

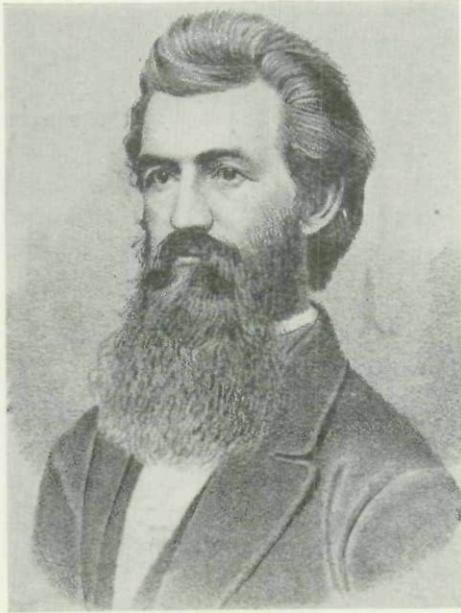
BENJAMIN F. GUE

BY DAVID C. MOTT

It is becoming more apparent as time goes on that the different sections of the United States have economic conditions of their own and in the struggles for supremacy in national policies first one section and then another gains ascendancy. It is apparent just now that the Middle West has arrived and is coming into her own. The great agricultural section rich in nature's gifts is about to dictate the policies of the nation as indicated by the two great political parties vieing with each other in shaping public policies to favor the chief industries of this section.

Iowa, situated centrally in this section, is regarded as the key state. It is now and has been for a generation furnishing many of the leaders in agricultural progress and development. So it becomes a matter of keen interest to the historian and the student to study the personalities who laid the foundations for success in Iowa when the embryo state was in its making. The Third Series of the ANNALS OF IOWA from the time it was founded by Charles Aldrich nearly fifty years ago has tried to bring into relief those personages. Believing that those who contributed to the development of the main industries were the real builders of the state the ANNALS has recently produced biographies of certain men who did most for the development of agriculture, horticulture and related matters. A man who did a leading part in that work was Lieutenant Governor Gue.

Benjamin F. Gue was born in Greene County, New York, December 25, 1828. His parents were John and Catherine (Gurney) Gue. The family removed to a farm in Ontario County, New York, in 1833. His parents were Quakers, and abolitionists, and Benjamin's opinions at an early date came to be in sympathy with his parents on that subject. Their home was a station on the Underground Railroad where escaping slaves always found shelter and aid. Benjamin was the eldest of six children and when he was ten years old his father died. He did his part in aiding the mother to keep the family together.



B. J. W.
Feb 6th 1865

Here he received a common school education in "district school." In 1851 he engaged in teaching school, but in the spring of 1852 he and his next younger brother went to the northwestern part of Scott County, Iowa, near what is now known as Big Rock, where they entered 160 acres of prairie land and 40 acres of timber. They also purchased a team and farming utensils and began to cultivate the land, living in a log house, doing their own cooking for a year and a half, until their mother and her younger children joined them in the fall of 1853.¹

Benjamin F. Gue took an active interest in the Free Soil movement in his locality. Many Democrats were opposed to the extension of slavery into new territory to the north or west. The Whig party was remaining neutral. The consequence was a new party was forming, the Republican party, which was opposing further encroachments of slavery. Early in January, 1856, Governor Grimes, at the request of a few of his friends, issued a call to citizens who opposed the extension of slavery to meet in convention in Iowa City on February 22, 1856, and organize "a Republican party for the state to make common cause with a similar party already formed in several other states of the Union."² Mr. Gue was a delegate to that convention, which completed a state organization of the new party, and nominated a state ticket which was elected. Thus at the age of twenty-seven years we find him a member of a convention that has become famous in Iowa history.

The fall of the next year, 1857, Mr. Gue was elected as one of the representatives from Scott County to the Seventh General Assembly. It convened on January 11, 1858, the first assembly under the present Constitution, that of 1857, and the first to meet in the new capital city of Des Moines. It contained many men of ability, several of whom later reached prominence in the history of the state and country. In the Senate were Gideon S. Bailey of Van Buren, Alvin Saunders of Henry, W. H. M. Pusey of Pottawattamie, William Loughridge of Mahaska, Samuel J. Kirkwood of Johnson, Nicholas J. Rusch of Scott, Jonathan W. Cattell of Cedar, William G. Thompson of Linn and J. B. Grinnell of Poweshiek. Among the membership of the

¹*Progressive Men of Iowa*, 1899, p. 147; also *U. S. Biographical Dictionary*, Iowa Volume, p. 700.

²*Gue's History of Iowa*, Vol. I, p. 281.

House were Dennis A. Mahoney of Dubuque, Thomas Drummond of Benton, Cyrus C. Carpenter of Webster, Thomas Mitchell of Polk, William H. Seevers of Mahaska, Ed Wright of Cedar, D. N. Sprague of Louisa, James F. Wilson of Jefferson, W. W. Belknap and George W. McCrary of Lee.

Two years previous to this the Sixth General Assembly made an effort to pass a bill providing for the establishment of a State Agricultural College. On January 7, 1857, J. H. Sullivan, a representative from Lee County, offered a resolution that a committee of seven members be appointed to prepare and report a bill to the House providing for the establishment of a State Agricultural College. The resolution was adopted and the following day Speaker Samuel McFarland appointed J. H. Sullivan of Lee, Robert A. Richardson of Fayette, J. Wilson Williams of Des Moines, John M. Moore of Dubuque, William Keysey of Fremont, Delos Arnold of Marshall, and David Edmundson of Jasper as the committee. On January 12 they reported a bill for an act establishing a State Agricultural College. On January 16 it was taken up as a special order and considered in committee of the whole and several amendments made. It was referred to a special committee and other amendments added, and finally on January 21 it was passed by the House by a vote of 39 to 22. On January 28 it was messaged back from the Senate as having been amended and passed and asking for the House to concur in the amendments, but as this was the last day of the session there was no time for its further consideration.³

When the Seventh General Assembly met the friends of the proposed agricultural college were better prepared. In Mr. Gue they found an enthusiastic supporter. Soon after opening of the session which was on January 11, 1858, a group of five members most interested in the project of the proposed agricultural college, consisting of Robert A. Richardson of Fayette County, Benjamin F. Gue of Scott County, Ed Wright of Cedar County, William Lundy of Muscatine County, and Charles Foster of Washington County, prepared a bill, and Mr. Richardson introduced it on February 4.⁴ Its title was "A bill for

³*Journal of the House, Sixth G. A.*, pp. 196, 212, 256, 345, 402.

⁴"Brief History of the College," in *Second Report of the Trustees of the Iowa Agricultural College*, p. 5.

an act to provide for the establishment of a State Agricultural College, with a State Board of Agriculture, which shall be connected with the entire agricultural interests of the state of Iowa." It was read the first and second time and laid on the table and ordered printed for the use of the House.

The bill was evidently referred to the Committee of Agriculture for William Lundy, its chairman, reported to the House on March 1 that that committee to whom the bill was referred had had the same under consideration, and they begged leave to report:

The importance of the object of the bill was such that we esteemed a consultation with the Senate Committee on Agriculture necessary to consider and act upon its provisions. We also have had in consultation with us, the honorable member from Fayette, by whom the bill was introduced. The system proposed in that bill is one which if it could be carried out according to its intentions, especially in regard to the mode of electing the controlling board, would be of great benefit to the agricultural interests of the state; but as it appears to be too far in advance of public opinion, the committee of both houses, together with the member from Fayette, have agreed to submit a substitute for said bill, and recommend its passage, and instructed me to present the same.⁵

The report of the committee was concurred in and the substitute was adopted, laid on the table and copies ordered printed. On March 5 on a motion by Ed Wright of Cedar County the regular order of business was suspended and substitute for House File No. 129 was taken from the table and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

On March 10 James F. Wilson, chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, reported the bill back to the House without amendment, and recommended that the further consideration of the same be indefinitely postponed. The committee also recommended that the Committee on Agriculture be instructed to prepare and report a bill for the establishment of an agricultural bureau in connection with one of the state offices at the capitol.⁶

This report precipitated a spirited debate between the friends and opponents of the measure. Speeches were made in advocacy of the bill by Benjamin F. Gue. Ed Wright, William Lundy,

⁵*Journal of the House, Seventh G. A., p. 445.*

⁶*Ibid., p. 567.*

and Robert A. Richardson, and against it, principally on the ground of expediency, owing to the condition of state finances, by James F. Wilson, William H. Seevers and John Edwards. After free discussion the friends of the bill consented to a reduction of the appropriation asked of \$30,000 to \$10,000,⁷ and after a few other slight amendments the bill was passed by both houses of the assembly. This was the act that provided for the establishment of a State Agricultural College and Farm and was to be under the management of a Board of Trustees of eleven members.

Mr. Gue proved himself to be a hard-working and efficient member of the General Assembly and in 1859 was re-elected as representative. The Eighth General Assembly convened at Des Moines January 8, 1860. Mr. Gue was appointed chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, and also chairman of the Committee on Rules. On January 10 he introduced a resolution to grant to the State Agricultural Society, which was meeting in the city, the use of the hall of the House for that and the next evening for their meetings, and the resolution carried.

On January 17 Representative Martin B. Bennett of Marion County introduced a resolution "that the Committee on Agriculture be instructed to inquire into the expediency of consolidating the offices of secretary of the Agricultural Society of the State, and Agricultural College, and report by bill or otherwise, blending these institutions into one society." Representative Thomas W. Claggett of Lee County offered an amendment "that the committee also inquire into the propriety of abolishing the Agricultural Farm." Both the amendment and the resolution were adopted. On February 7 E. S. McCulloch of Lee County also introduced a resolution instructing the Committee on Agriculture to forthwith inquire into the expediency of repealing the act establishing an Agricultural College, and report by bill or otherwise, and the resolution was adopted. On February 16 a minority of the Committee on Agriculture reported on the subject as follows:

That they have had the same under consideration, and the minority of said committee beg leave to report, that in their opinion it is expedient to repeal said law, and for the following, among other reasons:

1st. Said institution was not, and is not now demanded by a ma-

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 567; also "Brief History of the College," *op. cit.*

majority of the taxpayers of the state, or those for whose especial benefit it is claimed the same was created.

2d. It is believed that the expenditures of money required to establish and keep up such an institution, will be entirely disproportioned to the benefit resulting therefrom to the people of this state.

3d. Admitting that the institution would be of practical value to the agricultural interests of the state, your committee believe it unwise and unjust to embark in such a costly enterprise at a time when such financial distress pervades the country, and when the people are already overburdened with taxes.

4th. Again, the state of Iowa is yet young, and almost one half of her territory unsettled, and it is unjust to burden the present taxpayers of the state with the cost of establishing an institution not imperatively demanded.

John M. Whitaker,
T. N. Barnes.

Which, on motion, was laid on the table.

Mr. Gue, from Committee on Agriculture, presented the following majority report:

The undersigned, members of the committee on agriculture, to whom was referred a resolution inquiring into the expediency of repealing the law creating and providing for an "Agricultural College and experimental Farm, to be connected with the entire agricultural interest of the state," ask leave to submit the following report: That in their opinion, it is clearly inexpedient, unwise and unjust to repeal said law, for the following, among other reasons:

1st. That the law was enacted by the last legislature, at the earnest solicitation of the most intelligent and experienced farmers, mechanical and working men of the state; that after a full and free discussion upon the merits of the bill, and the expediency of their laying the foundation for an institution for the benefit of the great mass of the people who earn an honest living by the hard labor of their hands, and the sweat of their brows, it was passed with a unanimity that ought to have entitled it to a fair trial before attempts are made to crush it out.

2d. There is no evidence before the committee that any considerable number of people, of any class, or in any portion of the state, desire that the law of the last session, for the establishment of this institution, should be repealed until after a reasonable time has elapsed to enable them to judge whether it will meet the wants and expectations of those for whose benefit it was proposed to establish it. Your committee believe it would be but justice to the very large and respectable class of our citizens, who compose the working men of the state, to let the original intent of the friends of this institution be fairly carried out, as provided by the law which it is proposed to repeal.

3d. In view of the financial embarrassments which now depress our people, the friends of the College have decided to ask for no farther appropriation from the state at this session of the legislature; but that

they will solicit and secure such subscriptions from friendly sources as may enable them, when times are more propitious, with some assistance from the state, to erect such buildings as the wants of the institution may require; thus relieving the people from any apprehensions that this institution should add to their already heavy burthen of taxation.

Your committee would further represent that the law was so framed that the institution should go into operation gradually. An agricultural bureau was organized in connection with the board, for the purpose of collecting and disseminating valuable information which could in no other manner be so effectually and cheaply obtained. It also provides for the collection and distribution of seeds; thus affording a medium of exchange among farmers in the different parts of the state, which, of itself, is of far more value than the whole amount of expense incurred. Indeed, it is impossible to calculate the great advantages which will undoubtedly result from this department.

Who can estimate the value to this state of the introduction of the single article of sorghum, obtained by the seed department of the general government, which has saved to our citizens, already, hundreds of thousands of dollars. Through this department of the College, we are already reaping the benefit of the law, to some extent, while the board is engaged in making preparations for carrying its provisions fully into effect, as fast as the means, at their disposal, will justify.

The farm has already been purchased, the location made, and an amount of money subscribed to assist in erecting the necessary buildings. As evidence of the demand there is for an institution of this kind, and its popularity among the farmers, your committee would state that there has already been numerous applications for admission into the college, as students, as soon as it goes into operation.

In view of all these facts, your committee would most earnestly protest against the repeal of this law, and the consequent destruction of all that has thus far been accomplished; being confident, as we are, that if this step backward is taken, that it must and will be retraced, and that all of the time and money already expended, will be worse than lost; it will be evidence to our citizens and to the world, that after having once determined to educate our working men, to elevate labor and make it honorable and ennobling; that after having decided to provide an institution in which the sons of our farmers and mechanics may be educated for their chosen profession, we have repented of our noble purpose, and have concluded that ignorance is preferable to knowledge, and have chosen darkness rather than light. All of which, is respectfully submitted.

B. F. Gue,
R. W. Macomber,
M. W. Robinson,
L. C. Noble,
F. A. Stevens.⁸

⁸*Journal of the House, Eighth G. A., pp. 244-46.*

Let the "Brief History of the College" above referred to describe the result:

The minority of the committee submitted with their report a bill repealing the act by which the College was established. This was a critical time in the history of the new enterprise. The state was depressed with a heavy debt hanging over it; the whole country was suffering from great financial embarrassment; the policy of the legislature was to economize in all directions and cut off every project likely to draw heavily upon its resources. An agricultural college was at best an experiment to some extent, and was looked upon with little favor even by many intelligent farmers. Its friends watched with anxiety the indications everywhere visible of a disposition on part of a majority of the legislature to wipe out of existence thus summarily an act from which they had hoped to eventually build up a great institution devoted to the interests of the laboring people. H. C. Caldwell, one of the ablest and most influential members of the House, led the attack on the College. It was clearly evident to the friends of the College that a majority of the House was disposed to vote for the bill of repeal. Time must be gained, or all their hopes were likely to be blasted. The chairman of the Committee on Agriculture [Mr. Gue] arose and moved that the bill be laid upon the table for the present, as its opponents were not quite ready to act upon it. The motion seemed reasonable, and prevailed. About two weeks later an effort was made to take the bill from the table, but the friends of the College were not ready yet, and raised the point "that where objection was made, it required a two-thirds vote to call the bill up." The speaker sustained the point, and as the friends of the College never got ready during the session to take up the bill, and as its opponents were not able to get a two-thirds vote, it has rested there in quietness from that date to this.

The friends of the College, well satisfied that they had barely saved their embryo institution from destruction, made no effort during the remainder of the session to procure an appropriation for the erection of a building, but decided to wait for a more auspicious occasion.

Before the assembling of the next legislature the great rebellion had convulsed the whole country, and the entire energies and resources of the loyal states were required to preserve our government from destruction. All thought of asking aid of the state was postponed, and the trustees and friends of the College were content to wait for the return of peace.

The fall of 1861 Mr. Gue was elected senator from Scott County. The Ninth General Assembly convened January 13, 1862. Mr. Gue was appointed second on the Committee on Agriculture, chairman of the Committee on Printing and to membership on the Public Buildings Committee. In the Tenth General Assembly, which convened January 11, 1864, he was

chairman of the Committee on Credentials, and in the standing committees he was second on the Committee on Agriculture, had membership on Committee on Claims, was on the Committee on Manufactures, was chairman of the Committee on Printing and chairman of the Committee on Senatorial and Representative Districts.

At the opening of the Tenth General Assembly he introduced on January 12 Senate File No. 1, a bill for an act to repeal an act passed in the extra session of the previous General Assembly, approved September 11, 1862, which provided better protection to the southern border of the state. It provided for organizing a volunteer military company in Wapello County and in each of the counties bordering the state of Missouri, organizing them into companies, battalions and a regiment, and was subject to call at any time. The bill introduced by Mr. Gue repealing the act of September, 1862, was promptly passed by both houses.

This was in an era of the building of canals. On January 19 Senator Gue introduced a concurrent resolution requesting the state's representatives and senators in Congress to use their influence to secure the construction of canals so as to make navigable connections in the shortest way between New York City and the Mississippi River. This resolution amended by additions was passed during the session.

On January 25 Senator Gue introduced a bill for an act to prohibit the circulation of foreign bank bills in this state, and of bills issued in other states, territories and foreign countries, except the issues of the national bank and currency issued by authority of Congress. After some modification it was passed.

During the session of the Tenth General Assembly the State Agricultural College and Farm was again in peril. Nearly two years earlier, July, 1862, Congress appropriated to the several loyal states in the Union, for agricultural colleges, 30,000 acres of land for each senator and representative each such state had in Congress. The amount under this grant to Iowa was 240,000 acres. This has been known as the Morrill land grant, so called because of the name of the author of the measure.⁹

At the Extra Session of the Ninth General Assembly on Sep-

⁹"Brief History of the College," *op. cit.*, p. 11.

tember 8, 1862, Senator George W. McCrary of Lee County introduced a joint resolution accepting the grant made to the state. The resolution was passed and approved by the governor September 11. The measure provided that a commissioner appointed by the governor should select the lands, and report his selections to the governor who should lay the list of lands before the Board of Trustees of the Iowa State Agricultural College and Farm at their first annual meeting thereafter for their approval and sanction.¹⁰ Peter Melendy, one of the members of the Board of Trustees, was appointed commissioner.

On January 23, 1864, Senator Coker F. Clarkson of Grundy County, chairman of the Committee on Apriculture, presented a memorial from the Board of Trustees of the State Agricultural College and Farm praying that the 240,000-acre grant be placed under control of the Board for use of the Agricultural College, and asking for an appropriation to erect buildings. It was referred to the Committee on Public Buildings.¹¹

On January 25 the House messaged over to the Senate a concurrent resolution providing for a committee of three members of the House and two of the Senate be appointed to go to Story County and examine the College Farm and report the condition and situation of the same to the General Assembly, and also report an estimate of the amount necessary to erect college buildings. The rule was suspended and the resolution read a first and second time, and Senator Clarkson moved to concur. On motion of Senator Roberts the resolution was amended so as to appoint only two from the House and one from the Senate. Senator T. W. Woolson of Henry County offered an amendment that such committee also examine and report whether the State University is not so organized and constituted as to be made the agricultural college required by the conditions of the Agricultural College Land Grant. On roll call this amendment was lost by a vote of 12 for to 29 against. The resolution then passed by a vote of 33 for to 7 against, and the resolution as amended was concurred in.¹² Senator Gue was appointed as the Senate member of this committee and Representative John Russell of Jones County and Charles Paulk of Allamakee County for the House.

¹⁰*Acts of Ninth G. A., Ex. Ses.*, Ch. 26.

¹¹*Senate Journal, Tenth G. A.*, p. 115.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 129-30.

On January 29 Representative A. B. F. Hildreth introduced a bill for an act relating to the branches of learning to be taught in the State University, and further to endow the same. It was laid on the table and ordered printed.¹³ The object of this bill was to endow the University with the 240,000 acres of land given Iowa for agricultural college purposes, or at least a part of it. After reading the bill Mr. Hildreth followed by an extended address as shown by the *Iowa State Register*, which we quote:

Mr. Speaker:—There are certain matters connected with the grant for the promotion of agriculture and the mechanic arts, which cannot be fairly disputed.

The grant is not to any *particular* institution, nor is it for a *single* institution. The purpose of the grant is defined in section 4 of the act of Congress, found on page 71 of the report of the register of the State Land Office, Nov. 16, 1863, and is there declared to be for "the endowment, support and maintenance of *at least* one college," &c. This language not only forbids the construction that *only* one college was intended, but strongly implies the idea that Congress desired more than one. The true construction is, that the matter is left to the sound discretion of the General Assembly acting for the best interests of agriculture, and the mechanic arts in the state.

In order to save the grant to the state, the state must provide, within five years from the acceptance of the grant, at least *not less* than one college, as described in section 4 of the act of Congress. It may be argued that the five years commenced with the date of the act of Congress—July 2, 1862—but this I believe would be a forced construction. A more reasonable construction is, that the limitation commences with the date of the acceptance of the grant by the state, Sept. 11, 1862.

No portion of the fund arising from the sale of the lands donated, nor of the interest thereon, can be used, "directly or indirectly, under any pretense whatever, for the purchase, erecting, preservation or repair of any building or buildings." The clause in section 5, paragraph *First* of the act of Congress, permitting ten per cent to be used for purchasing sites or experimental farms does not affect this.

If we intend, as no doubt we all do, to save the grant by and through the Agricultural College, there must be an appropriation sufficient not only for recitation rooms, lecture halls, chapel, &c., but also buildings for the boarding and lodging of students and the residences of professors. There is no village near the Agricultural College Farm, in Story County, where students and professors could board—no buildings which they could rent—and the founding of a naked college building, without the other buildings necessary to make it useful, would be neither a compliance with the terms of the grant nor consistent with the good faith or good name of the state.

¹³*House Journal, Tenth G. A., p. 148.*

The third paragraph of section 5 of the act of Congress, refers to section 4 of the same act, and the language there used contemplates not merely the erection of a college building to remain idle for the want of other necessary buildings, but a *living, acting* institution, accomplishing the purposes contemplated by the act. Not only must the state erect these buildings, but if by that time the interest on the proceeds of the sales of the lands, to that time sold, will not support such an institution, the state must supply the deficiency. To entitle the state to the benefit of the grant, she must supply not only the shell but the kernel of the nut.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if the General Assembly is prepared to make sufficient appropriations to erect the necessary buildings, and to support and maintain the institution until the interest on the proceeds of the sales of the lands will support and maintain it, then the grant can be saved in that way. But if the General Assembly will not appropriate the necessary moneys then the grant must be lost, or must be saved in some other way.

Sir, it can be saved by passing a bill similar to the one which I have prepared and submitted, requiring the State University to teach the branches mentioned in the grant. Indeed, sir, would it not be well—would it not be wisdom—to do this, even if the state were now prepared to erect the necessary buildings on the College Farm?

The grant for Agricultural College purposes consists of about 200,000 acres—that of the University of about 46,000 acres, (72 townships), since increased by the unsold saline lands. Even if a portion of the grant were given to the University, the endowment of the Agricultural College would be much the larger one; so that there would be left an ample endowment for the College.

The Agricultural College has in bonds and lands, aside from the farm and its improvements, over \$25,000. The University is in successful operation, as an institution of the state; one of the most important and useful of its institutions; and the work now being done there is as important to the interests of the state as that being done in any other institution. Its funds are now invested at ten per cent, but already it is so that, as the principal of the fund is paid in, it cannot be re-loaned at that rate of interest. The rate must go down, and as it goes down the income of the institution goes down; and that too as the demands upon the institution are increasing by reason of the increasing numbers of those seeking admission into the institution. Would it not then be wise to keep up and sustain the now successfully operating institution, thereby saving the Agricultural College Grant to the state, and thereby giving time to organize upon a healthful basis the new institution, and leaving an ample endowment for both.

In conclusion, I beg to say, there should not, and I trust there will not be any strife or contention between these two institutions. Both are needed—both will aid largely to advance the best interests of the state. There is enough for both, and it is wise so to manage the fund

as not to cripple either, and at the same time properly care for the public interest.¹⁴

Suel Foster, the earliest and most prolific writer in the public press for an agricultural college in Iowa, a member from the first of the Board of Trustees of the Iowa Agricultural College and Farm, and president of the board at this time wrote a letter to the *State Register*, portions of which we quote:

We are not a little surprised at the course of the friends of the University in proposing to share the benefits of the donation by Congress in "An act donating public lands to the states and territories, which may provide colleges for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts." It is very evident from the title of the act, from the law itself, and from the spirit and intent of the law, that it was intended for just such institutions as our state has already commenced to establish under the name of an Agricultural College. The state accepted the lands as above donated by Congress, and authorized the trustees of the Agricultural College to attend to the selection of the same, with a full understanding and provision of both the law of Congress and of the state, that the lands should be for a permanent endowment of the Agricultural College.

Nay, more, the friends and trustees of the Agricultural College petitioned Congress from time to time for this same grant of lands, corresponded with the friends and supporters of these particular institutions in distant states, and with our senator, Mr. Harlan, chairman of the Committee on Public Lands, who had charge of this particular bill, suggesting important amendments to him, by which today Iowa has double the quantity of these lands we should have had by the original bill. Thus have some of us labored arduously for ten years, with our plans and hopes now maturing for the establishment and enjoyment of our favorite branch of education, namely, *educated labor*, securing health, industry and economy. And now to divide with the State University, we shall feel that we have been very much wronged, and that our hopes and our encouragement will be greatly baffled.

We think it would have been better for the trustees of the University to have consulted the Agricultural College trustees on so important a matter.

We appeal in most earnest terms to the friends of agricultural education to decide at this session of the legislature whether or not the great interest of our state, the men engaged therein, are worthy of a higher education than the "common schools." If not, let us back out, and consider that interest, and the trustees of that institution as undeserving and not worthy of consultation, as they have been treated in this matter by the proposition of the University men, to divert that

¹⁴*Iowa State Register* (Weekly), Feb. 3, 1864, p. 2, c. 4.

sacred trust to another institution. When shall we be able to take our place in the national government, in state, in society, in education, if we do not now stand manfully and boldly for our rights? How discouraging after so many years of most ardent and faithful attention to this cherished hope of educated and elevated labor, with noble encouragement by our nation, and so little by our own state!¹⁵

The Reverend O. M. Spencer, president of the State University, contributed to the public discussion of the subject by writing an extended letter to the *State Register*, from which we quote the following portions:

In your issue of February 5th, I notice an article headed, "State University vs. Agricultural College," in which an attempt is made to place these two institutions in an attitude of hostility, as the above caption would clearly indicate. As a friend of both, and believing, as I do, that their interests are identical, I sincerely deprecate any effort on the part of the friends of either, by an appeal to local prejudices, professional jealousies, or party animosities, to separate those who ought to be on terms of friendly intercourse.

There are two sides to this as to every other question. Mr. Foster has stated one side, allow me to state the other.

I. The friends of the Agricultural College claim that the lands donated by Congress for the establishment of one or more agricultural colleges, belong to the trustees of that institution, and that the friends of the University do them injustice by seeking to divert a portion of that appropriation.

The simple truth seems to be this: These lands were donated by Congress to the state for a specific purpose. They now belong to the state, and not to any particular institution. The state may give them to whom she will, provided the conditions of the grant are complied with. The legislature alone is competent to decide this question, and when that decision shall have been made, whatever it may be, no one will acquiesce more cheerfully than myself. Should the General Assembly see proper to donate a portion of these lands to the State University on condition that it shall establish an agricultural department, the act would not be without its precedents. Rhode Island has donated the whole of her agricultural land grant to Brown University, simply on the above condition. Connecticut has pursued a similar course towards Yale; whilst New York, with one or more agricultural colleges in operation, has donated her entire grant to the Peoples' College—a literary institution with an agricultural department.

President Spencer then proceeds to argue that if the University should add a college of agriculture to its liberal arts college, its medical college, and other colleges or departments it would be complying with the terms of the land grant, and would

¹⁵*Ibid.* (Daily), Feb. 5, 1864, p. 2, c. 2.

be doing the legitimate work of a university. He then calls attention to the 46,000 acres Congress had given the University a few years before, and the recent grant of over 200,000 acres to aid agricultural education, and says:

But this is not all. The University was expected to establish at least four different departments or colleges, viz: The Collegiate, Medical, Law and Theological Departments, whereas the Agricultural College is only expected to establish a single department. Now if these lands were designed to endow a single institution, we are forced to the improbable conclusion that the general government intended that the State University with one fifth of the means of the Agricultural College should establish four times as many departments.

The truth is that the State University not only needs an additional building, but must have additional endowment, or its career of usefulness and prosperity will be arrested, and that too, at no distant day.

We sincerely hope that our senators and representatives, legislating not for this or that particular locality, but for the interests of the state at large, and for all time to come, will give this subject their most candid consideration, and then, that they will make such a disposition of this magnificent grant as, in their better judgment, will best subserve the interests of education in this great and growing commonwealth.¹⁶

On February 16 Senator Gue reported at length the result of the visit of the joint committee to the Agricultural Farm in which the committee was in agreement on the fine possibilities of the location and the good progress of the improvements.¹⁷

The controversy between the friends of the University and of the Agricultural College and Farm culminated in a series of public discussions held for several evenings in the hall of the House of Representatives in which Governor Kirkwood, who had a few weeks before retired from four years as governor, and was a resident of Iowa City, with the help of others spoke ably in favor of the diversion of the land grant, or at least a portion of it, to the University, while Senator Gue, and Representatives George M. Maxwell of Story County, John Russell of Jones County, Hugh M. Thompson of Scott County and others advocated letting it remain as already placed with the Agricultural College and Farm already in process of development.¹⁸

¹⁶*Ibid.*, Feb. 12, 1864, p. 2, c. 1, 2.

¹⁷*Senate Journal, Tenth G. A.*, pp. 271-79.

¹⁸"Brief History of the College," *op. cit.*, p. 14.

Before the end of the session all lands granted to the state of Iowa by Congress for the benefit of agricultural colleges by act approved July 2, 1862, were granted to the Iowa State Agricultural College situated on the Agricultural Farm in Story County, Iowa. The Board of Trustees were given authority to sell, or lease for a term of ten or more years any of the lands, the proceeds to go to the Agricultural College.²⁰

The plan of leasing those portions of the lands of the grant that were remote from railroads and would not come into the market for some years, was devised by Governor Kirkwood and Senators B. F. Gue and C. F. Clarkson, and was incorporated into a bill which became a law, and which produced remarkable results of support for the College.²¹

There was also appropriated \$20,000 to aid in erecting a permanent building for the College, the entire cost of which was not to exceed \$50,000.²²

Mr. Gue became interested in entering newspaper work in Fort Dodge early in 1864. In the *Daily State Register* of Des Moines of February 21, 1864, appeared a clipping from the *Davenport Gazette* concerning Mr. Gue. Edward Russell was the editor of the *Gazette* at this time, and doubtless wrote the article, which is as follows:

We learn that our worthy senator, Hon. B. F. Gue, has purchased the *Fort Dodge Republican*, and will probably assume the editorial control of that journal sometime in May next. We should be heartily glad of this if friend Gue could edit his paper and still remain a citizen of Scott County; and even now, notwithstanding our regret at the prospect of losing a gentleman who has by his industry, energy, and integrity, and by earnest activity in every good word and work won the esteem of his fellow citizens throughout the county, we are compelled to congratulate the people of Fort Dodge and the press of the state on the accession to the editorial ranks of a gentleman so well fitted to wield an earnest pen and voice in behalf of loyalty and freedom as is Mr. Gue. We bespeak for him the cordial support in his new position, when he enters upon it, that we know he will well deserve. His entrance upon editorial life will be a loss to Scott County, but a gain to Webster County and the state at large.—*Davenport Gazette*.

Mr. Gue removed to Fort Dodge, and on May 25, 1864, it was announced in the *Fort Dodge Republican* that he had purchased

²⁰*Acts of the Tenth G. A.*, Ch. 117.

²¹"Brief History of the College," *op. cit.*, p. 14.

²²*Acts of the Tenth G. A.*, Ch. 62.

George D. Ingersoll's interests in that paper, and that he with A. K. Welles would be the publishers and Mr. Gue the editor. In his salutatory he said:

"We shall devote a large share of our paper to the general and local interests of the Upper Des Moines Valley and Northwestern Iowa. We trust that our subscribers will write for the columns of the *Republican* everything of general interest occurring in any of the northwestern counties of the state. Articles descriptive of the country, its peculiarities, resources, improvements, and local news from all parts will be cheerfully published." Subscriptions and advertising were solicited from not only Webster County but from the counties north and west of there. The paper was to be devoted to general news and local news, and one column each week was to be given to agriculture.

At this time Mr. Gue had had no experience as a newspaper man, although he had frequently written articles for the press, and was a fluent public speaker. His experience in four general assemblies and his active participation in handling many of the important subjects there considered and legislated on, had given him a large acquaintance with public measures and public men.

As was the custom in those days rather scarce attention was given to purely local news. The great national affairs of the closing era of the Rebellion was gripping attention. Mr. Gue was intensely loyal to the Union cause and very critical of the Democrat party of that day if they wavered in the least in their loyalty. His paper at this time contained many articles on prospective railroads, and on the Des Moines River Land Grant. During the summer of 1864 and some of the following summers the clouds of grasshoppers was a frequent theme in his paper, and what to do about them was a helpless question.

In his issue of October 17, 1864, hardly five months after his advent on the *Republican*, he announced he had purchased the interest of A. K. Welles in the *Republican* and had discontinued its publication, had founded the *Iowa North West*, and had taken as a partner Nelson M. Page, a practical printer. B. F. Gue & Co. were announced as publishers. An enlargement to seven columns was made. However, by the following February 21 it appears the partnership with Mr. Page must have ended, for the statement "Published by B. F. Gue" began

running at the top of the first column of the first page. The only other change in this announcement during his ownership of the paper was on July 1, 1868, when the heading was changed to "B. F. Gue, editor and proprietor," which he practically was from the time he became its editor.

On April 26, 1865, less than a year after Mr. Gue came to Fort Dodge, he was appointed postmaster there.²³ On the following June 14 he was nominated by the Republican party at its State Convention for lieutenant governor.²⁴ Soon thereafter he resigned as postmaster, and was followed in that position by his brother, D. J. Gue. Those who contended with B. F. Gue for the nomination of lieutenant governor were Colonel James B. Weaver of Davis County and George W. McCrary of Lee County, able men who achieved great and honorable distinction later. William M. Stone was renominated for governor at this same convention. In the political campaign that followed Governor Stone and Mr. Gue aided by many others, presented their cause at public meetings over most of the state. General Thomas H. Benton of Pottawattamie County was the Democratic nominee for governor and Colonel S. G. Van Anda of Delaware County for lieutenant governor. The Republican ticket was successful, Stone receiving a majority of 16,375, and Gue 19,370.²⁵

His office of lieutenant governor made Mr. Gue presiding officer of the Senate, a position he was well qualified to fill. This was the Eleventh General Assembly and it convened January 8, 1866. It was the first session after the close of the Civil War and many questions came before it which naturally followed that great struggle, such as ratifying the amendment to the United States Constitution prohibiting slavery, granting the right of suffrage to Negroes, and many questions relating to Union soldiers returned home and returning. The Soldiers Orphans Home was officially recognized and established. Before the close of the session Mr. Gue was elected as one of the Board of Trustees of the Agricultural College and Farm, which was now composed of one member from each of the twelve judicial districts, as shown in an article from the *Iowa North West* as follows:

²³*U. S. Official Register*, 1865, p. 101.

²⁴*Iowa North West*, Ft. Dodge, June 20, 1865, p. 2, c. 4-5.

²⁵*Manual of Iowa Politics*, by H. S. Fairall, pp. 70-72.

THE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

This institution has received proper consideration at the hands of the legislature, during the recent session. The law regulating the sale of the college lands was amended, requiring the valuation to be increased 50 per cent over the appraisalment made by the trustees last season. The lands embraced in this large grant (about 180,000 acres remaining now unsold) will be offered for sale, and leased, on very reasonable terms during the present year by the trustees. An appropriation of \$91,000 was made for the purpose of completing a College building.

The following persons were chosen by the legislature, trustees for the term of two and four years:

First District, J. Wilson Williams, of Des Moines; Second District, Dr. J. D. Wright, of Lucas; Third District, R. O. Stevenson, of Adams; Fourth District, J. C. Cusey, of Humboldt; Fifth District, T. K. Brooks, of Polk; Sixth District, T. A. Morgan, of Keokuk; Seventh District, H. M. Thompson, of Scott; Eighth District, John Russell, of Jones; Ninth District, Peter Melendy, of Black Hawk; Tenth District, John Garber, of Clayton; Eleventh District, B. F. Gue, of Webster; Twelfth District, R. W. Humphrey, of Floyd.²⁶

The terms of office for these trustees began May 1, 1866, and Mr. Gue's term was for four years. He is anticipating the big task before the new board, as witness the following article in his newspaper:

MEETING OF THE COLLEGE BOARD

The trustees of the State Agricultural College meet at Des Moines on Thursday, 3d of May, for the purpose of making arrangements for completing the College Building, and bringing the remainder of the lands into market. The amount of money placed at their disposal by the late legislature for the completion of the College, is \$91,000. With this amount, it is believed that the building can be finished ready for occupation by the students and professors. The lands will undoubtedly be immediately brought into market, affording a much better chance for obtaining cheap lands than is now offered.

The trustees have a work of great magnitude upon their hands, in the judicious expenditure of this \$91,000 and the disposal of nearly 180,000 acres of land. Every member should be present, and assist by his counsel in discharging these responsible trusts for the best interest of the people and the College.²⁷

When the board met Mr. Gue was chosen president of the board, also president of the Executive Committee, and president of the Committee on Organization and Professors.

²⁶*Iowa North West*, Apr. 10, 1866, p. 2, c. 2.

²⁷*Ibid.*, Apr. 24, 1866, p. 2, c. 3.

Evidently one of the desires of this Board of Trustees of the Agricultural College was to get into the market more of the lands of the Federal Grant as shown by this article from Mr. Gue's newspaper:

THE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE LANDS

The lands embraced in the College Grant, which were selected in Northwestern Iowa about three years ago, are again brought into market. There is remaining unsold at this time more than 150,000 acres, some of which are among the best prairie lands in the state. These lands were last year first opened to purchase or lease, and so great was the demand for them that in the space of about five months over 50,000 acres were taken.

These lands now offer great inducements to those who want cheap homes. They have been appraised at prices ranging from \$3.25 to \$4.00 per acre; but the purchase money need not be paid under nine years from the time of selection. The purchaser or lessee can by paying one year's interest on the appraised value of the tract he selects, settle upon it and hold and improve it for nine years, free from taxation, and is only required to pay the interest annually in advance.²⁸

For the next year or two Mr. Gue's time was largely devoted to the Agricultural College. To obtain more information on organizing and selecting a faculty, as chairman of the Committee on Organizing, he made several trips to various educational institutions, especially those that were taking advantage of the land grant (Morrill Law), and at the same time kept a lookout for faculty material. During some of those trips he contributed editorial correspondence to the *Iowa North West* that was descriptive of the sections as well as of the institutions visited. In the *North West* of November 28, 1866, is a letter describing his trip to Grinnell College, and on south to St. Louis and through southern Illinois.

In the issue of September 25, 1867, appears this statement:

Before another issue of the *North West* I shall be off for the State Fair, State Editorial Convention, and a two-months' tour through the Eastern States. My correspondents everywhere will please take notice and wait patiently for attention to their favors coming in my absence. Mr. N. M. Page will have entire charge of the *North West* office during my stay.

B. F. Gue.

On November 6, 1867, he started an editorial correspondence from New Haven and Yale University, and Cornell University

²⁸*Ibid.*, June 6, 1866, p. 2, c. 1.

at Ithaca, which appeared in issues of November 27 and December 18. He returned home as stated in the December 18 issue.

In their quest for a president they discovered Adonijah S. Welch, a native of Connecticut, who had had a brilliant career in Michigan as an educator and had been a member of the Board of Trustees of the new Agricultural College in Michigan. He was a field officer in the Second Michigan Volunteer Cavalry. On account of his health he removed to Florida in 1865 where he established a lumber mill and engaged in orange growing. He became chairman of the Republican State Committee in 1868. When Florida was readmitted to representation he was elected a United States senator and served from June 25, 1868, to March 3, 1869.

In the March 25, 1868, issue of the *North West* it is stated Mr. Gue and Mr. Page had left a week before for Chicago and left Mr. Pomeroy in charge of the editorial department and that they expected the editor and foreman home that evening. In the April 8 issue appeared an editorial letter written at Detroit descriptive of a visit to the Michigan Agricultural College; that they learned more about Professor Welch, and that it was planned to recommend him for president of the College. On this trip Mr. Gue visited Antioch and Oberlin colleges. On April 22 the *North West* has a letter telling of Mr. Gue's visit to the new Agricultural College at Manhattan, Kansas.

Professor A. S. Welch, having accepted in 1868 the presidency of the Iowa Agricultural College, visited Ames in that year, devised a course of study and consulted with the officials of the Board of Trustees as to the improvements being made, and returned to the East to finish his term in the Senate.²⁹

The *North West*, in its issue of August 19, 1868, carried a three column article written from Ames and dated August 18 stating the Iowa State Agricultural College would open October 21, 1868, that the building would be ready, that Professor Welch had been selected for president and had accepted the appointment, gave the names of others of the faculty, and gave the courses of study and conditions of admission. It was signed by B. F. Gue, president of the Board of Trustees. In its issue

²⁹*History of Iowa*, Gue, Vol. IV, p. 111; *Natl. Cyclop. Am. Biog.*, Vol. XII, p. 291; *Biographical Directory Am. Congress*, p. 1679.

of November 19 the *North West* in a two-column article says the college opened October 21, that sixty-five students were present, that only preparatory courses would be given until the formal opening in the spring. The advantages of the school are enlarged upon and set off to advantage.

In the issue of the *North West* of December 17, 1868, appears the following article published in the *Chicago Journal* of a few days before:

We received a call yesterday from A. S. Welch, president elect of this institution, now United States senator from Florida. He was on his way to Washington to resume his senatorial duties, having spent the vacation in the discharge of his presidential duties. He reports the College as having opened most auspiciously. On the 21st of last month the institution was opened. Sixty-one students were admitted—fifty-four young men and seven young ladies. Others have since come in, and there are now about one hundred in all. The present term, which will close on the seventh of January, is only fragmentary. The first regular year will begin on the third Wednesday in March. After this year it will commence the first Wednesday in March. This change is to give the president elect time to finish his duties at Washington. We may remark, in passing, that Senator Welch was offered the long, or six years' term, but preferred the short, because he wished to take hold of this educational enterprise.

For fidelity to the spirit and the letter of the grant, the founders, trustees and President of the Iowa Agricultural College deserve special praise. It augurs well for the success of the institution.—*Chicago Journal*.

The formal opening occurred March 17, 1869. Of it we quote from the *North West*:

THE COLLEGE DEDICATION

The occasion of the formal opening of the first regular term of the Iowa Agricultural College, on Wednesday the 17th, was one long to be remembered by its friends.

Not less than 1200 persons were in attendance from every part of the state. The ceremonies were appropriate and impressive, and were participated in by the highest officials in the state. Excellent addresses were delivered by Governor Merrill, Lieutenant Governor Scott, Hon. John Russell, speaker of the House, Hon. A. S. Welch, president of the College, Dr. N. S. Townsend, professor of agriculture, and an interesting poem by Professor Parker of Grinnell College.

We had no time to take notes, but publish in another place, a more extended report of the exercises, from the Montana [Boone] *Standard*. Among the notable men present, in addition to those above mentioned,

were Judge Shane, Judge Woodbury, Judge Whiting, Hon. G. W. Bassett, John Cleghorn, E. N. Chapin, Senator Mitchell, and others that we do not now remember. The following representatives of the press were in attendance: Stewart, of the *Chicago Post* and *Davenport Gazette*, Dr. Sprague of the *Homestead* and *State Register*, Raguet of the *Boone Co. Democrat*, Gallup, of the *Montana [Boone] Standard*, Walker, of the *Statesman*, McAllister, of the *Clinton Herald*, Frost, of the *Belle Plaine Union*, True, of the *Tama Republican*, and Ballou, of the *Nevada Aegis*.

The popularity of the College can best be judged from the fact that it was filled to its utmost capacity on the first day of the term, and probably not less than one hundred applicants will be unable to secure admission. About thirty of the students out of the 150 are young ladies.³⁰

Mr. Gue's time and attention were largely taken by his duties on the Board of Trustees of the Agricultural College from the time of his appointment in May, 1866, until the end of his term, May, 1870, somewhat to the disadvantage of his newspaper. It was necessary for him to leave his editing and printing business in charge of his hired help during his frequent and sometimes prolonged absences. He was a great man to attend conventions. Very few Republican political conventions were held in the state, or in his district, that he did not attend and take part. The same was true as to editorial conventions, many of them with editorial excursions.

It is interesting to note that at the Republican State Convention of June 19, 1867, which was near the time of the expiration of his term as lieutenant governor, he was a delegate from Webster County, attended and was put on important committees and took an active part in the proceedings, but was not a candidate for renomination, nor for governor. Colonel Samuel Merrill was nominated for governor, and Colonel John Scott for lieutenant governor. Mr. Gue was then in the midst of his greatest activities on the Board of Trustees of the College.

The *North West* kept on thriving, regardless of the partial neglect of its editor and publisher. It had a large amount of legal advertising, including delinquent tax sales from Webster, Pocahontas, Kossuth and Humboldt counties. This was in 1864 when those counties had no newspapers. Then came the publication of many of the laws of Iowa as enacted by the General

³⁰*Iowa North West*, Mch. 25, 1869, p. 4, c. 3.

Assembly in 1866, in 1868, and in 1870. An attempt was made in December, 1864, by Mr. Gue to run in each issue an agricultural column. In the earlier ones clippings from agricultural journals constituted most of the matter in that column. In June, 1866, it dropped out. In November, 1867, it started again but dropped out in February, 1868. In July, 1868, he started a Farm, Orchard and Garden page which had some merit, but was dropped in May, 1869. Political subjects, state and national, were much noticed and frequently treated editorially. Political news from over Iowa was given considerable attention during the seven years. It was evident where the editor's chief interests were—the Agricultural College, and state politics. Prospective railroads was a frequently recurring theme.

During each legislative session a "Legislative Letter" was run, giving a good summary of the proceedings. The River Land Grant and the grasshoppers each summer, were frequent subjects treated. Running through several months in 1866 and 1867 was a series of articles, "Historical Sketches of Northwestern Iowa," by Major William Williams. April 29, 1868, contained an article urging the planting of more trees on the prairie farms being opened up.

A bitter editorial utterly condemning Senator Grimes on his position on President Johnson's impeachment appeared on May 20, 1868. On July 1, 1868, the paper was changed from a seven-column, four-page, to a six-column, eight-page paper, much to its advantage. Advertising was gaining and more evidences of the editor's presence were apparent. His term on the Board of Trustees of the College is nearing its close. January 21, 1869, carries a full report of a recent meeting of the State Horticultural Society at Des Moines. May 20, 1869, tells of a big celebration because of the completion of laying a railroad track into Fort Dodge. Much interest over the plans for building a line to Mankato, Minnesota, was evident at this time. On January 13, 1870, appears a "Complete History of the Cardiff Giant Hoax," followed a few weeks later by additional articles on the same subject.

In 1870 increased space was devoted to railroad projects. August 18, 1870, the *North West* has a party in honor of the completion and occupancy of a new building for the paper. Speeches of congratulation were delivered.

Various news items appear from time to time in the columns of the *North West* along this period on the establishment of new newspapers in Iowa, and on the changes of newspaper men from one place to another. March 9, 1871, tells of the removal of the U. S. land office from Fort Dodge to Des Moines. On March 23, 1871, appears an extended article on the State Agricultural College, describing its conditions and growth, courses of study, and praising its work. June 8, 1871, tells of the editor gone on another editorial excursion, this time to St. Paul, Duluth and other northern points. A list of about 150 editors who were in the company is given. Before going on this excursion Mr. Gue published in his paper an editorial strongly favoring the nomination of C. C. Carpenter, his fellow-townsmen, for governor.

The August 24, 1871, issue tells of the sale of the *North West* to G. W. Chapman of Iowa Falls, and contains Mr. Gue's good-bye to his readers. He reviews the progress of Fort Dodge and Northwest Iowa in the seven years, thanks those who helped him make his paper a success, thanks the brethren of the press who have so generally treated him kindly, but gives no reason for quitting so good and promising a field.

In 1872 Mr. Gue removed to Des Moines. William Duane Wilson had been for some three years editor and publisher of the *Iowa Homestead and Western Farm Journal*. In its issue of July 12, 1872, a statement is made that the publisher now becomes The Homestead Company, and B. F. Gue becomes a part owner and the managing editor. Mr. Wilson, however, remained as editor of the Patrons of Husbandry department, and would have more time to devote to organizing granges.

Mr. Gue's article in the same issue as he assumes his editorial duties alludes to the change of ownership of the Homestead having passed to the Homestead Company. He tells how they plan to enlarge the paper securing "the services of several able and experienced writers on practical agriculture, stock-breeding, wool-growing, forestry, fruit and floral culture, horticulture, beekeeping, architecture, road-making and bridge-building, hedges, fencing, farm machinery, farm management, industrial education, domestic economy and other subjects of interest." He elaborates his plans much further showing he

hopes to make the *Homestead* one of the first agricultural journals of the country.

Mr. Gue followed his ambitious plans and soon had several departments in the *Homestead*, Farm, Stock, Horticulture, Agriculture, Bees, Pomology, Dairy, Iowa Agricultural College and the Patrons of Husbandry departments. He also had a column or two every week of political news and notes from over the state. By September 18 the paper was enlarged from five to six columns, and the columns lengthened from seventeen and a half to twenty inches. The paper was carrying more good reading matter than before. Then in the issue of November 8, 1872, without announcement the words "B. F. Gue, Managing Editor," are omitted from their accustomed place at the head of the column. No comment, no other name supplied. "Published by the Homestead Company" continued in its accustomed place.

There is in the manuscript division of the Historical, Memorial and Art Department a letter from Mr. Gue to his friend, Dr. W. R. Smith of Sioux City, dated at Des Moines, November 20, 1872, saying that matters had taken such a turn there that he was obliged to relinquish his position on the *Homestead*, and that he had sold his interest in it, that he was out of business in an expensive place to live, and that his means were tied up for two years. He said there was a vacancy in Des Moines in the Pension agency [for the Iowa-Nebraska district] caused by the death of Stewart Goodrell and that he had made application for the position. He said that Congressmen Frank W. Palmer and Jackson Orr had the naming of the appointee in their hands, and he asks Dr. Smith if he would be willing to write to Captain Orr in his behalf, and ask George H. Wright to join if he is willing to do it. He received the appointment from President Grant and entered on his duties before the end of the year, was reappointed four years later and served the full eight years, giving his entire time to the duties of the office.³¹

On retiring from the pension office in 1880 he again became editor of the *Homestead* and continued to be until November 9, 1883, when he was followed by Henry Wallace of Winterset.

In the fall of 1885 Norman Boardman, a former senator from Clinton County, suggested to several, among others to Mr. Gue,

³¹*History of Iowa*, Gue, Vol. IV, p. 111.

that members of the earlier general assemblies ought to have a reunion. Mr. Gue then consulted several and joined with them in issuing a call, so the first session of what turned out to be the Pioneer Lawmakers of Iowa met in Foster's Opera House, Des Moines, February 24, 1886. The meeting was called to order by Mr. Gue and the association organized. Eighty-seven former members were present. Mr. Gue aided in securing and having published many of the manuscripts of addresses made in the early meetings of this association, thus securing valuable historical material.

In 1892 as the Historical Department was getting fairly started the Curator, Charles Aldrich, appointed Mr. Gue as his assistant and secretary.³² Mr. Gue remained in this service about three years, giving valuable assistance to Mr. Aldrich in making the beginnings of the collection of Iowa historical materials, including the great collection of pioneer Iowa newspapers.

As we have said Mr. Gue was of Quaker parentage, and he was greatly influenced by their doctrines and principles, especially as to their opposition to slavery. His residence in the first several years of his life in Iowa in the west part of Scott County not far from Springdale, Cedar County, his knowledge of John Brown's stay there, his association with such men as Ed Wright, J. W. Cattell, William P. Wolf, Laurie Tatum and other kindred spirits of that locality doubtless much influenced him and also gave him an easier entrance into public life. As to his religious views, in his mature years he became a member of the Unitarian church and was one of the founders of the Unitarian church of Des Moines, and of the Unitarian Association in Iowa.

For many years during the later period of his life he had been assembling material with the purpose of writing a history of Iowa. After ending his work on the *Homestead* in 1883 he began to devote more time to that subject. Age was overtaking him before he completed the work. He had to gather his material from many sources. No one had preceded him in writing a general history of the state. He himself had been an active force for twenty-five years and was an observer both before and

³²ANNALS OF IOWA, Vol. I, p. 58.

after that period. It is said he devoted seventeen years of labor to the work. It was finally published in the early part of 1904 in four volumes of from 300 to 500 pages each. It met with general approval, and remains today a valuable compendium of the territorial and early portion of our state's history. Other histories of Iowa have since been written that are more fascinating, but none has appeared that has covered the facts of that period so completely. Students of those days for many years to come will be putting themselves under obligations to this industrious early Iowa historian.

Mr. Gue's death occurred suddenly on June 1, 1904. We quote from the *Register and Leader* of June 2:

Mr. Gue had been out driving in attendance upon the funeral of Hon. J. H. Merrill, had put his horse in the stable and was returning home on foot when, at the corner of Ninth and Clark streets, he fell stricken with heart failure. He was carried to his home, his consciousness revived briefly, but soon he relapsed and passed away.

The *Des Moines Daily Capital* on June 2 said of him:

From the funeral of a friend he returned to fall at his own gateway. His last words were those of solicitude for his faithful daughter. Then the end came peacefully, as it was fitting that it should come, to terminate such a career. All Iowa mourns today the passing of an honored citizen.

His friend of many years, Hon. Charles Aldrich, in an interview June 2 said of him:

He was one of the most active and influential, as well as effective members of the legislature. He was not aggressive in the ordinary sense, but he was a powerful force. His devotion to the right, not only in his official capacity, but throughout his whole life in all circumstances, was inflexible; he stood for what he thought was right to the end. This character, this principle, is the thing that distinguished him above all things. His influence always was on the right side—in politics, in morals, in business, in society. If an educational matter was under consideration, his influence was thrown upon the side of the liberal and the expansive and progressive. He was a good talker; he had great nervous force; he was entertaining; withal he instructed. He was well informed and his speeches were popular. He was persistent and capable. He made an excellent presiding officer of the Senate. If one wished what was right in morals, in business, in politics, he never was disappointed in Gue. He was outspoken, fair, and without guile, trickery, finesse or pretense in his politics or his work.³³

³³*Des Moines Register and Leader*, June 2, 1904, p. 7.

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