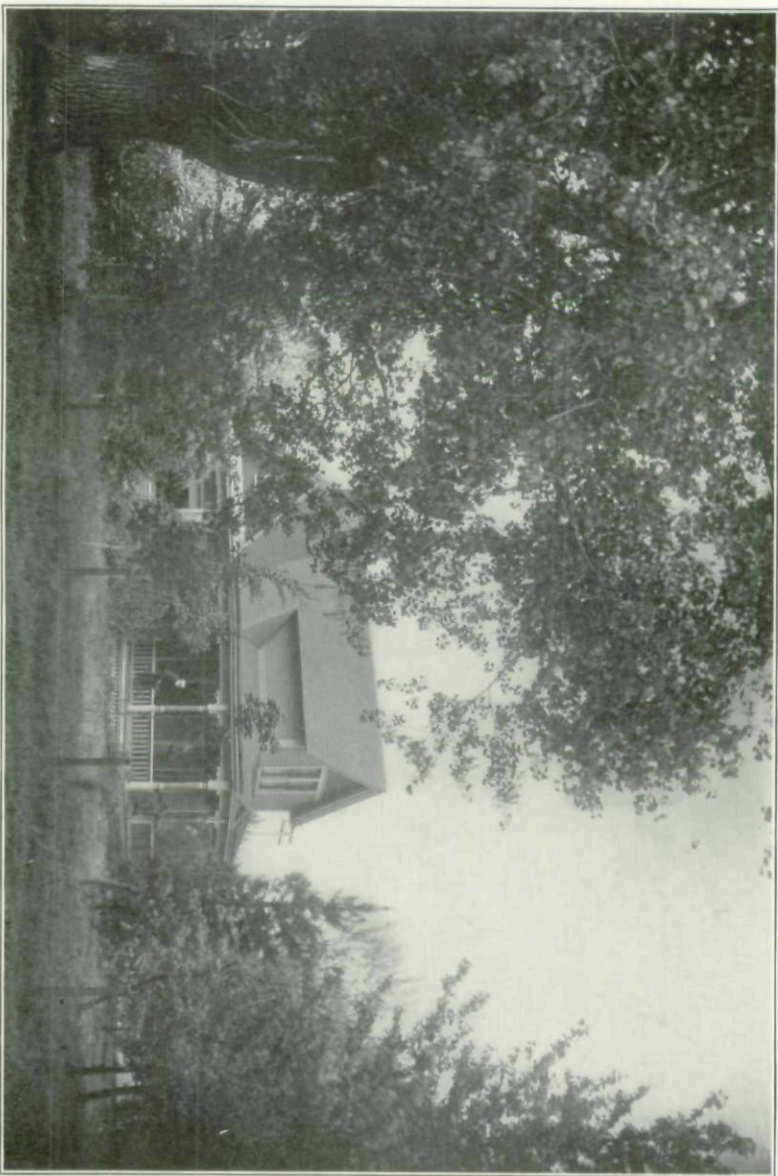
Among Iowa's business men and statesmen there was but one Charles Aldrich. * * * He was a man who was faithful to every trust imposed upon him and who has passed away leaving to his State a name unsullied and the recollection of a life that may well be an inspiration to others. A truly great man has passed away.

Waukon Standard, March 12, 1908:

The foundation and development of the Historical Department was the thing nearest to the heart of Mr. Aldrich and had been for thirty years. But his interests were not bounded by a single idea. His activities took the widest latitude. Whether in politics, as newspaper editor, public officer or trusted lieutenant and manager for men ambitious in political affairs, or in the service of his country as a soldier, or engaged in the tasks of a lawmaker, or directing the re-unions of lawmakers and historical societies, or devoting his time and energies to the collection of historical material on behalf of the State—he was always broad-minded, liberal spirited and prepared to do his full duty as he saw it in whatever relation he was placed.

Burlington Hawk-Eye, March 10, 1908:

Personally he was a lovable, kindly man, and a tireless worker. His monument will be the Historical Department, which was founded on a small but valuable collection which



Mr. Aldrich's Home, Boone, Iowa

he himself presented to the State. For many years he toiled in adding to this nucleus without pay, and finally saw the dream of his life materialize in a historical building, which is one of the finest public structures in the State. Magnificent as it is and valuable as its contents, its existence is almost solely due to the tireless energy and self-sacrificing labors of Mr. Aldrich. Mr. Aldrich's life has been a notable one. He was a soldier, a legislator, a journalist and a historian. His name will be written high among the builders of Iowa; his memory will ever be an inspiration.

McGregor News, March 11, 1908:

Charles Aldrich, one of Iowa's most distinguished pioneers,* passed away at the age of 79 years. He founded the State Historical Department. * * * He originated its beginnings and he developed its field. He put it on permanent foundations and before his death realized the cherished ambition of a quarter of a century when the building in which the Department is housed, through the generosity and appreciation of the State, was finished. For years he has been in delicate health but the love of his work and the undying hope of seeing the collection appropriately quartered have supplemented an extraordinary nervous force in lengthening his years until his hope was realized.

Sac Sun, March 12, 1908:

The work that will prove his enduring monument is the formation of the Iowa Historical Department, of which he was Curator from 1892 to the day of his death. Through his untiring energy a large collection of valuable records and other material has been made and classified and now they are housed in a substantial building. Mr. Aldrich inclined toward the higher ideals in political life. A quarter of a century ago, when he served a term in the legislature, he proposed a bill for the establishment of a State Board of Pardons like that established by the last legislature and he is credited with being a pioneer, also, in the matter of anti-pass legislation. A long life, well lived, has reached an honored close.

Clinton Mirror, March 14, 1908:

He at times held other important appointments, and served

one term or more in the legislature about a score of years ago; in which position he introduced a bill abolishing railroad passes—a premature measure, looming large among recent “reforms”(?), but which was laughed out of the legislature at the time. We saw him at the *Freeman* office in the fall of 1859 and again on the levee at Lyons in '62, on his regiment's way South, but always failed to find him at Des Moines. The *Mirror* was one of the very few papers advocating the passage of his pass bill, and we received a friendly word of acknowledgment from his hand, while others were characterizing him as an impracticable crank. Mr. Aldrich was a useful man in his four-score years of life, and lived to see his legislative idea made practical, embodied into law, and enforced.

Grand Junction Globe, March 13, 1908:

Charles Aldrich died at his home in Boone Sunday. He has devoted practically a lifetime and a small fortune to the securing of material bearing on the history of the State of Iowa. The great Historical Department and the many priceless treasures that have been gathered together are the results of his labors. It is impossible to estimate the value of the work that he has done. All we can do is to honor his name and it was with regret that all Iowa heard of his death. A grand old man has left us.

Waverly Democrat, March 12, 1908:

In his death the State loses one of its most useful citizens, one who will be remembered when hundreds of others equally well known have been forgotten. Practically the whole of Mr. Aldrich's life was devoted to the arranging and preserving of material of historical value in this State and the gratitude of generations to come will be his for the valuable service he thus gave. The private collection that he made and gave to the State some twenty years ago formed the nucleus of the present contents of the State's Historical Building, north of the Capitol, and it was mainly through his efforts that this building, which, with its myriad of things of historical interest, comprises one of our most valuable public possessions, was founded.

Sioux City Journal, March 10, 1908:

Mr. Aldrich, through his devotion to the work which crowned his life, won many friends and admirers, and it is doubtful if any other man of his time could have accomplished the results he attained. His success gave him the greatest pleasure; and yet he was conscious of the greater things that were possible, and his anxious thought was with the future. For a number of years Mr. Aldrich had been in delicate health, and he was never physically robust. He had activity of mind, perseverance, sincerity of purpose, great pride in his State and in its history and in the men who had won distinction in its service, and his zeal was unflagging. Men of less determination would have yielded to bodily infirmity and made complaint of deficient appreciation; but none of this moved him. He was faithful to the very end.

Saturday Evening Post (Burlington), March 14, 1908:

He is mourned sincerely by all who are cognizant of the characteristics of his lofty mind and his pleasant and kind personal bearing. Mr. Aldrich during his long life did many things, and did all of them notably well, but his promotion during a quarter century of the Iowa Historical Collection betokens him to have been easily a genius of the first rank as a collector. It is as a collector that he will go into history, and as time passes, and the nature and extent of his work comes to be better understood and its true value estimated, his fame will be assured and permanent. * * * Certainly it was a great privilege to have known Charles Aldrich, and we do not value it lightly, but on the contrary, reckon it as one of the most precious possessions of memory. That such a gentle and exalted mind should now have gone into oblivion we cannot believe and we shall with confidence anticipate another acquaintanceship with so choice and amiable a spirit in some other world.

Tipton Advertiser, March 12, 1908:

Charles Aldrich, who passed away at Boone last Sunday, was founder of the Historical Department of Iowa, and as such did a work for the State of immeasurable value. The rewards he received were entirely out of proportion to what

he accomplished in the way of securing and preserving historical documents which will tell their story to future generations. But the task was always a labor of love with him and much of his work was without thought of reward. * * *

Vinton Eagle, March 13, 1908:

The man himself was the greatest attraction. You were naturally drawn to him. It was interesting to sit by him and absorb the great fund of knowledge that dropped from his lips. He had a most wonderful memory and it readily retained almost everything he read or came in contact with personally. It was always a pride to him that he had achieved something in life and he was only sorry that it was not a great deal more. His was a restless ambition and the good of it all was that his mind was always on what he might be able to do for his fellowmen. His life was upright and clean and if he ever gave way to selfish ambition it must have been years ago and long outlived. All Iowa will mourn his death.

Sioux City Daily Tribune, March 9, 1908:

The largest and most enduring service rendered the State by Mr. Aldrich was the founding of the State's Historical Department, first in the acceptance by the State of his own modest accumulations and later to the appropriations growing, as the value of the project grew in appreciation, into the fine building at the State's capital, in which is housed the historical data of the State and whence come the growing volume of historical publications. It was the good fortune of Mr. Aldrich, denied to many who work for the good of their fellowmen, to live to see fully accomplished this work to which he gave his years of loving toil.

Council Bluffs Nonpareil, March 9, 1908:

* * * "He was truly one of nature's noblemen," said Mr. [W. W.] Wallace. He has done more to perpetuate the history of Iowa than any one man in the State's long list of patriots. I wish you could find some one who could adequately tell of the charm of Mr. Aldrich's character, who could speak of him as he deserves. In his personal life he was superior to most of the men one meets. Contact with Charles Aldrich made one palpably better. He was a lovely man. Of what religious

leanings he may have had I know nothing; that he was as a friend faithful and as a lover of Iowa enthusiastic and tireless make up the image my recollection frames of him." * * *

Spirit Lake Beacon, March 13, 1908:

At the ripe age of 80 years, Charles Aldrich, founder of the Historical Department of Iowa, passed to his reward Sunday at his home in Boone. For more than a quarter of a century as Curator of the State Historical Department his efforts were tireless in the accumulation and preservation of valuable historical relics and matter. His good works will stand for the enlightenment and pleasure of generations to come and will be more appreciated as the years pass.

Boone News-Republican, March 12, 1908:

The earthly remains of Curator Charles Aldrich will be laid away in the cemetery at Webster City, and a modest shaft will mark the spot of this gentle and retiring man's last resting place. But off to the south, under the gilded dome which surmounts Iowa's proud Capitol, his real monument will stand.

In the early days of the struggle to found the Iowa Historical Department, opinion was divided as to the usefulness and need of such an institution. Iowa is a comparatively young commonwealth, as the history of the world goes, and the business of making money and building homes engrosses the attention of most of her male population, while the duties of the household leave scant time to the matrons and misses to pore over the historical relics of the State, interesting as they might be. It required a missionary with zealous faith and self-sacrificing persistence to prove to Iowa the value of preserving her records for future generations. Now we have a collection which is priceless, and the wisdom of the founder is everywhere recognized and applauded.

Curator Charles Aldrich was inspired to do this work by the knowledge that posterity would be greatly hampered and disappointed unless it were done. While the great mass of Iowans were content to deal with the present, taking no thought of the past or future, one man had the insight and the unselfish devotion to his race to inaugurate for them a

place for a permanent record of their growth. Slowly and by unstinted energy Mr. Aldrich brought the State into a realizing sense of the need of the Historical Department, which now is rich in its fund of information and its precious relics of the past. * * *

None question now the need and value of Curator Aldrich's work. He has founded an institution which will live as long as literature and art, and for which generations yet unborn will rise and call him blessed.

Marshalltown Times-Republican, March 9, 1908:

If any man was a part of Iowa, its history and its development, Charles Aldrich was that man. His death removes another of the notable figures from among the lessening number of the men who have done their part in the making of Iowa from a prairie territory into a magnificent agricultural commonwealth and a leader among the states in all that goes to create the true greatness of a people and a nation.

He was a typical Iowa pioneer and of the high type that has left its lasting impress upon our institutions and our laws and the common thought and conviction of Iowa. Clean minded, high of aim, possessed of a large mentality, helpful, sincere, honest, and without the greed that diverts energy from its higher levels, Aldrich has served others more than himself. All his life he was a busy man. The record of his life is one of public service and without a stain. This is a great and splendid statement to be made with absolute truth above an open grave.

What did he leave? Not much to be devised by will or expended upon granite shafts rich with an adulation too often undeserved; but in the capital city of Iowa a magnificent building rears above its fellows monumental of the life and services of Charles Aldrich, father and curator of the Historical Department and prime mover and promoter of the splendid building that houses it. While Iowa's Historical Building stands, Aldrich will have an enduring monument. And the best of all is that he was the type of man who needs nor craves a monument.

Men wither and decay. A lifetime is too short for the

great work of a great and sincere man. Old age comes and the weakness of the shadow wherein no man may labor. Then night and the rest of the night. To have worked while the light endured, to have kept faith with mankind and one's own soul, to leave behind that justification for having lived that is voiced in the regret and sorrow of the living, is to have lived and died well. So lived Charles Aldrich.

Grinnell Herald, March 10, 1908:

The passing of Curator Charles Aldrich this week removes one of the few remaining figures in Iowa's public life that were a connecting link between the past and the present of our State history. Charles Aldrich was in a very real sense "one of the founders;" he was also in an equally true sense one of the strong, wholesome influences in the State during the present generation.

Mr. Aldrich was the father of the State Historical Department at Des Moines. To his enthusiasm and persistency more than to anything else is due the construction of Iowa's magnificent Hall of Archives and Historical Building. The people of Iowa do not yet fully appreciate what this work, the hard work of a historical pioneer, will mean to the State some day. Where present generations have smiled indulgently future generations will bless. Charles Aldrich will grow with passing years and in the future he will be looked back to as a man who had the scholarly foresight and practical wisdom to see the value of preserving material relating to Iowa history before it was too late.

He was a man of the most natural charm and grace. He fairly breathed refinement. He was a type of the best that New England sent to Iowa, and he was a power in shaping many Iowa institutions.

Lest it be forgotten, let it here be recorded that among other important institutions which he did much to shape was the important one of our local form of government. Coming to Hamilton County as editor of the Webster City *Hamilton Freeman*, in the days when Judge Mason's code was inflicting the autocratic rule of the county judge upon the people of Iowa, Charles Aldrich's independent spirit rebelled against

such tyranny as he was subject to. He had been living too long under the democratic New York system of twenty-one commissioners to submit tamely to "one man rule."

"The czar of Russia," once remarked the deceased to the writer, "was impotent compared with an Iowa county judge." And like the good fighter he was Mr. Aldrich went down to Des Moines to attend the legislature with the chief idea of knocking out this odious southern system and replacing it with some more democratic form of local government, more congenial to New England minds. He succeeded admirably in this and the story of how by compromise and experiment we arrived at our present system * * * is too long a one to be repeated here.

Suffice it to say that Charles Aldrich has left the imprint of his strong character on the State of Iowa in many ways. And when Iowa's story is written * * * the name of Charles Aldrich must not be missing among its best formative influences, for his works do follow him.

Daily Times (Davenport) March 10, 1908:

But while his other activities were sufficient to make him one of the State's prominent men for all time, it was because he founded and developed the Historical Department of Iowa and because of the work that he did in connection with it to preserve the original sources of the State's history that he held a unique place. From small beginnings the department was developed until after a quarter of a century the Curator had the pleasure of seeing the collection of priceless documents and relics housed in a special building erected by the State.

One of his most valuable contributions to the permanent record of Iowa's early day events was the publication under his direction of a quarterly journal known as the *Annals of Iowa*. Much important biographical and political matter of historical value has been preserved in special articles published in this quarterly.

Unlike many who specialize in a field dealing largely with the dead past, Mr. Aldrich has been broad-minded, keen and alert, taking deepest interest in passing events in which,

perhaps because of his knowledge of the beginnings in the State, he could see more than a passing show. It was, too, largely through his personal relations with the big men of the early days of the State that he secured from them much valuable historical material. Gen. Grenville M. Dodge, John A. Kasson and Gen. W. T. Sherman were among those who assisted Mr. Aldrich in some of his most important work. Mr. Aldrich has been very methodical in his work, so that those who come after him in the continuation of it will have little difficulty in picking up the story of Iowa's development where he has let fall the pen.

Cedar Rapids Daily Republican, March 12, 1908:

The tributes which have been paid to the life and services of the late Charles Aldrich, the Curator of the Iowa Historical Department, have all fallen short of the measure of his deserts. Mr. Aldrich was a country newspaper man when he began to interest himself in the collection of autographs and historical documents. He began at a time when such work was wholly neglected in Iowa. In the course of a few years he had gathered enough materials at his own expense to fill a few cases. After overcoming some objections he received permission to put these cases in the State Library. They began to attract attention, being one of the main features of that Library. In due time Mr. Aldrich dared to ask for small appropriations to aid in his work. They were at first either not granted or granted grudgingly and meagerly. He had to fight his way at every step against the "conservatism" of the lawmaker, many of whom sneered at the "trash" that Mr. Aldrich was gathering. But he persisted, often heartsore and weary.

But he succeeded more and more and finally the legislature was induced to rear a building to house his "trash," a building second only to the State Capitol building in magnificence. Large as it is, it will hardly house all the things that he has brought together and started for the people of Iowa. Historical material of every description is now collected and preserved and in the future years that building will be the great Historical State-House.

Mr. Aldrich lived long enough to see his great dreams accomplished realities. The last years of his long, useful and gentle life were blessed with the consciousness of things accomplished and the gratitude of the State was poured out upon him. Mr. Aldrich was also one of the grand old men of the State, a man whose name will live in the archives of Iowa. He has laid an historical foundation for the future which is priceless in value. The gentleness and the persistency of Mr. Aldrich will be missed in the Historical Department, but he has left his work where others can carry it forward.

Des Moines Capital, March 9, 1908:

Said the prophet of old, "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in its season." And the imagery seems to typify the long, useful and fully matured life which terminated at Boone yesterday morning.

It is no mere rhetorical exaggeration or a strained attempt at eulogy to say that the years will eventually demonstrate that the usefulness of Charles Aldrich was unsurpassed by any citizen Iowa ever produced. He was intense in his loyalty to his State. The success of Iowa people and the growth of Iowa institutions was to him ever a matter of deep personal gratification. It was that he might render some service of permanent value to the people and the State which he loved that inspired the thought of building a State Historical Building within which the records of the commonwealth might be preserved and which should be a sort of Mecca to all who desired to obtain historical information not only of Iowa and western people but of the important phases of our national history as well.

In carrying forward his great work the path of Mr. Aldrich was not always strewn with roses. Frequently discouraging obstacles appeared. Legislators were indifferent. Statesmen dodged. Politicians hesitated for fear that votes might be jeopardized.

But the faithful old man kept toiling on. His prophetic eye could see a time coming when the State would be ready to praise an achievement for which now there was so small encouragement.

It will always be a source of gratification to Mr. Aldrich's friends to remember that his life was spared long after the State had reached the point where it was ready to acknowledge its lasting obligations.

The modest collection of historical records and relics from which the present magnificent collection developed was the gift of Mr. Aldrich. For many years he labored for the upbuilding of the enterprise without pay. By and by he saw the ambition of his life realized. The State Historical Building is to-day admittedly the finest structure owned by the State, and no Iowan will ever enter its doors without thinking gratefully of Charles Aldrich.

Our news columns give in more elaborate detail the story of Charles Aldrich's life. It was many-sided but always useful. He was a soldier, a legislator, a journalist, a naturalist, and a historian. We shall not soon look upon his like again.

Register and Leader (Des Moines), March 10, 1908:

A Monument to Aldrich.—In a sense the State Historical Building stands as a monument to the life work of Mr. Aldrich. But the State should do something in a more intimate way to honor his labors. He planned the Historical Department and in the main he created it.

But few have appreciated the tireless industry with which he has worked to form the nucleus of a great historical collection. The portrait gallery alone is invaluable. Likewise the rare manuscripts he has accumulated, the newspaper files, and the no less rare volumes of the pioneer period of the west.

Mr. Aldrich received but little compensation during his life. His salary was small and many of his rarest treasures he collected at his own expense and gave to the State. Iowa should not allow this great work to go unrecognized. A bronze or granite statue should greet the visitor at the entrance of the Historical Building.

Daily Gate City (Keokuk), March 11, 1908:

Iowa newspapers, as is proper, abound in appreciations of the late Hon. Charles Aldrich. Some of the tributes are very fine, but it is a question if any of them exceed in expressiveness what the late Sam Clark once said when referring to

the fact that Mr. Aldrich had given to the State of Iowa the collection of historical records and relics which formed the basis of the present magnificent collection. Mr. Clark said that Aldrich had not only given his valuable possessions to the State, but, what was infinitely more valuable, he had given himself. Therein was Mr. Aldrich's greatest gift, and for it he deserves praise above all things else.

Nevada Representative, March 18, 1908:

The late Charles Aldrich of Iowa was a man who was an honor to the citizenship of Iowa. He was a different sort of a man from any other man that we ever knew. We had heard of him for years but we first came to know him about the time that the act of the General Assembly was passed creating the Historical Department of the State. We remember that it was in the room of the Hon. T. C. McCall, then senator from Story, that we first met him, and the subject then under discussion was the bill which was then pending and the passage of which opened up for him what was really his life work. This was in the mid-winter of 1892, when Mr. Aldrich was already a few years past 60 years of age and when many a man would assume that he was ready to quit. But a very casual review of his work since that time is sufficient to show that the previous forty years or more of his active life had in fact been merely preparatory to the work upon which he was about to enter. We are sure, therefore, that the years during which we knew Mr. Aldrich and learned to love him with increasing respect and affection were his best years and the ones by which he would wish to be and will be remembered. * * *

It was some time before we knew Mr. Aldrich that there came to our attention his proposal to give to the State certain correspondence of historical value if the State would furnish filing cases in which to take care of it. The proposal commended itself to the approval of men who were in position to act, and the necessary appropriation of a few hundred dollars was made. We thought at the moment that it was quite an appropriation for filing cases, but when some months later we first looked through the cases and the correspondence in the State Library we began to understand. This was some-

thing like twenty years ago; but nevertheless when the proposal was made to enlarge this collection into an "Historical Department," of course with Mr. Aldrich in charge—for there was absolutely no one else in the State who could have been thought of for the place—we wondered what an Historical Department could be like.

But he got his department, and years following we would go down once in a while into the southeast basement rooms of the State Capitol, and occasionally take friends down there, and Mr. Aldrich would always show us around and tell us a lot we ought to know; and we would delight in the collection and in his stories and would wish that he might live forever; for we did not know what would become of the Historical Department without him—and we do not know yet. But gradually we came to understand that Mr. Aldrich was doing the work for which he had been preparing through all the years of his earlier and middle life, and that the work was worth the preparation and the toil. And the little appreciation we could give was only illustrative of what all others who came near him and his department were compelled to give; and so gradually the public men of the State came to feel that whatever else the State might or might not have money for, that Historical Department must have better and more suitable accommodations. So the appropriation was made for the first wing of a new Library and Historical Building. The State only secured lot enough for the one wing; but the owners of adjacent property understood that condemnation proceedings might be looked for sometime, and they did not put up any fine buildings. But the wing went up; and we remember being there when the corner stone was laid. It was, we think, in the summer of 1899, and John A. Kasson we think made the address, while Harlan and Allison and many other men then living who had been prominent in making Iowa history were on the platform; but Mr. Aldrich, who simply did things without making speeches about them, was the happiest man there and was the real hero of the occasion.

And the years that followed for him were happy years.

His heart was in his work, and few were the men in or out of public life in Iowa who were not glad to respond to his requests; and he gathered a splendid historical library, and historical records, and portraits of men distinguished in Iowa history; and all his work was done without thought of any selfish ambition, but that the history of Iowa might be written and gathered and preserved, while yet the men and women should be living who could tell the story. And so he published the *Annals of Iowa*, in which are preserved so much that might otherwise be lost sight of; and the valuable fact is that the material is accessible to the antiquarian and the investigator not merely now, but will be later when the difficulty of getting historical information is vastly increased; and all this has come about because Charles Aldrich knew about Iowa and appreciated what should be done and had the unselfish spirit that made him do the work and enabled him to command the necessary support. Toward the very end of his time the State bought the adjacent ground and put up the rest of the Historical and Library Building and Hall of Archives; but this achievement Mr. Aldrich lived only to see barely completed and not to be enjoyed; but its erection by the State was the final seal of approval by the State upon his splendid work, and it was a seal that was given in his lifetime.

Iowa has had many great and useful and worthy public men; and many there have been who have had their little day of glory such as Mr. Aldrich never had; but few there are that have done so much for the State as he has done, and none there are who have been more sincerely loved and honored nor whose works will better and longer endure.

Daily Freeman-Tribune (Webster City), March 9, 1908:

When Mr. Aldrich set up his modest little printing office in this city and began to proclaim republican principles with that courage and tenacity which have marked his whole life, the village had only about 200 inhabitants, and the county was democratic. The new editor was not only a vigorous writer, but an organizer as well and with the fire of enthusiasm burning in him, and the energy and tact to meet pioneer

conditions, he soon had a strong following and his office became the political headquarters of this part of the State.

* * * * *

In the death of Mr. Aldrich the birds and dumb animals lose one of the best and strongest friends they ever had. His versatile pen was ever ready to take up their battles and he did as much as any man in Iowa to create proper sentiments for the care and treatment of all animals and birds.

But Mr. Aldrich's crowning monument is the founding of the Historical Department of Iowa. The great building recently completed in Des Moines for this department will stand as a tribute to his unselfish devotion and energetic persistence, for without him the Historical Department would not exist. He began the collection of autographs when a mere boy, and as he grew in the knowledge of the world and into wider opportunities for obtaining interesting and instructive specimens, he acquired a reputation as a collector, and by the time he and his wife suggested its presentation to the State, it had become very interesting and quite valuable. * * *

Mr. Aldrich took a deep interest in the monument to the victims of the Spirit Lake Indian massacre of 1857, which was built in 1894, by a legislative appropriation. He caused to be placed a tablet in the Hamilton County court house to the memory of the rescue company that went to the relief of the settlement, and he gathered the data and prepared the inscriptions that are on the monument, including the names of all the members of that historic band of pioneers.

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