

## Laying the Foundations of the Iowa State Normal School\*

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William C. Lang

*On May 12, 1972 fire destroyed Gilchrist Hall, the oldest building on the campus of the University of Northern Iowa. The original building of the institution, converted from a home for orphans of Civil War veterans, also was destroyed by fire in 1965.*

*When workmen began removing debris from the remains of Gilchrist Hall, they found a cornerstone. It had been hidden for many years by a corridor built to join the structure to another building. The cornerstone contained a sealed copper box which held documents of the 1880s. Special ceremonies marked the opening of the box; an adaptation of remarks made at that time is presented below.*

WE ARE GATHERED VERY CLOSE TO the site on which the building stood from which this university sprang. To our north and east, the Soldier's Orphan's Home dominated the prairie landscape. It had been occupied on October 12, 1869 even before it was completed.<sup>1</sup> To most people the structure represented the desire of a grateful nation to bind up some of the wounds caused by the terrible Civil War. However, others saw the building as having a future potential of another kind. Let us hear how at least one other viewed it. Senator Edward G. Miller, who farmed in Lincoln Township about ten miles south of here, and who introduced the bill to transform the Orphan's Home into a normal school wrote in 1901:

\*This article is an expansion of remarks made by Professor Lang on the occasion of the opening of the cornerstone of Gilchrist Hall at the University of Northern Iowa on October 7, 1972.

<sup>1</sup> *Iowa Documents*, 1870, II, Section 9, pp. 3, 4.

The first time I saw the Soldier's Orphan's Home at Cedar Falls the question arose in my mind: 'What shall we do with the building and grounds when the soldiers' boys and girls are grown and gone out into the world?' The answer was instantaneous: 'Establish there a normal school.' And in subsequent years as I hauled the products of my farm to the Cedar Falls market and passed the Home, the thought always recurred to me: 'That is the place for the much needed normal school . . .'<sup>2</sup>

The idea took possession of me; I felt sure that the thing could be done; of its desirability it seemed hardly necessary to argue it with a friend of education. I broached the subject to leading citizens of Cedar Falls and I have to confess a little disappointment in finding my scheme not immediately and enthusiastically approved. I'd just come from Wisconsin with the knowledge of her Normal School system, the work of Henry Barnard, and it seemed the easiest thing in the world to make the people of Iowa see the merit of my plan for utilizing a soon to be vacant public building and at the same time taking a long step forward in the cause of education. The gentlemen to whom I spoke knew better than I the difficulties to be encountered; but when the time came to help they were not backward . . .<sup>3</sup>

The normal school idea was not a new one in Iowa. In 1849 the second General Assembly, within a decade of the establishment of the first normal school in the United States, responded to the need for an institution to prepare teachers, "for the common schools and others" by authorizing such an institution in each of three districts into which the state was divided. The Assembly authorized the expenditure of \$1500 for the support of the three schools on the condition that the friends of education would raise an equal amount to provide for buildings.<sup>4</sup> A building was erected in Oskaloosa and one was begun in Andrew.<sup>5</sup> The hoped for additional state support did not materialize. In fact the state withdrew its support and for over two decades the General Assembly ignored requests for state institutions to educate teachers.<sup>6</sup>

Even though neglected, the normal school idea was not dead.

<sup>2</sup> Miller, Edward G., manuscript by the former state senator from Black Hawk County describing the founding of the Iowa State Normal School. Document bears no title, no date. University of Northern Iowa Archives, Cedar Falls, Iowa, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from former Senator Edward G. Miller to President H. H. Seerley, February 4, 1901, pp. 2-3. University of Northern Iowa Archives.

<sup>4</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, Second General Assembly, Chapter 78, January 15, 1849, p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in *Iowa Documents*, 1876, I, Section 6, pp. 104-105.

<sup>6</sup> Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in the *Iowa House Journal*, Appendix, 1857, pp. 654-55.

Governors, State Superintendents of Public Instruction, and the State Teachers' Association continued to make appeals to the General Assembly.<sup>7</sup> A commission headed by Horace Mann, who had played such an important part in establishing the first normal school in Massachusetts, reported to Governor Grimes in 1856. While the commission failed to recommend the establishment of a normal school, it did propose a comprehensive plan for teacher education on a statewide basis in county high schools and a normal department at the state university.<sup>8</sup> Such a department did function at the university in Iowa City from 1855 to 1872.<sup>9</sup> Efforts to establish normal schools by legislative effort continued to fail. Private normal schools and other colleges and universities provided the personnel for the schools.

However, as has happened frequently in history, the confluence of the proper time, the energetic persons, and the idea which has been incubating, results in creativity and creation. In 1873 Edward G. Miller was elected to the Senate of the Iowa General Assembly. His devotion to a normal school at Cedar Falls has already been noted. After his election he returned to Wisconsin to learn more about their system of normal schools. He consulted with Iowa

<sup>7</sup> Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in *Iowa Documents*, 1876, I, Section 6, pp. 68-73, 105. A special appeal is made for the value of Teachers' Institutes and Normal Institutes because Iowa "cannot or will not yet aid in the establishment of permanent normal schools . . ."

The Journals of the Iowa House and Senate from 1858 to 1868 list numerous petitions for normal institutes and schools. Beginning in 1868 the Journals of both the House and Senate have separate indexed items on petitions for and bills introduced to establish Normal schools. The *Cedar Falls Gazette* reported in 1868 and again in 1871 requests addressed by the Iowa State Teachers Association to the Iowa General Assembly for the establishment of normal schools. A part of such a request read, "Iowa, alone, of all the northwestern states, has no school exclusively devoted to training teachers at public expense." *Cedar Falls Gazette*, February 28, 1868, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, Sixth General Assembly, Extra Session, Chap. 31, July 14, 1856, p. 78 called for the appointment of a commission by the governor to revise the school Laws of Iowa. Governor Grimes appointed "Hon. Horace Mann of Ohio, Hon. Amos Dean, President of the State University, and F. I. Bissell, Esq., of Dubuque . . ." *Messages and Proclamations of the Governor of Iowa*, II, p. 36. In his second biennial message in 1858, Governor Grimes requested the General Assembly to pass into law the recommendations of the report submitted by Mann and Dean. *Ibid.*, p. 48. The report of Horace Mann and Amos Dean is included in the *House Journal, Appendix*, 1857, pp. 191-200.

<sup>9</sup> Parker, L. F., *Higher Education in Iowa*, pp. 80-96 *passim*, U.S. Bureau of Education Circular No. 6, 1893.

educators, including the Superintendent of the Mason City Schools, J. C. Gilchrist, before he introduced a bill to establish a normal school in Cedar Falls in the Fifteenth General Assembly of 1874. He found too little support for the bill and did not press for a vote on the proposal.<sup>10</sup> However, J. C. Gilchrist had an influence on the Normal School even before it was established.

Times were hard in Iowa in the '70s. The so-called "crime of '73"<sup>11</sup> in national politics seemed only to accentuate the difficulties accompanying economic and social adjustments following the Civil War. Money, undepreciated money, was scarce. Even so, Senator Miller, with his newly elected colleague Representative H. C. Hemenway of Cedar Falls, persisted in seeking a normal school at Cedar Falls in 1876 in the Sixteenth General Assembly. Hemenway first introduced a bill in the House "to establish and maintain a school for the instruction and training of teachers of common schools." The "buildings and grounds" used by the Soldier's Orphan's Home were to be surrendered for this purpose.<sup>12</sup> Senator Miller, who had left his copy of the 1874 bill at home, sought to save time by introducing Hemenway's bill in the Senate while he sent home for his original proposal which, by the way, he declared later was placed in the box before us.<sup>13</sup> When the Hemenway bill came up for consideration in the Senate, Senator Miller substituted his own version section by section. Adopted in the Senate by a bare constitutional majority,<sup>14</sup> Hemenway supported Miller's bill in the House.<sup>15</sup> Here, too, only after prodigious "behind the scene efforts" was the bill adopted by a bare majority<sup>16</sup> and later signed into law

<sup>10</sup> Miller, Edward G., undated and untitled manuscript, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Debtors and those interested in the mining and sale of silver often referred to the national government's decision to stop the coinage of silver dollars as the "crime of '73."

<sup>12</sup> *House Journal*, February 1, 1878, p. 131, House File 248.

<sup>13</sup> A copy of Senate File 207 introduced by Senator Miller in 1874 was found in the cornerstone box. It is the only official copy of the bill known to exist. A duplicated copy is now on file at the Iowa State Department [f History and Archives, Des Moines, Iowa. The original is in the University archives.

<sup>14</sup> *Senate Journal*, March 11, 1876, Senate File 171, pp. 399-400. This bill, which originally duplicated the Hemenway bill, was substantially changed by substituting sections from Senator Miller's bill of 1874.

<sup>15</sup> *House Journal*, March 15, 1876, pp. 584-585. The bill was approved at an evening meeting on the next to the last day of the session.

<sup>16</sup> *Idem*. At least 51 affirmative votes were needed for passage. On the first vote there were 48 "yeas." After a motion to reconsider passed, a second

by Governor Kirkwood.<sup>17</sup> There had not been a word of debate concerning the measure recorded in either House—unusual indeed. Senator Miller described the passage of the bill as follows:<sup>18</sup>

The most notable thing about this normal school bill was the manner of its passage in both houses. It is probable there is not a parallel case in the history of Iowa legislation where a bill that carried quite a large appropriation and involving the expenditure of still larger sums in the future was passed without a word of opposition! In the Senate not a word was spoken except to make the necessary motions. In the House the same was true except that Mr. Hemenway in a brief statement explained that the bill to be voted on was Senate File No. 171 that had passed that body as a substitute for House File No. 248. With my notes in my desk I was prepared for debate; but I thought it best to let it go to a vote at once for I knew if it was beaten I could get a reconsideration and make my fight later on. That there was strong opposition I knew and that it found no expression on the floor before the vote was taken is a marvel to this day. Perhaps the action of Senator Arnold of Marshall furnishes a clue to his reticence. He was opposed to the bill "but," said he to me, "If you need my vote to pass your bill you shall have it." When the roll was called, I was nervous, got "rattled" and lost the count. Mr. Arnold declined to vote. When the secretary—now Congressman Hull—reached "Young of Mahaska" he looked toward me and held up one finger—we lacked one vote of a constitutional majority. Mr. Arnold saw it, rose in his seat and asked that his name be called; "I vote Aye" he responded and a normal school bill had passed the Senate. It was personal consideration for the author of the bill that prompted him. How far this motive influenced the action of other members I can not say but clearly the bill did not pass on its merits. I think the same thing is true of the House; personal good will toward the champion of the measure in that body led some members to vote for the bill or at least to keep silent. Without any previous understanding Mr. Hemenway and I had adopted the same method to accomplish our purpose. We could have made speeches and won for ourselves perhaps a little newspaper glory; but we cared nothing for that. Besides we did not wish to stir into life the latent opposition that we knew existed. We wanted to see this great adjunct to our educational system a thing accomplished and when the time came to act we took such course as seemed best to insure the result. And in the light of subsequent events I do not believe we could have taken any other possible course and met success.

For the last dramatic scene in this memorable contest I will quote from a letter in the *Reporter*. At a late hour of the session Senate File No. 171, with other appropriation bills, came up in the House. "Mr.

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vote brought 52 "yeas." The House had adopted the bill. In later statements concerning the voting, Senator Miller reported 50 "yea" votes on the first motion. The record in the *House Journal* does not give that total.

<sup>17</sup>*Laws of Iowa*, Sixteenth General Assembly, Chapter 129, March 17, 1876, p. 120.

<sup>18</sup>Miller, Edward G., unnamed and undated manuscript, pp. 7-8.

Hemenway made a concise and clear statement of the case and let it go to a vote. Ayes 50—one short. Hemenway changed his vote and moved to reconsider." The situation was interesting. Louis Case of Bremer proved himself the right man in the right place at the right moment; he secured the vote of Allen of Henry and he and Jagna of Tama got Hoag of Page to change to "Aye." Our old friend Smart captured Evans of Story and sent him back to the Chamber. On the second roll call we had 52 votes and the appropriation for the normal school was made. It was a time for hearty congratulations between friends of education and at least one member felt to exclaim in the words of old Simeon: "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace."

The provisions of the bill adopted were not generous. Hemenway's version asked for \$25,000 for the biennium.<sup>19</sup> The Miller bill, which was the one adopted, provided for but \$14,500—\$10,000 for teachers and employees and \$4,500 for repairs, improvements, and contingent expenses for a two-year period.<sup>20</sup> The Board of Directors, provided for in the act, met in Cedar Falls in June and July 1876, to receive the properties, plan for their remodeling, establish rules of operation, and elect a faculty with J. C. Gilchrist as principal—Gilchrist who was the Superintendent of Schools at Mason City and the devoted disciple of Horace Mann whom he had met while enrolled at Antioch College.<sup>21</sup>

Let us look briefly at the new school through the eyes of two Gilchrist children who with their parents, brothers, sisters and many students made their home in the new normal school. Writing in 1936 the late and former Congressman Fred C. Gilchrist wrote President Latham in part:

The school had been started in the old Iowa Soldiers' Orphans Home. Board partitions had been put in some of the rooms on the second and third floors in order to fit them as a dormitory. It was a boarding school. It was a mile and a half or two miles from town and the pupils boarded in the building. Afterwards and about the second year the men lived over at what was known as 'North Hall', being what the Soldiers' Orphans Home called the 'chapel'. This had been

<sup>19</sup> *House File 248*, Sixteenth General Assembly, February 1, 1876, State Department of History and Archives, Des Moines, Iowa.

<sup>20</sup> *Laws of Iowa*, Sixteenth General Assembly, 1876, Chap. 129, pp. 118-120.

<sup>21</sup> *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Board of Directors of the Iowa State Normal School*, June 1876 to March 30, 1897, pp. 1, 7, 8, June 7 and July 13, 1876. At its first meeting the Board elected J. C. Gilchrist as principal "at \$150.00 per month for the time actively engaged in teaching." At its second meeting the board elected the remainder of the faculty. It also reconsidered the principal's salary and "fixed" it "at \$1500 per annum" and granted the "privilege of occupying living rooms in the building."

fitted up with partitions and dormitories. The physical appointments were abominable. No one would live today under the conditions that [*sic*] they existed. There were no inside bathrooms or toilets of any kind. The students used kerosene lamps. These were usually cleaned and kept in trim by one single janitor. Water was piped upon each floor but it was not drinking water and there was only one water cock on each floor. Everybody took their meals down in the basement.

There were four 'sections' on each floor and these 'sections' were divided off into four pine walls or cubby-holes that were used as bedrooms, the board partition running only about eight feet high. One only of these bedrooms in each section had a window and the others depended for light and air on the fact that the partitions did not run clear up to the ceiling. Two girls were assigned to each bedroom and they did their studying out in the main part of the 'section'. The beds themselves were miserable and no human being would sleep on them at the present time. There were no bed springs. The slats ran across the cheap bedsteads and straw ticks were placed on top of these slats. I have myself oftentimes helped to fill these ticks with straw which we secured at nearby farm barnyards after threshing time in the fall. Each person had to police and act as janitor for his own room and section.

During the first year the men lived in a couple of sections on the third floor and there naturally was a great deal of communion and fellowship as between the sexes all being thrown together in that fashion. That was the reason for and the explanation of some of the rather rigid rules that were promulgated concerning the social activities of the students. In addition to this the orthodox sentiment of that day regarding social intercourse was very rigid. . . .

Likewise there was no equipment for the school itself. It had black-boards and chalk and nothing else but bare walls and a few school seats some of which had been inherited from the old Soldiers' Orphans Home. For example, if one tried to teach physics he must rely for apparatus upon his ingenuity in performing what were called 'experiments'. The pupil could look at the picture in the textbook and at a few diagrams on the blackboard and that was all there was to it.

There was no library at all except some books which had been left behind by the orphans. . . . I mean by this to say that there was no library at all. My father had his own books which he put into public use. But outside of his contribution there was scarcely anything at all.

Furthermore the Legislature was stingy. Times were very hard in 1876. You will recall that this was following the "crime of '73" and all the banks were busted and the people of Iowa were in great economic distress. As I recall it the first appropriation to pay teachers' salaries allowed only \$5,000 per year and this had to go around four or five of them with some allowance for outside work.

Furthermore there was no school spirit or school ideals and no school history or no old grads and no halos of any kind. It was all new and bare. But the school started and it grew in numbers rapidly and in reputation and standing as well. At first it was a mere academy. It got to be more of a college before my father left it. He strived toward that end. And there was no place where students did better work or

where they were disciplined more firmly in the foundations of study than at the old Iowa State Normal School. The fact is that they had rigorous training and ample and efficient leadership. They were grounded in the elements much better than at any other educational institution of which I have ever had knowledge. One simply had to work and one simply had to puff up the hill and make his grades. That was all there was to it. No other thing could be thought of and no other thing would be tolerated. Nobody could shirk. Everybody had to work and everyone had to succeed. So after all, the training developed strong men and women, and made them into great teachers. . . .

Nobody complained. Everybody was satisfied and everybody was cheerful. Social life was agreeable all around. You could play croquet with your best girl but you could not dance with her. You could take her to a lecture down town but you could not take her to the skating rink down there, nor could you go out for a buggy ride with her on a Sunday afternoon. Nobody seemed to care about such things anyway because everybody was engaged in hard work. These are my early impressions of the mode of living. But I insist that the educational and moral training was never excelled. Although young men and women lived together in the same building and went back and forth together, there was never the slightest suggestion of their misconduct or of immorality. . . .<sup>22</sup>

The late Maude Gilchrist wrote of her impressions:

My first glimpse of the Iowa State Normal School, in the year 1876, showed a large three story brick building with basement and attic, topped by a square tower, the architectural feature of the '60s and '70s; a two story brick building to the north, which was the Chapel during soldier orphans' days; and a two story frame building, used for a laundry and home for the maids. Then there could be seen a large grove of maples extending to the west boundary of the forty acre tract which made our campus. This grove lured us often to pleasant paths and ponderings and the first commencement was held in its shade.

A group of silver maples spread their shade at the southeast corner of the campus and a planting of junipers in two rows, (perhaps four rows) extended south from the main building to the east and west road into the country. Other trees are shown in pictures taken at that time, but my memory fails to recall them now, except those on the curving driveway from the northeast entrance up to the building. A good fence, topped by a flat board, marked the east boundary of the campus. This board could be walked upon, though that probably was not its purpose. Two of the younger girl students were often found together wearing the fashionable blue cape of 1877. The Students' Offering appeared one month with the following couplet:—"How do the busy little twins improve each shining minute? They spread their azure capes for sails and walk the fency limit."

<sup>22</sup> Letter from Fred C. Gilchrist, Laurens, Iowa to President O. R. Latham, Cedar Falls, Iowa, October 2, 1936, pp. 1-3. University of Northern Iowa Archives, Cedar Falls, Iowa.



The young elms, planted along the front of the campus, were carefully watched and made to grow by the hand labor of our Normalities. I recall hearing father say after supper, (for we dined at noon in those years) "Well, boys, those elms need water," and I can see him as he marched across that east campus, a bucket of water in each hand. Of course, the "boys" followed that example and some of those elms stand sturdy and strong today.

The call of the dinner bell, three times a day, took us to the basement dining room, where simple, wholesome fare appeased good appetites. After supper in spring and fall, the front steps was the place for a social hour. In winter we gathered in the parlor and the music room to the right of the main entrance. Colonel Pattee's office, (the business office) and a general assembly room, (relatively large) were at the left and a recitation room took the space back of the parlor on the right. The principal's office, a small laboratory, a small class room and a coat room occupied the west wing on first floor.

On second floor were four "sections," each a long study to be used by eight girls, with four small bedrooms on the side; also two rooms at the front for the use of the principal's family, (we children had two of the bedrooms in the first section.) rooms for the business manager, women teachers and a few students were in the west wing. The third floor, similar to the second, was given over to men students that first year and Professor Wright occupied one of the front rooms. The small brick building, known as "Chapel" all its life, was remodeled and used as the men's dormitory from 1877. A sketch of this "Dorm" might be placed somewhere in the splendid George T. Baker Hall as a reminder of "simple living and high thinking" in the pioneer days of I.S.T.C. Here, too, lived Mr. Marks, the faithful engineer, who managed the steam heating plant, keeping us warm with those creaking pipes, and providing steam for hot water on each floor. We drew a pitcher of cold water from the big pipe, then let the steam from a near-by pipe bubble into the pitcher. This change made the third floor available for girls in 1877. Two sections on second floor were converted later into recitation rooms by the simple method of cutting out the bedroom partitions. Compare our "section" with the popular modern "dorm,"—one room filled with double decker beds for twenty or thirty girls!

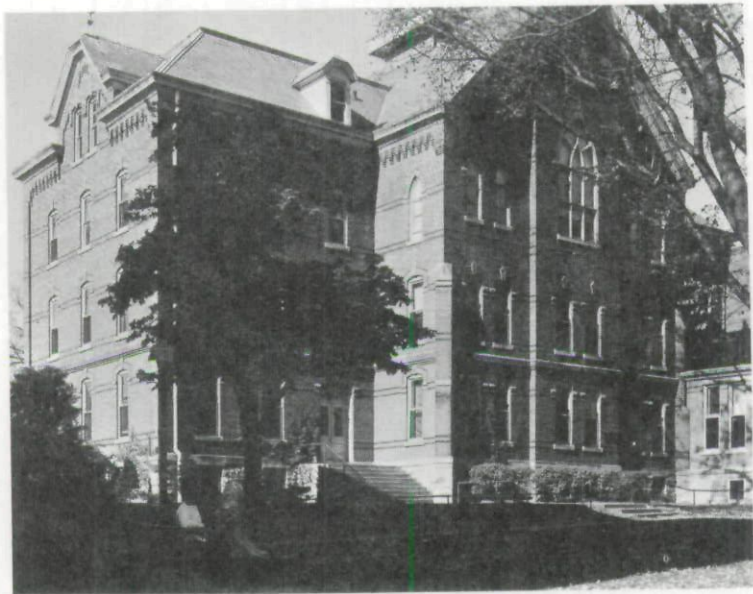
Then later, the business office was moved to the west wing, first floor, and the assembly room, enlarged by this office space, became "Room A," the auditorium of that day.

We endured hardships, to be sure, but *not* the hardships of many students in the past century,—living in poor frame buildings, keeping fires in stoves, carrying water from wells, reading by candle light. We remember that 1876 marks the beginning and the end is not yet. . . .<sup>23</sup>

Buildings there were, yet permanence was not assured. The institution was attacked from many quarters. In 1878 by a tie vote the institution was saved. A motion to close it by crippling the

<sup>23</sup>Communication from Maude Gilchrist to the Iowa State Teachers College, October 2, 1937, pp. 1-2. University of Northern Iowa Archives, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

appropriation bill lost 44 to 44!<sup>24</sup> Not until 1882, when an appropriation of \$30,000 provided for a new building—South, later Gilchrist, Hall—was there assurance of continuity.<sup>25</sup>



*Gilchrist Hall was erected in 1882 at a cost of \$35,000. It was not only the home of the first president of Iowa State Normal School (today the University of Northern Iowa), but students resided there and some faculty members boarded in the building. It was destroyed by fire on May 12, 1972.*

In spite of uncertainty the faculty and supporters laid the foundations. No one sought to lay sounder foundations than Principal Gilchrist. In his inaugural address of September 14, 1876 he states the name of the institution, unnamed in the bill creating it, as the "The Iowa State Normal School." In his remarks, spoken in

<sup>24</sup>*House Journal*, March 15, 1878, p. 441. The appropriation bill was approved for a third reading necessary for its passage by a vote of 46 to 43.

<sup>25</sup>*Laws of Iowa*, Nineteenth General Assembly, Chapter 85, March 14, 1882, p. 83. The appropriation of \$30,000 was insufficient to meet the costs of a proposed structure. The citizens of Cedar Falls, subscribed \$5000 so the contracts could be let and the building constructed.

the somewhat flowery idiom of the time, he states in clear terms the essentials of sound teacher education. Space does not allow more than a brief sketch of his ideas, but state them we must—they are



*Three of the grandchildren of James C. Gilchrist, first president of the Iowa State Normal School, view his picture which hangs in the boardroom of the Administration building: from left to right, Mrs. Mavis G. Allen, Mrs. Francis Hakes, and Fred C. Gilchrist, Jr., all of Laurens, Iowa.*

foundational. Mr. Gilchrist declared the role of the teacher goes far beyond the subjects taught in the classroom. Teacher education must, therefore, be based on the premise that the teacher's "knowledge should extend in every direction beyond the curriculum which he teaches." Creating a continuing thirst for learning in the students must be a part of teacher education. "The intrinsic charm of knowledge," he said, "passing before his senses allures him; and falling in love with the mystic beauty of the Knowable but Unknown his soul is inflamed, his devotion cannot be quenched, and his love knows no ending." There were, however, three additional responsibilities of the normal school: to teach the mastery of subjects; the methodology of instruction by experience for all levels of the common school including the high school; and to explore

with the student the increasing knowledge about the human mind and its functioning. Beyond these foundational principles of teacher education, Principal Gilchrist saw teaching, as many great teachers of the past and present, as a moral act. The manifestation of its morality lay in battling ignorance, superstition, and those acts of social and individual destructiveness he called sin. His inaugural was then a foundation upon which sound teacher education could be built in time and with support. Teaching could take a worthy place as a profession along with law, medicine, and theology.<sup>26</sup>

It was apparent from the beginning that more space was needed. The first Board of Directors called this need to the attention of the General Assembly.<sup>27</sup> When, six years later, the members of the Masonic Order laid the cornerstone of what we knew as Gilchrist Hall, a dream was on the way to fulfillment.<sup>28</sup> The dedicatory address of the Reverend A. L. Frisbie of Des Moines on August 29, 1882 reminded his hearers that the most important danger to self-governing people lay in ignorance, and that "the school and the teacher are the agencies upon which our republic relies for protection."<sup>29</sup>

Can it be that our affluent society fascinated by the whirl of computer memory drums, hypnotized by the voluminous printouts with an overwhelming mass of data, grasping desperately onto its material gadgetry to provide meaning and security; I say, can it be that our affluent society is in danger of eroding the foundations of its real security? Can it be that we fail to recognize that in the attack on ignorance we hold back the barbarian outside, within our midst, and in ourselves and hopefully make possible the survival of our endangered planet? Do we fail to recognize that we dare not cripple inquiry by lack of material and intellectual support, we can not undermine confidence in those whose insight into man's experience and potential is most essential, and we can not allocate large

<sup>26</sup> Gilchrist, F. C., *Normal Schools—Their Origin and Office*, Inaugural Address as Principal of the Normal School, September 14, 1876, Cedar Falls, Iowa. The first report of the Board of Directors to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction referred to the institution as the State Normal School. The name given it by Principal Gilchrist—The Iowa State Normal School—gradually passed into general usage. A report on Gilchrist's educational philosophy and his influence on Iowa teacher education will be made later.

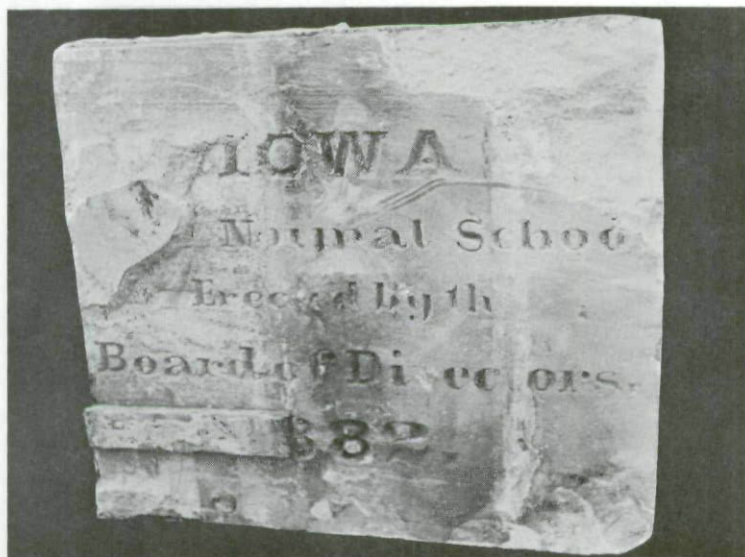
<sup>27</sup> *Report of the State Normal School at Cedar Falls*, by the Board of Directors for 1876-1877, September 1, 1877, p. 10.

<sup>28</sup> *Cedar Falls Gazette*, September 1, 1882, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, September 8, 1882, p. 1.

segments of wealth to destructive or largely unproductive activities without betraying those who so bravely faced privation and unenviable odds in laying the foundations of this institution and others like it—betraying men like J. C. Gilchrist and his kind?

Fred Gilchrist ended his letter to President Latham in 1936, a period of economic depression, with this conviction, "... but after all the foundations were laid wide and deep and strong and no earthquake can ever shake them, and no flood can ever wash them away and no Iowa cyclone ever blow them out."<sup>30</sup> I hope he was correct. We must provide the answer. In examining and considering the documents of the past, we must also think about the future.



*Cornerstone from UNI's old Gilchrist Hall, laid August 29, 1882 and discovered during demolition work on the burned-out building, September 3, 1972.*

<sup>30</sup> Letter from Fred C. Gilchrist of Laurens, Iowa to President O. R. Latham, Cedar Falls, Iowa; October 2, 1936, p. 4.

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