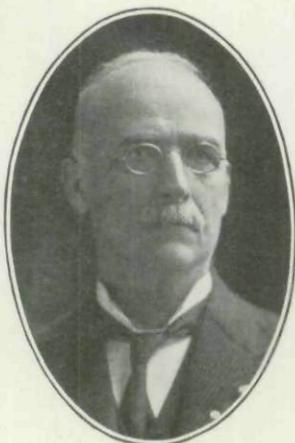


PIONEERS IN IOWA ARCHIVES CONSERVATION



BENJAMIN F. SHAMBAUGH

CHARLES ALDRICH

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ANNALS OF IOWA

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

IOWA ARCHIVES LAW AND ADMINISTRATION.

The ANNALS in this issue devotes most of its space to the subject of public archives because of the special interest in that subject lately awakened throughout the country, and because of a recent change of responsibility in the administration of the archives of Iowa.

The evolution of the plan and provisions for the preservation, custody and use of the archives accumulations of our State has been detailed heretofore in the ANNALS and other publications of our Department. It embraces chapters upon the prevision of Hon. Charles Aldrich, founder of the Department; the investigation, report, and recommendations of Dr. B. F. Shambaugh, Superintendent of the State Historical Society of Iowa, at Iowa City; the reduction of these recommendations through a maze of intricate working details to a working system of receptacles and other devices by Hon. A. H. Davison, Secretary of the Executive Council; the laborious and painstaking initiatory administrative steps wrought out by the common efforts of Mr. Davison and a corps of workers employed by the Executive Council and directed by Mr. John H. Kelley, and of the further effectuation of all these plans and policies by Mr. C. C. Stiles who has been in charge under the Executive Council for nearly eight years.

When, after years of consideration of ways and means for not only saving our State archives from destruction, but also for rendering the materials easy of access, Mr. Aldrich, Dr. Shambaugh, Hon. Horace E. Deemer, of the Board of Trustees of the Historical Department of Iowa, and others, prepared and there was passed by the Thirty-First General Assembly of Iowa, one of the early statutes of American commonwealths upon this subject. It was designed to transfer from the custody of the various State officials to that of

our Board of Trustees, the accumulated materials then more than ten years old to be put in order and filed. On mature consideration the Thirty-Second General Assembly decided that while the vast bulk of the materials was undergoing preparation, it would be better if their actual custody and the oversight of the work should be retained by the Executive Council but that thereafter they should be turned over to our Board of Trustees. So the Executive Council, consisting of the Governor, the Secretary of State, the Auditor of State, and the Treasurer of State, directed that the archives in their respective custody, embracing all the materials originating under territorial and State government, and from scores of now obsolete offices and commissions, be prepared for delivery, and by January 1, 1915, the bulk of the preparatory work had been finished upon the materials of all these offices.

There had been some uncertainty as to the point at which the technical delivery to the Board of Trustees—whether of a single document, a single office, or all the offices—should be tendered or accepted. In January last there came a *subpoena duces tecum* for the reports of a banker for 1909 to 1912, and the court was uncertain on whom, as the proper custodian, service should be made. There were existing and multiplying problems of custodianship. Lines of authority and responsibility seemed indistinct. A resolution was adopted by the Executive Council which tendered to our Board of Trustees co-operation in the simplification of all the difficulties, which was approved by a proper resolution by our Board of Trustees. The curator of the Historical Department was directed to draft a bill to codify existing laws and so amend them as to accord with the resolutions mentioned. Such a bill, published elsewhere in this issue, presented to the legislature by Hon. Herbert C. Ring, member of the House of Representatives, was passed and on July 1, 1915, will become the Iowa law. The future policy with respect to care, custody and use of the public archives of Iowa, will, while the writer is in the office of curator and can have the consent of our Board of Trustees, be based upon the theory that the curator succeeds, in his responsibilities, the officials from whom the materials are derived. No use

will be denied and no authority will be exercised over them other or different from that which the Secretary of State, for instance, might or should have exercised while the materials derived from him were in his possession, except as the statute recently enacted directs. As the reason for their existence is primarily an official one, and although as time passes the volume of official use may diminish and that of other uses may increase, yet however small the one or great the other, they shall forever be reserved as the original records of government rather than exploited as the source materials for the student, and whenever demands justify, we will publish such as have public interest.

THE NEW IOWA ARCHIVES STATUTE.

Be it Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

Section 1. That sections twenty-eight hundred eighty-one-j (2881-j), twenty-eight hundred eighty-one-k (2881-k), twenty-eight hundred eighty-one-l (2881-l), twenty-eight hundred eighty-one-m (2881-m), twenty-eight hundred eighty-one-n (2881-n) of the Supplement to the Code, 1913, be and they are hereby repealed and the following enacted in lieu thereof:

(a) That for the care and preservation of the public archives the curator of the historical department of Iowa is hereby given the custody of all the original public documents, papers, letters, records and other official manuscripts of the state executive and administrative departments, offices or officers, councils, boards, bureaus and commissions, ten years after the date or current use of such public documents, papers, letters, records or other official manuscripts. Provided, that the executive council shall have the power and authority to order the transfer of such records or any part thereof at any time prior to the expiration of the limit of ten years herein before provided or to retain the same in the respective offices beyond such limit according as in the judgment of the council the public interest or convenience may require.

(b) That the several state executive and administrative departments, officers or offices, councils, boards, bureaus and commissions, are hereby authorized and directed to transfer and deliver to the historical department such of the public archives as are designated in Section 1-a, of this act, except such as in the judgment of the executive council should be longer retained in the respective offices.

(c) That the curator of the historical department is hereby authorized and directed to receive such of the public archives and records as are designated in section 1-a of this act and provide

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