

presented to the Board of Trustees at the last meeting. That body by a unanimous vote decided that this effort should be made, and the first number is now before the reader.

It was, however, deemed judicious to retain the name, "ANNALS OF IOWA," and accordingly the right to use it was secured from the owner of the copy-right at Iowa City. In reviving the publication it will be our aim not only to fill its pages with the best articles we can obtain upon all topics of Iowa history, but to render it as useful as possible in building up the Department of History now in the first year of its organization in our Capitol. We enter upon this work with much misgiving—with the deepest regret that this work had not been commenced under able and zealous management forty years ago—but with the determination to make our labors as valuable as possible to the State.

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#### ORIGIN OF THE HISTORICAL DEPARTMENT.

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Allusion has elsewhere been made to this subject, but it has seemed to be a very proper thing to present, in the initial number of the new "Annals," a brief history of this work. In the year 1884, Mrs. Aldrich and I presented to the State, through the trustees of the State Library, a simple Autograph Collection, proposing, if it should be placed in cases in the Library, and properly cared for, to make further additions to its contents, as well as to illustrate it with portraits of the celebrities represented, adding also sufficient biographical data. This offer was accepted. In due time a case was made, and later on another, from funds appropriated to furnishing the edifice. But no one else was willing to undertake to arrange the materials in the cases. I was therefore compelled to come to Des Moines and do this work myself, or let the enterprise fall to the ground. We also continued to make additions to the Collection, both by purchase and solicitation. In 1888 the two cases were filled to overflowing, and two more were needed. The Legislature that session put an item in the

general appropriation bill, allowing \$1,000 to be expended for the care and preservation of objects in literature, art and science, which should be presented to the State. Of this amount \$900 were used in building two more cases. The work of collecting went right along, quite at our own expense.

But when the Pioneer Law Makers' Association held their second reunion, in the winter of 1890, the Collection was made the subject of commendatory resolutions, in which the Legislature, then in session, was earnestly requested to sustain the work. A committee from that body visited the two houses and presented the resolutions. As a result of this action a bill was passed by the unanimous vote of both branches of the General Assembly, appropriating \$3,000 for this purpose, with a provision directing the collection of documents, papers, etc., "relating to the earlier days of our Territory and State." Upon its approval I was appointed by the trustees of the State Library to continue the work, with an allowance of \$100 per month, during the years 1890 and '91. I made every effort in my power to increase and strengthen the original collection, as well as to collect data for State history.

At the next meeting of the Pioneer Law Makers' Association this work was made the subject of a further appeal to the State Legislature. Many of the leading newspapers of the State had kindly commended it, urging the founding of a permanent Historical Department in the State House. Governor Larrabee spoke of our work very kindly in his biennial message of 1890, as also did Governor Boies in 1892. As a result of this agitation a bill was introduced in the Senate by Colonel C. H. Gatch, of Polk county, providing for the establishment of a Historical Department, and making the original "Aldrich Collection" a part of the work. This bill passed the Senate by a unanimous vote, and the House by 67 yeas to 14 nays. It also provided for the appointment of a Curator, who should hold his office six years. The three lower southeast rooms in the Capitol, originally designed for the State Historical Society, were set apart for this purpose. The work is placed under the authority of the eight trustees of the Iowa State Library. At a meeting held for the purpose of organizing the

Department, the writer was appointed Curator, and with the approval of the Trustees I appointed Hon. B. F. Gue as my assistant and secretary. The new rooms were opened on the 1st day of July, 1892.

While there have been detentions and delays, arising from the finishing of the new rooms, and the building of the necessary furniture, the business of collecting has steadily progressed, and with results which I believe are wholly satisfactory to the public, as well as to those set in authority over the work. It was predicated upon a small collection which we began more than forty years ago, and continued six years at our own private expense. The only reason in the world why I am engaged in it is, that no one else would do the work. The *Keokuk Gate City* sometime since asserted that when I gave away the Collection, I gave myself with it!

It has always seemed to me that at our Capital the State should build up and fairly maintain a great Historical Museum, wherein should be secured as large collections as practicable in State and National History, Literature, Art, Military Relics and Mementos, Natural History, Geology, Archæology, Numismatics, etc., as it is practical to bring together. Such an institution should be kept growing, for in the language of Prof. G. Browne Goode, "a finished museum is a dead museum." There is apparently no end to the amount of materials which may be readily obtained for this purpose. The great need is a place in which they can be safely kept and conveniently exhibited. Such work has been in progress at the Capitals of Illinois, Wisconsin and Kansas for more than a quarter of a century, and with the heartiest approval of their people. Why not here?

Having, as above stated, become connected with this enterprise, my only ambition is by earnest effort to deserve the approbation of the people of Iowa.

CHARLES ALDRICH.

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Indian tradition says that the plat now covered by the city of Davenport was the site of a large and populous Indian village; that it was one of the oldest of the Indian towns on:

the Mississippi was believed by the red men who lived there when the first white trappers and traders visited them. These traditions were corroborated by Black Hawk, who stated that for many centuries this had been one of the chief villages, as far back as tradition reached.

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### A MONUMENTAL WORK.

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Capt. Frank E. Landers, of Webster City, has become quite well known to people who have transactions at our Capitol involving action by the Executive Council, of which body he has been the clerk for the past five years. As such officer it is his duty not only to arrange all papers and documents to be acted upon by the Council, but to keep the record of its proceedings, check over and record and transmit to the Auditor of State the original copies of claims allowed, and perform innumerable other duties as may be required. This work would seem to be sufficient to fully employ all the powers and capacities of an ordinary man; for in his way he must have to do with questions of revenue and assessments, as well as of all incidental State expenditures. He must know pretty much everything that pertains to the business of the State. In fact, it would seem that such a busy man, such an untiring worker, would have little time to devote to any "hobby." But such a conclusion would be far from correct. "At the close of the day's occupations," the passer-by may see "a light in the window" of his den on the west side of the Capitol, where it often burns until the small hours of the night. This state of things has existed for some years, and his task will most likely occupy these "spare hours" for a year to come.

The special work which is thus occupying the thoughts and so much of the time of Capt. Landers is the preparation of a Historical Geographical Atlas of our entire country. It is known to well-informed people that the boundaries of Colonies, Territories and States, have undergone numberless changes. Boundaries have been thus fixed or changed by grants from.

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