

Iowa People and Events . . .

Civil War Interest Continuing

Ninety years ago at Appomattox courthouse, General Grant in a private's uniform and Lee in resplendent gray gripped hands in a farewell to war.

Although four other wars have intervened in the 90-year period, no farewell in Civil war interest seems in sight today. Fascination aroused periodically by books, battlefields or family tradition makes it the nation's most discussed former conflict. Iowa men had a notable part in it.

The struggle was a culmination of decades of controversy and dispute over the slavery issue, and remembered perhaps mostly because it was fought on the soil of neighboring states, constituting a rebellion against the government of the United States. At least twice the seceders sought to capture Washington, the capital of our country.

Book publishers now assign special editors to Civil war works. A recent recording of songs loved by the Southern soldiers—ringing with a Rebel yell authenticated by the late historian Douglas Southall Freeman—became a best seller. The restored house where Grant and Lee met attracted 62,000 visitors last year while Gettysburg drew 12 times that number, the National Geographical Society says.

Millions read how the Union's one surviving soldier, at 108, shoveled snow recently in Duluth, Minnesota; how a Confederate, aged 109, tried out a new wheel chair and took an airplane ride, how another Southern warrior, aged 106, bagged a six-point 140 pound deer.

Evidence of renewed interest in the struggle centers around numerous Civil war round tables. The first sprang up in Chicago 15 years ago. From an original membership of 15 who met in a bookstore "for war talk"

the rolls have swelled enormously and raised a kindred fever in other cities.

Civil war scholars and plain "fans" took to the idea in Milwaukee, New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Richmond and Los Angeles. An interest in the war is the prime requirement for membership. As in Chicago, a millionaire collector of Civil War items may sit beside a man whose membership dues hurt.

Often they ask each other privately, "What's behind this common feeling?" Writer Harnett T. Kane answers for them, "For millions this war still has the bitter sweet pathos of the Lost Cause, even for descendants of Northerners." Historian Bruce Catton adds: "Under it all, perhaps, we are subconsciously trying to recreate a mood: that strange haunting mood made up of radical memories and built-in instinctive emotions, which somehow possess us all at times . . ."

In 1911 these "instinctive emotions" brought two Union officers back to a private spring they drank from during the Petersburg area fighting. They enclosed it in a small memorial park. Later a Massachusetts man returned a State flag his forebear had hauled down from the Confederate Capitol at Richmond. At the final Confederate reunion, in Norfolk in 1951, the United States paraded its armed might, drawn from both the North and the South, before three surviving Gray veterans.

New Crop Markets Needed

Crop price-fixing by the government has always been under some degree of criticism. It is an economic rather than a political matter, but hardly ever considered on real merits. Through means of storage of grains and food commodities the government has fostered class advantage, for the ultimate result is purchase by the United States at high figures that would not be obtainable by actual demand.

The public has come to anticipate, and regard as its right, that these official bids for crops be made annually. By the same token, less effort has been put forth by

growers to seek favorable price markets and avenues of distribution for these annual crop yields, relying almost entirely upon governmental fixing of prices or purchase of crops. This simply adds up to a need of new markets through which to dispose of the burdensome American crop surpluses.

Raymond C. Firestone, executive vice-president of the Firestone Tire & Rubber Co., recently told the Farm Equipment Institute convention in Chicago, Ill., that many farm surplus problems can be solved through better distribution, development of new markets, and well-planned and executed merchandising campaigns. He declared we "do not do enough research and do not make enough effort to find new markets and get better distribution in the markets we already have."

Early Iowa Papers Valuable

Fairly complete volumes of Iowa newspapers, either daily or weekly, issued during the period when Iowa was a territory or the first years of statehood, and now offered for sale, are quoted at almost fabulous prices.

As an instance, in the current Americana Catalogue 135, of Edward Eberstadt & Sons, New York, there appear quotations of sale price of volumes of the *Keokuk Saturday Post*, "a Family Journal, independent in all things," D. Reddington, editor, Volume I, No. 1 to Vol. III, No. 13 (which contains Reddington's valedictory,) described and priced as follows:

Elephant folio, seven columns to the page, four pages to the issue, bound in two volumes, boards with buckram backs and leather labels; Keokuk, November 10, 1855 to January 10, 1858.—\$450.00.

In further description, these papers are characterized as being

An exceptionally fine file, in choice condition, and lacking only four of the 117 issues during the period. The paper is valuable both from the historical and the literary standpoint as it was well edited and contains, besides the important news of the times, a considerable body of frontier literature that played an important role in the education and life of the

local citizenry, and much of which is available to present-day study nowhere else.

The source of acquiring of this valuable file of that paper could have been from the dismantled private library of some member of the Reddington family, who had preserved the editor's own file, closing as it does with the last issue of his editorship, or that of some local Keokuk literary individual since deceased. The file is an exclusive item impossible of duplication, which accounts for the price of \$450.00 at which it is held.

Another similar Keokuk newspaper file item in the same catalogue, covering a like period, is priced at the startling figure of \$1,250.00. Possibly it is secured from the same source, and described:

"Iowa newspaper. The *Keokuk Daily Post*, volume I, No. 1 to Vol. III, No. 72, in four volumes, lacking only 29 numbers of the 697 published in the period, in all 668 issues. Keokuk, October 28, 1855 to January 22, 1859.—\$1,250.00.

The same descriptive comment would apply to these files as to the weekly papers respecting value and exclusive original source of historical material.

The financial figures mentioned for these two items, indicate the tremendous monetary value of the great collection of Iowa newspapers of the same period in the collection of the Iowa State Department of History & Archives in the State Historical building at Des Moines, the most extensive in the whole Mississippi valley, and available to the public for historical research purposes.

Government Relies on the Thrifty

There is a growing sentiment in America that regular saving should be ignored—that the government will take care of people and give them security when they get beyond a certain age or become old and unable to work. But it must be borne in mind that the people who earn and do save, take care of the government! Were it not for the thrifty and the willing workers, the government would be in a bad way.—George Matthew Adams.

The Value of a Single Vote

In an Iowa campaign of the 1940's, a Republican rally of state-house employees was held at the old Princess theatre building in Des Moines. In the group of leading speakers was Gov. Robert D. Blue, who impressed the large crowd of workers with his analysis of the importance of polling every possible vote, relating historical instances of how a single vote many times had determined the outcome of issues.

After citing how Governor Kraschel once was elected by a margin of slightly more than one vote per precinct, Wilson losing by that close vote, the governor related how a substantial number of contests of seats in the Iowa house of representatives in the following legislature were occasioned by close votes; and likewise, that the Democrat floor leader who was elected by the margin of only two votes, had a contest, and the Republican floor leader, who was elected by a majority of eight votes, also had a contest.

In the House of Representatives, Blue said, the even division of fifty-four Democratic representatives and fifty-four Republican representatives occasioned a vigorous and prolonged contest over the election of a speaker. John Ryder was a representative from Dubuque. He was a man of advanced years and was ill when the session opened. It was first reported that he would not be able to attend the session. Many long distance calls were placed to ascertain the facts. The early votes for speaker stood fifty-four votes for the Republican candidate and fifty-three votes for the Democratic candidate. The speaker pro-tem, Ed Brown of Des Moines, ruled that a plurality of votes was not enough to elect the Republican candidate and that a majority of fifty-five votes was necessary to elect a speaker. Finally the Democrats prevailed upon Mr. Ryder and his family to have Ryder brought to Des Moines. He was brought into the house chamber in a wheel-chair attended by two doctors. He cast his vote in an inaudible voice for Lamar Foster, the Democratic candidate for speaker.

In the meantime the Democratic leaders and Republican leaders had been frantically talking to Representative Beltman of Sioux county, who was known to be wavering in his allegiance to the Republican candidate. Finally he was persuaded to vote for the Democratic candidate. The vote of John Ryder made a tie vote of fifty-four Republican votes and fifty-four Democratic votes, and that tie was broken when Representative Beltman switched his vote to the Democratic candidate. After voting, John Ryder was wheeled out of the house chamber and never returned. The election of Lamar Foster of West Branch as speaker of the house of representatives for that session gave the Democrats the chairmanships and majority membership on all of the house committees. The session that followed was frequently filled with drama, close votes and reversals.

Governor Blue also told of a young attorney in a neighboring state being employed to defend a man charged with murder and was successful in his defense of the man. Sometime later, this attorney aspired to the Illinois legislature. The race in his district was close and the young man was elected by a single vote. The man whom he had defended was upon his death bed, but because of his gratitude and interest in the success of the young man who had defended him, insisted upon being carried to the polls upon a litter and without his vote the young man would not have been elected to the Illinois legislature.

At that time, United States senators were selected, not by popular vote, as now, but by state legislatures. In the Illinois legislature that year this young man organized the opposition to the candidate who seemed to have the most supporters, resulting in his candidate going to the United States senate.

In that session of the senate one of the important questions before congress was the admission of Texas to the Union. Again, the outcome was in doubt and the contest close. The new senator from Illinois supported the admission of Texas to the Union and the

vote was carried by a majority of one. Thus, through a chain of circumstances, the single vote of a sick and dying man in Illinois was instrumental in a substantial degree to the admission of Texas to the Union.

An inscription appears upon a tablet in Morton hall, Philadelphia, commemorating the decisive importance of a single vote in the congress of 1776 by John Morton casting the deciding vote, stating that he "secured to the American people the Declaration of Independence, himself a signer." On July 2, congress took up R. E. Lee's resolution declaring "These United Colonies . . . free and independent states." Six colonies were arrayed in favor of its adoption and six opposed, the Pennsylvania delegation with six votes divided—two for and two against, with two absent. John Morton then voted in favor of the adoption and the resolution gave this country the freedom declaration that echoed the world around.

In almost countless other instances in public life the controlling effect of one vote in elections has been demonstrated, illustrating the great importance of the casting of every possible vote. Notable, too, in American history was the first election of Thomas Jefferson over Aaron Burr by one vote in the House of Representatives, thereby his becoming president of the United States. Burr, the brilliant New Yorker, had tied Jefferson in the count of the electoral college, each receiving 73 votes—both Republicans—sending the election to the House of Representatives, there to be decided which should be president, the other to be vice president, the vote to be by states. The Federalists had a majority of members but were determined to elect Burr; however, he peremptorily declined to contest for first place, and as a Republican refused even to listen to the proposition of the Federalists, proving himself true to his chief and loyal to his party. For seven days they balloted and on the 36th ballot Jefferson won by a single deciding vote, and Burr became vice president.

Another time the presidency was determined by one

vote, this on February 9, 1825. John Quincy Adams was deadlocked in the electoral college with Andrew Jackson and William H. Crawford for the high honor, the House of Representatives again voting, with the state delegations as separate blocs. The New York delegation had not voted in the tie between the three men, for that state's delegation also was deadlocked. Then, a delegate of New York cast his vote for Adams and election was had by that one vote.

During Jefferson's term of office, his Draft Ordinance, looking to the control of the Northwest Territory, was calculated to prohibit after 1800 any human slavery from existence in the vast area that later became Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky and the states north and west of the Ohio river. But this move was defeated by one vote, and a property right in slaves recognized.

Perhaps the most recent demonstration of the one-vote factor was the negative decision in the U.S. senate last year when the so-called Bricker admendment was debated and lost, but revived and now considered again. Wide differences of opinion then prevailed in discussion of the effect of the amendment sought by Senator Bricker. Many who did not vote for it favored the restriction of executive treaty making but considered the provision too broad. It would have required reference to the congress of the specific situation and a state of war declared by that body before troops could have been sent to Korea. President Truman chose to take direct action by by-passing congress in characterizing the use of troops as a "local police action." During consideration of the Bricker proposal a rewriting of the admendment was had, and several drafts considered. On at least three different occasions favorable senators felt that an area of agreement had been found. But when it went to a vote, the substitute by Senator George was defeated by a single vote, lacking that much of a two-thirds majority.

The spectacular Hayes-Tilden contest of 1876 is an-

other example of the astonishing value of one vote. Then an electoral commission was created to investigate, ascertain and determine election results and accomplish a lawful count of the electoral vote. The fifteen-man commission consisted of five senators, five congressmen and five justices of the supreme court of the United States. After weeks of investigation and consideration the vote when reached stood 7 to 7 when the 15th and final vote was to be taken. Then, the vote was for Hayes, 8 to 7, and he became president.

Moreover, in this connection, an Indiana legend is to the effect that a deciding vote was cast by an Indiana congressman on the commission who had been elected in his own Indiana district by just one vote. Further, it was said that the man in the Indiana district that cast that one vote was a law client of this congressman. He was desperately ill at election time, but insisted on being taken to the polls anyway, even in a wheel chair, rather than lose the privilege and responsibility of his one vote, and vote he did, electing the congressman by one vote.

It is the record, too, that five states in the Union were admitted and one territory kept out, each decision by one vote. They were California, Idaho, Orgeon, Texas and Washington. And since, statehood was lost to Alaska in February 1952 by one vote, the roll call in the senate being 45 to 44 against admission.

The record as related is illustrative of the great responsibility of the individual voter, each in playing his important part in the government of our great representative Republic. In light of this informative record no voter can rightly judge that his vote is of no importance.

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