

## LETTERS OF JAMES W. GRIMES

One of the most prominent men in the first thirty-five years of Iowa as a territory and as a state was James Wilson Grimes, a successful lawyer and an outstanding political leader and statesman, who first came to Iowa in 1836, before he had attained his majority, fresh from the green hills of New Hampshire and a brief period of "reading law" which had followed three years in Dartmouth College.

A Whig in politics, he was twice elected to the territorial legislature despite the fact that Iowa was predominantly Democratic, as was the county in which he lived. A lawyer of recognized ability and distinction at the Iowa bar, he was an equal success as a political leader and strategist, being one of the major factors which welded the old line Whigs, the scattered elements of the American Nativists, and the Free Soil Democrats into the nascent Republican Party in 1854-1856. In the former year, 1854, he was elected the first Whig-Republican governor of Iowa, largely through his own energy and the fatiguing thoroughness of his state-wide canvass. Later, in 1859, he was elected to the United States Senate by the Iowa legislature to succeed the Democratic incumbent, George W. Jones. This position of honor and responsibility he held until 1869, when he resigned due to increasingly bad health.

Yet spite his successful leadership as a political statesman, the true and full story of Grimes' influence upon the course of Iowa affairs has yet to be written. Reverend William Salter, his good friend and fellow townsman, wrote a biography of Grimes, published in 1876, four years after the Senator's death, which though well done had the handicap of not having available important materials which time alone could uncover.

The letters from the pen of James W. Grimes below are from the correspondence of early Iowa leaders in the manuscript collection of the department, principally those of Samuel J. Kirkwood, Iowa's Civil War governor, W. Penn Clarke, lawyer, newspaper editor, and a leading Free Soiler and an American nativist, C. C. Carpenter, a member of

the Spirit Lake Expedition and later governor of Iowa, and Reverend William Salter, an outstanding Congregational minister in Burlington from 1846-1910. Wherever the letters are addressed to "Dr. Gov." the reference is to S. J. Kirkwood.

Though these letters are published in full for the first time, they have been used by scholars and students of history and government before. In his biography of Samuel J. Kirkwood, Iowa's Civil War governor, and in his *History of Senatorial Elections in Iowa*, Dan E. Clark made thorough use of the letters in so far as they related to those subjects. Other writers too have doubtless scanned them. Their publication now, however, is in the interest of stimulating someone who has access to other sources of the life of Grimes to undertake the much needed biography of the man.

The spelling and punctuation of the original letters have been retained throughout.

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Dr Sir

It seems that the good people of this Township contrary to my expectation & desire, have re-elected me to the office of School Inspector. I have it in contemplation to leave the State about the 1st may, [sic] & may not return until about the 1st of Sept. In that space of time there may be some duties to be discharged by the Inspector. Will you be good enough to undertake their performance? I can offer you no pecuniary compensation, because I receive none myself. But I know you feel a deep interest in the subject—and I feel that you can render the cause more justice and your labors be more satisfactory to the community, than any one I can select. You are doubtless aware that your duties would only consist in the examination of a teacher or two & the inspection of the schools.

I am very truly &c  
Jas.W. Grimes

4 April/48  
Burlington, Ia.  
Rev. Wm Salter.

Iowa City 8th Jany 1853

Dr Sir

Your favour of the 5th inst is just reced. The house of which I am a member has passed a bill providing

- 1st— That any district may declare itself permanent & the Fund Com.—cannot afterwards change its boundaries
- 2d— Any district may elect six or eight directors & classify them so that two shall go out of office every June.
- 3d— Establishing the “rate” system, or tuition upon scholars able to pay & taxation to provide for the instruction of indigent scholars & to supply any deficiency.
- 4th— Any district may adopt this law or not.

I think it will operate well in towns villages & cities, but poorly in country districts It was copied chiefly from a special law of New York regulating the schools in the City of Syracuse. There were no copies printed else I would send you one. I have had but one copy of the auditors report & I think I have sent you a copy of Bentons report,<sup>1</sup> but for fear I have not I now send one to you. It is a poor thing. He is utterly incompetent to discharge the duties of his position. Our whole system as at present managed is a humbug & I very much fear that our school fund will prove a curse instead of a blessing.

I concur with your view of the University subject. I have not the remotest idea that it will ever amt. to any thing under the management of the State. I proposed to Grant<sup>2</sup> who is our Speaker & the member from Davenport a distribution of the University fund with a slice to the Iowa College but he objected to it upon the ground that that institution “was a nest of abolitionists.” If the members from that locality will neither ask or agree to receive, it will be a hard matter to do any thing for that college.

We are now talking of adjourning on the 24th inst. & if

<sup>1</sup>Thomas H. Benton, Jr., Democratic Supt. of Public Instruction 1848-54; Sec. of the Board of Education, 1859-64.

<sup>2</sup>James Grant, lawyer and political leader of Davenport, prominent railroad man, member of 4th territorial and 4th state legislatures.

so I much doubt if there will be any thing done upon the subject of the University this winter.

I write you in great haste whilst the house in session & have not time to read my own letter over.

My regards to your lady

[Rev. Wm. Salter]

[signature torn off]

Burlington 3d April 1854

My dear Sir

Pray tell me what the political prospects are in your County & in the central part of the State? I suppose you know that there are four men who controul the HawkEye<sup>3</sup> are trying to give me some trouble in this County. The effect of their efforts is to help me in this county, very considerably but what will be the effect in your part of the country?

I can carry Des Moines County by a larger majority than any man ever got in it and so far as I can learn the chances are that I can be elected. What do you think, a democrat in this town & the representative of Genl Dodge<sup>4</sup> in his absence admits that I can out run the party 3000 in the state but says that they can still beat me 1000 votes, for he claims that there is 4000 democratic majority in the State. Which party has increased most in your region? Is their any disaffection towards me & if so, whence does it arise & how & from whom does it show itself. Let me hear from you immediately. I start East in two weeks

Yours very truly

W. Penn Clark Esq

James W Grimes

Iowa City 12th Jany. 1855

My dear Sir

Your favor is recd. I think there is no prospect of obtaining any pecuniary aid from the State towards the object of your Society. I suppose you are not ignorant of the fact that the past management of that society has rendered it

<sup>3</sup>Possibly referring to Clark Dunham, J. L. Brown, L. D. Stockton, and Johnson Pierson. F. H. Warren had in previous years been connected with the paper.

<sup>4</sup>Augustus Caesar Dodge, with George W. Jones, one of the two U. S. Senators from Iowa, and the leading Democrat in the state. Long a public servant, from the days he served as a Territorial Delegate in 1840-46; 1848-54 as Senator, and until 1859 as Ambassador to Spain.

exceedingly obnoxious to many men in & about Burlington, and that that prejudice has in some degree extended to other parts of the State. This hostility has considerably abated, but it still exists in the minds of the members from Des Moines County and some others.

A bill authorizing the Gov- to appoint a Geological surveyor & chemist passed the House of Rep- & was sent to the Senate. It came up yesterday & Browning<sup>6</sup> made an onslaught upon it & got it indefinitely postponed. We have succeeded to day in getting that vote reconsidered & now hope to be able to pass it. Our other Senator from Des Moines is strongly in favor of the bill.<sup>6</sup>

The Maine law has passed the House & gone to the Senate where it will probably be defeated. An act for the better observance of the sabbath has likewise passed the House & gone to the Senate. It will be a very act [sic] to share the fate of the liquor bill & be entombed by that august body.

Our census returns are certainly very defective, but I doubt very much if we shall have them much improved when taken under the state authority. The township assessers take the census. Many of them & perhaps I might say the most of them are utterly incompetent to discharge the duties of their office. The people will not elect better men and what can be done?

I am, very truly in haste

Rev. William Salter  
Burlington, Iowa

Your friend  
James W. Grimes

Dr Sir

I reced. your letter ten days ago. I have been & am now, unwell, hence my neglect to answer it. I have only time to say that I have this day appointed you one of the Capitol Commissioners *vice* Hon Lincoln Clark,<sup>7</sup> resigned.

Burlington  
27th March 1856  
[J. H. D. Street]

Yours truly  
James W. Grimes

<sup>6</sup>Milton D. Browning, fellow townsman of Grimes, and member of the 3rd territorial, and the 1, 2, 4 and 5 state legislatures.

<sup>6</sup>W. F. Coolbaugh.

<sup>7</sup>Lincoln Clark, after a law career in Alabama, moved to Iowa in the 1840's, and was the successful Democratic candidate for Congress in 1850, though losing a re-nomination contest in 1852.

My dear Sir

Your letter is reced. You may be sure that the nominations of the 22d Feb- were not made by me & were not such as I would have made had I the power.

I supposed there was no doubt at all about your nomination until the result was declared and I am pretty much convinced that but for the indifference or hostility of some of your professed friends about Iowa City, you would have been nominated.

I know nothing of the qualifications of the present nominee & do not know that he was a candidate for the nomination.

When I first heard of Nobles' declination, I supposed that it was for the purpose of being a candidate again, but his letter of declination puts the act entirely upon the ground of private business. The same obstructions that private business might raise to a canvass as elector, would exist to a congressional canvass. I have never heard from him either directly or indirectly on the subject\* and do not know what his views are.

I understand that Springer<sup>9</sup> will press his claim. I learn this from Warren.<sup>10</sup>

I have never been approached either personally or by letter on this subject by any man in the District. They probably either think that I have no influence, or that I will take no part in selecting candidates; in both which particulars they are very near right. I shall make no effort to secure the nomination of anyone & shall vote for any one who stands square & boldly on the republican platform; who may secure the nomination

You err greatly if you suppose that I have any personal interest in the matter, other than the promotion of the Republican principles. I MEAN WHAT I SAY, when I assure you that I could not be *whipped into holding my present, or any other office again*. I have had my day, & give place to other & hope better men.

<sup>8</sup>Reuben Noble, a Free Soiler, a Republican, and later a Democrat. Speaker of the House in 1854, and district court judge 1874-78.

<sup>9</sup>Francis Springer, member of the 3, 4, 5, and 6 territorial and the 1 and 2 state legislatures, president of the 1857 Constitutional Convention.

<sup>10</sup>Fitz Henry Warren, a talented vigorous leader of the Whig and later the Republican parties in Iowa, though not possessing a "popular" personality; long a party opponent of Grimes.

In regard to the Nov- election I am full of hope provided an entirely *new man* is nominated. I prefer Fremont<sup>11</sup> to any other one named, for this reason- We cannot elect Mr. Seward<sup>12</sup> or any other old politician against whom there are old chronic prejudices, which you know are so hard to be conquered. To build up & consolidate a new party, we must have men who have not been before the people as politicians.

I know very little of the 5th March K.N.<sup>13</sup> Convention, I was so disgusted with their proceedings—their want of good faith & their ignorance of all political arithmetic, that I have disliked to read, talk, write, or hear about it. They say they will rectify their foolishness at some meeting they are to hold in Oskaloosa.

I heard, by the bye, one of them swear that you should never sit in another of their conventions in this state. So, you may know what to expect.

Know Nothingism *per se* is very weak in this State, you may rely upon that. Take away the republican vote which would go away in case of disagreement on the presidential nomination & their nakedness would be shown. But I hope for better things. Fillmore is so universally repudiated by every body in the North, that I think they will come to their senses & thus come into the republican movement.

Do you know what is proposed to be done to supply Noble's place? I hear of nothing going on.

The pre-Adamite (?) Whigs hold a Convention here on the 12th inst.

Yours friend truly

Burlington, 3d April 1856  
[W. Penn Clarke]

James W Grimes

Dear Sir

Your note by Mr. Morris<sup>14</sup> came duly to hand.

I made a requisition upon the govtm for between 1700 & 1800 muskets & 50 Colts revolvers & two two [sic] months ago Col. Craig of the Ordinance Corps wrote me that they would

<sup>11</sup>John C. Fremont, Republican candidate for president, 1856.

<sup>12</sup>William H. Seward, active abolition Whig and Republican leader, member of Lincoln's cabinet.

<sup>13</sup>Know-Nothing, or the American Party, were opposed to non-native nationalities and certain religious groups, notably the Catholic.

<sup>14</sup>Martin L. Morris, Treasurer of State, 1852-1859.

be immediately forwarded from St. Louis. Through some adverse influence, I presume, in an about St. Louis, they have not reached me. I have directed them to be sent to Iowa City when they reach there.

Yours truly in haste

[W. Penn Clarke, 1856]

James W. Grimes

Burlington, 9 March 1857

My dear Sir

I intend to write you a long letter & hence I commence on a sheet of foolscap.

First; In relation to the University. You are now one of the Trustees, if I mistake not. What is proposed to be done? Will the board of instruction be filled and the institution placed fairly on its legs? I hope so & hoping so, I trust that some place may be found for Prof. Hedrick of North Carolina who is one of the waifs thrown upon the republican coast by the political storm of 1856. He is said by every body who knows him to be a scientific man, a graduate of the North Carolina University & for three years a student & graduate of the Summer Scientific School at Cambridge Mass. Whilst performing his duties to the acceptance of every body as a Prof. of the N. C. University at Chapel Hill, he was imprudent enough to entertain and express an independent thought, just such thoughts as Macon & Gaston & Ruffin of that state used to entertain & utter, and was at once proscribed and banished. He is regarded by every one who knows him as fully competent to the discharge of the duties of a scientific chair in any college. The only trouble has been that in the heated campaign of last summer he fearlessly expressed the opinion that this government was not established as a great slavery propagandizing machine and that the true interests of the Southern states did not justify the extension of the area of human servitude. I enclose you herein a letter of Rev. Mr. Bird to a friend of mine in this place. I have several on the same subject, but I will not trouble you with them.

When at Iowa City, Mr. Lathrop<sup>15</sup> told me that Mr. Dean

<sup>15</sup>H. W. Lathrop, one of the editors of the *Iowa City Republican*.

was ready to come to the State this spring & put the University in complete operation if possession could be obtained of the capitol building He therefore expressed the hope that that might be done. Now, as the capitol & University are both located by the new Constitution I do not propose to take any action in the matter until the constitution is acted upon by the people, unless it shall be at the instance of the Iowa City citizens. The new constitution will be adopted by 20,000 or 25,000 majority and thus the whole question will be set at rest without the assumption of any responsibility on my part. But, if, the Trustees of the University and citizens of the town generally concieve that it is of any importance to inaugurate the University President, Profs. &c. at once, i.e. this spring and so signify their desires in some tangible shape, by petition for instance, so as to justify me in acting, I shall have no hesitation in doing so. It is a matter about which I am perfectly indifferent, save that I would like to see the University & especially the Normal school under good head way.

I am convinced that the new constitution is destined to be popular and that it will be adopted by an overwhelming majority. The democracy as a party are too shrewd to be driven into opposition to it. Some of them were disposed to do so in the convention, but the more wary saw the trap and avoided it. I have seen Johnston, Gillaspay,<sup>10</sup> Harris & Palmer since their return from the convention & they are uniform in the opinion that there will be no organized opposition to its adoption in their counties of Lee, Wappello, Davis & Appanoose; all democratic.

Our main efforts must be directed to carrying the legislature in October There can be no trouble about the August Elections. As far as it regards any aspirations that I may have, I wish my friends to entirely disregard them and labour alone for the advancement of our party & its principles. I desire to prevent our party from being dispersed (?), scattered upon [illegible] before it is firmly consolidated, above all, I do not want to see this done before I get out of office. I have aided in keeping them together pretty well. We are in

<sup>10</sup>Col. George Gillaspay, Ed Johnston, both leading Democrats of the state.

a much better condition than I expected we would be in two years ago. It will be very important to us, that we secure the right kind of a man for Governor in October. If we get a weak man, either intellectually or politically we shall be swamped. I would suggest your name, if I did not think it better for you to be a candidate for Congress next year with a prospect for a Senatorship two years hence. If however, you prefer to be a candidate for Governor in October, or if you prefer to be a candidate for the Senator in place of Jones," you may rely upon my co-operation and aid. I am disposed to assist in elevating those men who can do us the most good. I want somebody in Congress from this state who has some common sense. We have failed in this regard hitherto.

If I should be a candidate I would meet with a very warm opposition from my townsman Col. F. H. Warren. He imagines that I ought to have assisted him into the Senate two years ago, when I did not deem it my duty to mingle in the strife, going on for that office.

Pray let me hear from you at an early day.

I am very truly your friend

[S. J. Kirkwood]

James W. Grimes

(Private)

Burlington, 24th March 1857

My dear Sir

I like to be well thought of when I think that I deserve to be, but I always feel exceedingly foolish & [illigible] when I receive credit for a quality that I am conscious I do not possess. It is a relief to me, therefore, to know, that you have not so exalted an opinion of my '*political sagacity*' as some of my friends have been disposed to attribute to me.

I suggested the positions named in my former letter for three reasons.

- 1st Because I know you to be competent to fully & satisfactorily discharge the duties of the offices
- 2d Because as a matter of policy, I want to see some men placed in prominent positions who have been hitherto

<sup>17</sup>George W. Jones, of Dubuque, U. S. Senator from Iowa 1849-1859, having held numerous political offices before that time, a leading Democrat in the state.

attached to the democratic party &

3d Because, (without any flattery at all, I say it) on account of my personal regard for you, and for the manner you sustained me last winter, & I might add

4thly Because I have not got my heart set upon the office of Senator and would without any hesitancy forego any aspirations for that honorable position. Indeed, you are the first man with whom I ever spoke upon the subject.

It is perfectly agreed in this part of the State that the new constitution will be adopted by an overwhelming majority. Indeed, so far as I can learn, there is no settled positive opposition to it. Now in this view of the case, who shall be our candidate for Governor in October.

I can not listen to your suggestion to be a candidate. There must be a vigorous canvass. Dodge will probably be the democratic candidate & as he will stake his whole political fortunes on the issue of the contest, he will fight with desperation. I found last fall when I travelled over a part of the state that a wet day or a good deal of fatigue would knock me up & I am satisfied that I have not the physical ability to canvass the state. The truth is I used myself up for all such purposes the year I was a candidate before. There are other substantial reasons why I ought not to be & would not be a candidate again, but this is enough to assign at present. This disposes of me.

You say you will not be a candidate & I confess that I would rather you would wait until next year & be a candidate for Congress in place of Davis<sup>18</sup> who will not be a candidate. Who then shall it be? Of all the men whose names have been mentioned I am convinced that in every point of view Jno. A. Parvin of Muscatine would be the best man, for the reasons,

1st He resides in the central part of the state which has never yet had a governor nor a candidate for the office.

2d He was an old democrat, and his election & even his candidacy would have a tendency to strengthen and consolidate our party.

3d He can make a strong canvass; is a man of good char-

<sup>18</sup>Timothy Davis, Whig member of Congress from 1857-1859, resident of Dubuque and Elkader, Iowa, a prominent business man.

acter, respectable attainments and of fine presence.

4th He would make a most excellent officer. He has the moral stamina to say *NO* when that important word ought to be uttered. He will keep our party from running into the old latitudinarism doctrines of the whigs, being himself pretty radical, and he is withal a pretty shrewd, sagacious politician. How he is in relation to the Senatorship & how his influence might be exerted in case of his election, I know not nor does it matter.

The Lieut. Gov. should be taken from the North or North west. What say you to this programme?

[No signature]

[S. J. Kirkwood]

Burlington. 26 April 1857

My dear Sir

I am duly in receipt of your two favors of the 3d & 22d insts.

I am still firm in the conviction that the new constitution will be adopted by an overwhelming majority.

In this section of the state two out of every three voters will be for it. Such will be the case, for the most part in all that part of the state south of the Iowa river. About Iowa City, in Cedar, Iowa & portions of Linn County, on account of the Capital question, there will be a small division (?) against it, but it will not amount to much outside of Johnson County.

I know of no republican in the north who opposes its adoption save Noble in Clayton County, who is supposed to be controuled entirely by personal considerations.

The democrats find so many of their men in favor of it, that they dare not take ground against it. Surely after this springs Election, when the democrats had every thing their own way, when they [illigible] themselves of the cry of negro evidence, negro equality, [illigible] republican profligacy in state expenditures & not one one[sic] papers to defend us & our course, & still we carry the state, we have pretty good evidence that *we have the power to carry the state if we will*. The fact is, there was more capital made against us on the

score of the new constitution at the recent election, than there ever can, or will be again. We have sustained the shock of their attack & we shall now rally for the victory.

I concur in your views in relation to the convention. It will never do to call a convention to meet before the August Election. There would be no objection, indeed I think it would be admissable to call a convention in advance of the election to assemble say about the 20th or 25th Augst. so that our candidates can make as full a canvass as possible I think well of the idea of nominating Judge Smyth.<sup>19</sup> There is no man in the state for whom I would vote sooner than for him. I think the Lieut. Gov. should be taken from the *way* north From thence comes our majority & they should be favoured.

By all means refuse to call a convention to assemble before the election. It would play the d—l with us. At the same time, I am confident that the new constitution will receive not less than fifteen thousand majority, & more if there is a full poll.

Your friend truly  
James W. Grimes

[S. J. Kirkwood]

Burlington, 18th June 1857

My dear Sir

Is your State Centl. Committee doing any thing towards organizing the party in the State for the August election? Whatever may be the views of some of your committee in regard to the new constitution, it seems to me that self preservation requires that we should endeavor to get out a full vote in the several counties for county officers. I am well aware that in some counties, the result will in a great measure be controuled by local questions, but so much the greater reason that we should preserve our majorities intact in other counties. There is no question in my mind that the new constitution will be adopted by a decisive majority. If so, the August election will give the key note to the tune to be played in October.

If our troops do not stand firm in the skirmish about

<sup>19</sup>William Smyth, of Marion, appointed judge of the district court, 1853.

the outposts, we cant' expect much of them in the final engagement. It seems to me that something should be done, and that right speedily.

Our friends in Minnesota have done gloriously. They have furnished us the first instance since the foundation of the government where a Territory has gone otherwise than democratic.

They have achieved their victory against fearful odds. All the patronage of the Genl. Govtm. and all the officials that they could flood the Territory with, were arrayed against them, backed & sustained by an imported Irish brigade of two thousand votes, or more. We can do just as well, if we are united

Can not you impress upon the people intrusted in Worth, Winnebago, Cerro Gordo & Hancock that the two former counties can only become constitutional & the lines of all satisfactorily adjusted under the new constitution?

Your friend truly

James W. Grimes

[S. J. Kirkwood]

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Burlington, 14th July 1857

My dear Sir

Yours of the 5th inst. has been duly reced. I have cheering news from all parts of the state and shall increase my estimate of the majority for the new constitution. The entire republican party will vote for it with the exception of Johnson, Clayton and Allamakee counties and a very respectable portion of the democratic party.

As for the new Governor, of course I do not desire that any man should be a candidate against his will, but you must put your declination on some other ground than the f..... of ..... You can not be beaten, nor indeed, in my opinion, can any respectable man be defeated, who may be nominated by the republican party. The democrats are doing the very thing to insure us success even if we had no majority by their insane folly in so bitterly opposing the adoption of the new constitution

Here the anti Dodge & anti Jones democrats are all for the

new constitution; are pretty strongly so. It will receive 1000 majority in Lee County. It will have large majorities in almost all of the South Eastern Counties.

I think it would be well to have our confidential friends in the several counties written to by the Central Committee urging them to cause [?] for the constitution, or whatever the words are, to be printed on all our tickets.

There has been great neglect in distributing the constitution in some way, or at least I would think so. I have never seen a copy except in the newspapers.

Your friend truly  
James W. Grimes

[S. J. Kirkwood]

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Burlington 24 Oct. 1857

Dr Kirkwood

Find a note from my successor<sup>20</sup> just reced. It seems that this capital question was one of the principle strings pulled in the west & south & some was compelled to pledge himself as to what *I* would do. I think my course is the only judicious one under the circumstances, though I may not be & probably shall not be sustained in it at Iowa City. I enclose this to let you see how the matter stands.

The Senate is 23 to 13— we only lose one member from last year. We shall always be sure of Iowa hereafter. Ohio has gone just right. Chase<sup>21</sup> is elected & the democratic legislature will be compelled to manage the finances, a tolerably difficult think (sic) to do. They will feel very much as the man did who drew the Elephant as a prize before the year is out.

I suppose Penn Clark & Co. will be very bitter against me. Warren is particularly so I understand. He told some of the democrats before the election that he only desired an election to defeat me. Still I voted for him & did every thing in my power to secure his election. Will you take the trouble to write to some of the holdover Senators on this subject of

<sup>20</sup>Ralph P. Lowe, a leading Whig and Republican politician, unsuccessful candidate for Governor in 1850, succeeded Grimes in 1858, was a justice of the state supreme court in 1860-1862, 1866-1867.

<sup>21</sup>Salmon P. Chase, one-time gov. of Ohio, a Whig-Republican, member of Lincoln's cabinet, and of the U. S. Supreme Court; a long time acquaintance of Grimes.

the Senatorship & to others whom you may know? I dislike exceedingly to approach a man directly on the subject & yet I do not wish to improperly invoke the aid of others.

Let me hear from you.

Your friend, in haste,

James W. Grimes

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Burlington Nov. 5, 1857

Dr Kirkwood

Yours of the 31st of last month is at hand

The "American element"<sup>22</sup> in the republican party in the state does not amount to a "row of pins" It is wholly confined to your locality

Thorington<sup>23</sup> has written to all the members I have seen several of them. They will injure rather than benefit him. He stands no possible chance for election

Rankin<sup>24</sup> has been here ten days at Court. I have seen him every day. He is not *against* me. Col. Saunders told a friend of mine that Harlan<sup>25</sup> & his friends are for me—that he (Harlan) did not expect a re-election to the Senate. I think this is so. *You must strike for his place. You know you can rely upon my help & you can get it just as well as not.*

I have no fears about my election. The principle opposition to me, unless Judge Smyth becomes a candidate, will be from DuBuque. That ambitious city insists that our Senator must always be from Du Buque & will present Mr. Bissell<sup>26</sup> of that ilk. Bissell is a man I never saw,—is represented to be a good lawyer & a good man, but so far as I know, he has never been particularly identified with the republican party or done any thing to promote its success except perhaps to vote. I understand from a friend at DuBuque that the members of the DuBuque & Pacific R.R. Co. are particularly anxious on his behalf. I know one editor who has been offered \$600 to support him & another \$200. They pre-

<sup>22</sup>The "Know-Nothing" nativistic element.

<sup>23</sup>James Thorington, prominent political leader of Davenport, a Whig member of Congress 1855-57, defeated for re-nomination by Timothy Davis.

<sup>24</sup>John W. Rankin of Keokuk.

<sup>25</sup>James Harlan, Whig Senator from Iowa, 1854-65, 67-73.

<sup>26</sup>Frederick E. Bissell of Dubuque.

ferred to support me for a similar consideration & I told them to go to the d—l.

The opposition to me *personally* originates with Col. Warren of this place & is carried out by Penn Clark & Morris of your place & a few others. But it amounts to but little.

I would like to have you write *to all* the members that you know, if you are willing to do so, and give them your views on the subject. I do not really believe that there is any need of it, but there is nothing lost by activity in such matters

If "*An attempt is made to drive you to support some one else*" by your constituents, do not injure yourself by refusing. Agree to go against me in caucus if they desire it. There will be no harm done by it, I think. *AT ANY RATE*, preserve your own standing at home. You are under no pledge or obligation to any one but me & I release you from all obligations on the subject, I do not intend that any *friend* of mine shall be d—d or injured by his friendship for me, if I can help it. Have no scruples, therefore in acting as if the whole matter were an open question and according to Mr. Milton "The whole world before you, ————— to choose"

I have still got the ague, or rather have had another attack of it, after a lapse of two weeks.

Let me hear from you often,

James W. Grimes

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My dear Sir

Your favor of the 1st inst. has come duly to hand. I send you by this mail a "Report on the Des Moines River Improvement" including all the contracts with the Company, the opinion of Atty. Genl. Cushing &c. &c.

A copy of the act making the grant to the State will be found in Mr. Cushings opinion, Exhibit No. 3

This Des Moines Improvement is a humbug If the lands were now devoted to building a Rail Road, there are enough left to build one to the Minnesota line. I think that to be the true policy of the state & think it can be accomplished without difficulty.

I was aware that the design was to beat you. Jones & his friends had their hearts set upon electing Duncombe<sup>27</sup> as he is a warm friend of Jones and an agent of his Rail Road. The whole influence of the Rail Road was brought to bear against you. It seems to be a kind of political machine & is now to be used to elect Mr. Bissell of Du Buque to the U. S. Senate. Perhaps its managers will learn wisdom after this contest is over.

I hardly think Duncombe will contest your seat, as he cant' elect Jones by being in the House, since the republican majority is so large, but you can judge of this better than I can. At all events it is best [to] be prepared for any movement.

You should procure the certified poll books from all the counties in the District, or least of those giving you majorities. The absense of a regular seal will make no difference. The County Judges can adopt a temporary seal. There is not a county in the state in which a half dollar or a dollar has not been used as a temporary seal. In the certificate, let them, say "In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand & affixed the temporary seal of this County. No permanent seal having yet been provided, this — day &c'" & then let the temporary seal be affixed, whatever the county Judge may adopt.

We shall not allow you to be ejected from your seat for any such reason as you assign in your letter.

Who were the men who perished on the expedition after the Indians. One I think was Capt. Johnson, who was the other? I wish in my message to speak of them & have forgotten the names. Will you please inform me by letter.

Perhaps you are aware that I am a candidate for the Senate in lieu of Gen- Jones & I think with a certainty of success. My principle competitor will be Mr. Bissell of Du Buque. He runs on the geography question. I understand him to be a very good man but he is a man I have never even seen.

I do not know how you feel on this question. If you can conscientiously give me your support I shall surely always

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<sup>27</sup>John F. Duncombe, land and railroad attorney of Ft. Dodge, a life long Democrat, member of the 8, 9, 14-18 state legislatures.

feel very grateful for it, but I wish also to say, that your failure to do so, will in no degree lessen my respect & esteem for you.

Your friend  
James W Grimes

Burlington Nov. 11 1857  
[C. C. Carpenter]

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Burlington Nov. 17, 1857

Dr Kirkwood

I am heartily tired & sick of this Senatorial canvass & if there was any honorable way of getting out of it, I would do so at once. I see that some of my foes are resolved to defeat me, or defeat the party & it is my impression that they will be successful in either event in swamping us. I am well satisfied as to the expectation & desire of our party friends throughout the state. But the politicians dont' intend that that desire shall have utterance if they can help it.

I see that the "Maquoketa Excelsior" brings out Isbell<sup>28</sup> of Linn County. The Editor is Moriarty<sup>29</sup> late Public Printer. He professed to be a warm friend of mine until I told him very plainly that I would not countenance or submit to his attempts to swindle Teesdale<sup>30</sup> out of his office, to which the Genl. Assembly elected him. He undertook to urge as a reason why I should favor him & oppose Teesdale that he was favourable to me & that Teesdale was conspiring with Penn Clarke against me. I stoped him at once & told him I had heard all that, that Teesdale had an undoubted right to be either for or against me & that his proclivities towards this or that man would not influence me an atom. To revenge himself, he is now against me as you see. So we go. I do not think the Bissell movement is going to amount to much unless all the odds & ends unite on him. I do not know any one north for him unless it be Cooley<sup>31</sup> of Winneshiek, others, perhaps, *may* be brought over to him for sufficiently *weighty* reasons.

<sup>28</sup>Norman W. Isbell, justice of the state supreme court, 1855-56, judge of a district court, 1862-64.

<sup>29</sup>Peter Moriarty, state printer, 1855-57.

<sup>30</sup>John Teesdale, editor of the *Iowa City Republican*, later editor of the *Des Moines Citizen* and the *Iowa State Journal*.

<sup>31</sup>E. E. Cooley, Decorah, Iowa, member of the 7th General Assembly.

Penn Clarke has been here with R. L. B. Clarke<sup>32</sup> & Warren two days. I cant' learn what success he has had on his trip. I think not much. I do not know any one who is very likely to vote for him this way.

I have just got a letter from Noble who says that all this Bissell "*Splurge*" is designed for the benefit of Tim Davis who is to come in to beat all ———s. He is opposed to the whole movement. Write me often. Have they instructed you to vote for Clarke? Do not refuse to do it, keep yourself strong at home, though I *know* he would cut your throat politically in a minute. You are in his way. He knows it & he will attempt to kill you off in some way. You can safely agree to vote for him in caucus.

Your friend truly

James W. Grimes

Do you learn the position of any of the Members?

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Burlington, Nov. 30, 1857

My dear Sir

Yours of the 24th Nov. is at hand & be assured that I feel grateful to you for the contents.

I shall recommend the payment of the troops as you desire. Indeed, I am now writing a paragraph of my message on that subject & have written to Col. Richards<sup>33</sup> to forward me full report of disbursements &c. to be submitted to the Assembly with the message.

If I do not recommend a diversion of the Des Moines River grant to a Rail Road I shall favor it. But I think I shall recommend it. There would be no difficulty in carrying such a measure but for the land grant Rail Roads. The one terminating here is indifferent to it. The Vice President who is the active man of the company favors it. But the three northern roads will be bitterly hostile to it, especially the DuBuque & Pacific. Still I think it can be carried. You may count on my cheerful & active co-operation. If elected, as I hope & expect to be, I shall remain at the capitol during the winter. Lowe & other friends are very anxious that I

<sup>32</sup>Rufus L. B. Clark, of Mt. Pleasant, Whig member of the 1857 Constitutional Convention.

<sup>33</sup>Charles B. Richards, lawyer and business speculator of Ft. Dodge.

should & I am rather anxious myself. I certainly will be in that event, for I will want to help our friends manage matters so as not to dismember our party in the State. I don't want to be in office without a party in the state at my back.

It is an honor to be a member of the next House of Rep. It will contain more talent than all the Houses we have had since the state was organized.

You must have a talk with Wilson<sup>34</sup> of Jefferson County in relation to your schemes as soon as you reach Des Moines.

Wilson was a leading man in the constitutional convention and will be a leading man in any deliberative body. He is what is called a "singed cat." He is prudent, cautious, sagacious and if he has a mind that way, can be eloquent. He is a good politician & will see at once the policy of strengthening & giving prominence to our republican friends in your quarter of the state. The trouble in this respect heretofore has been that none of you ever let us know that there were such men. Richards was the only republican I ever heard of at Ft. Dodge until I accidentally came across your Presbyterian clergyman at Cedar Falls, & I heard of him by accident. By the way, pray give my kindest regards to that clergyman. I have forgotten his name, but I was much pleased with him.

I am very truly your friend

[C. C. Carpenter]

James W. Grimes

Burlington Dec. 4, 1857

Dr Kirkwood

I have just reced your letter.

Do not allow Clarke to get the inside track of you in any way. He wants to get rid of you by some unpopular movement on your part & if voting for me will injure you, you must not do it at all.

If I go down, I do not intend to take any of my friends down with me if I can help it. At any rate I do not want to.

Judge Smyth is to be a candidate & will be much the most respectable & formidable one. He will command the support of Linn, Jackson, Benton, I presume.

<sup>34</sup>James F. Wilson, member of the 7th and 8th state legislatures, member of Congress, 1861-1869, U. S. Senator, 1882-1895. A warm friend of Grimes.

I wish you would make the suggestion to Wilson that you mentioned to me. It wont' do for me to do it & it would come with no bad grace from you. His place is perfectly on the floor for that is where his services will be needed.

You are a *doomed* man as well as myself. The great Moguls, Clarke, Warren, Miller<sup>35</sup> have marked you. We would be in a bad plight if they had any people at their

Yours truly James W. Grimes

backs. They have none in this part of the State.

I am much more afraid of Smyth than of any one else. *He* is the dangerous man.

Burlington 15 Dec. 1857

Dr Kirkwood

Yours of the 9th inst. is reced & I hasten to answer to your queries at once.

In regard to Judge Smyth I only know that Thompson<sup>36</sup> wrote me. He says Smyth will be a candidate & that the Linn delegation will stick to him to the end.

The Clayton County men will probably be for me. Yell (the old member from Clinton) writes me that the Clinton Rep. are for me & thinks that the Senator will be also. Atkins & Cooley of Winneshiek, Woodward of Buchanan, Streeter of Black Hawk, Harmon of Bremer, Brown & Richardson of Fayette, Carpenter of Webster & Dana of Story are for me. I am told that Trumbull of Butler will probably vote for me.<sup>37</sup>

The men who are not for me are Rep. Scott 3—Cattell & Wright Cedar 2, Linn 3, Benton 2, Delaware 1, Louisa 2, Washington 2, Mahaska 2 Jasper 1 = in all 18 of these, but for local considerations I would get the Scott, Cedar, Linn, Benton & Delaware leaving only seven against me.<sup>38</sup>

The Harlan men (there are very few of them) might be against me did they not know that the men who are opposed to me are opposed to him also and are only waiting until I am slaughtered to cut his throat. The whole warfare, no

<sup>35</sup>William Miller, Whig-Republican lawyer, judge of the district court, and justice of the state supreme court 1870-1875.

<sup>36</sup>William Thompson, Democratic member of Congress, 1847-1851.

<sup>37</sup>Jeremiah T. Atkins, E. E. Cooley, J. S. Woodward, Zimri Streeter, W. P. Harmon, Aaron Brown, Robt. A. Richardson, C. C. Carpenter, John L. Dana, Mathew M. Trumbull, William A. Thurston.

<sup>38</sup>Jonathan W. Cattell, of Springdale, and Ed. Wright, latter Sec. of State.

matter what character it may assume in different localities, is all inspired by Col. Warren.

He will be at Des Moines expressly to defeat me. He represents to those who do not know better that I defeated him three years ago & elected Harlan. I wish I could take the credit of that achievement, but it is not due to me. The charge is false 2d That I defeated him for the House last Oct. This too, is false. I did all I could for him & he knows it can be proved by a cloud of witnesses. 3d That I never did any thing for the Republican party of this last, I will say nothing, leaving the decision to those who know my career in the state ever since I have been in it.

I am writing my message. I am going to give them a *blizzard* on 1st Dred Scott, 2 Kansas, 3 Centralizing influence of the central government. Is not really this last influence becoming fearful in this country. Look at the removal of John McKane[?] because he voted for an honest man in a municipal election, look at the employment of spies & agents in Kansas & Mr. Buchanans attempts or desires to controul the banking institutions in the country.

I start to Des Moines on the 28th inst.

Your friend truly  
James W. Grimes

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Dr Kirkwood

Just as I expected & told you would be the case, I am now sick with the ague. I am about the house but am compelled to take medicine & am now under its influence.

I reached Muscatine in safety & spoke there the morning after I left you to quite a large crowd. I found our friends disponding. I cheered them all I could & put forth my best efforts, but I confess that I expected them to be beaten because there was no organization. There was no effort made to get out the full vote of our party, whilst the democrats were thoroughly organized and drilled.

We have had accounts from Johnson except in Des Moines, Muscatine & Johnson we have done admirably. The majority in Lee for the democrats is small & Rankin is elected over Thurston. The demo. majorities in Van Buren, Decatur &

Wayne are greatly reduced. So also, it is reported of Wapello. We have carried Jefferson by over two hundred, Henry 813-Louisa 270, Scott & Clinton, Keokuk, Mahaska & Washington.

The Senate so far as heard from will stand 21 to 15 i. e. we are sure of 21 Senators. The House of Rep. is more doubtful, as far as heard from we stand 18 Repub to 15 democrats. If we have done as well in the South west as we have in the South East there will be no trouble. Warren does not lack five votes of an election. He has been the cause of all our trouble here. Coolbaugh<sup>39</sup> hates him most desperately. He furnishes both money & brains to the democratic party. He would have furnished neither had not Warren forced himself upon the ticket. Coolbaugh I *know* did not desire to be & would not have consented to be a candidate a candidate for the Senate had not Warren run on the other ticket. As it is, he is Elected by more than 300 majority.

Pray send me the news as you get it. Write me often.

I have directed Sells<sup>40</sup> to issue the proclamation about the capital & University. I expect you people to be down upon me about it. But really I know not how to escape from doing it & I really believe it to be to the interest of Iowa City, Des Moines & the State that the matter should be definitely settled.

I want Teesdale to get the paper at Des Moines or else establish one there. The incidental printing will be valuable this winter & hereafter. I cant' of course raise any *money* to aid him in these hard times, but I will help him by endorsement if that will do any good.

Your friend [illigible] with many infirmities at this present writing

Burlington 16th Oct. 1857

James W. Grimes

Burlington Oct. 28, 1857

Dr. Sir

Yours' of the 26th inst has been duly reeed.

Enclosed please find the authority for the auditor to issue his warrant.

Is it yet known at Iowa City what is Gov. Lowe's Majority?

<sup>39</sup>William F. Coolbaugh, highway and railroad builder and investor, member of the 5, 6, 7, 8 state legislatures, lived in Burlington, later removed to Chicago.

<sup>40</sup>Elijah Sells, member of the first state legislature, Sec. of State from 1854-58, a strong and powerful Republican leader, he was the valued political friend of Harlan. Later removed to Kansas and then to Utah.

Do you know precisely how the Senate & House stand? Sell's Count & mine disagree. I do not see where he gets so many republican members in the House of Rep.

Yours truly  
James W. Grimes

[W. P. Clarke]

Dr Kirkwood

Enclosed is a letter from Mr. Davis to me in answer to one I wrote him, in which I suggested that perhaps you would not desire to be a candidate. You can see how he feels on the subject. I am convinced that he will never, in the world, go for Thorington I do not wish to controul you at all, but I want you to make up your mind with a full knowledge of the facts. Re-enclose to me Davi's letter

For Heavens sake, never let one of the Asylums go to Vinton as recommended by a comtee in the House. Write me often I pray thee.

If you must have another session I trust it will be our Extra session & not an adjourned session

Your friend, truly  
James W. Grimes

Burlington 27 Feb. 1858

Dr Kirkwood

I learned from a source entitled to credit, that the democrats have now resolved to prevent any thing being done this winter. They have agreed to debate the Dred Scott resolutions a week or ten days and they think that they can take up a week's time with them in the Senate. Their 'game' is to render this General Assembly as obnoxious as possible that it may become "a stench in the nostrils of the people." I declare I am afraid they will succeed; we seem to have some very impracticable fellows, in the House especially, who act as if they were actually combined with the democrats. If we can get the election law, apportionment & state Bank laws enacted I will be satisfied, but it should be done speedily. There is too much loquacity in the legislature too many *great* men for our good.

You can rely upon the aim of the democrats, I have it direct enough to believe it.

Burlington March 6, 1858

Your friend, truly  
James W. Grimes

Dr Sir

Your note in which allusion was made to the state arms has been duly reced. I have also seen the "Des Moines Journal" in which a special message of Gov. Lowe is referred to. I cant' believe that Gov. L. is correctly reported. If he is, he certainly sent in an extraordinary message.

The amt. of arms belonging to the State is, I think, about 1900 muskets. The number & description were set out in a message sent to the special session of the Genl. Assembly held in July 1856.

There are also at Keokuk, Davenport & Du Buque each, one 4 pounder field piece in the charge of the proper artillery companies or their officers, and there were some revolvers, of which I caused to be delivered some to the Warden of the Penitentiary.

The gentlemen whose minds are exercised on the subject of allowing them to be sent to Kansas will have a jolly time proving any such charge against me. I never had the possession or custody of any portion of the State arms for one moment. They were immediately turned over to Gen. Geo. W. McCleary<sup>41</sup> who was the Adjutant General and he placed them in the charge of some warehousemen in Iowa City who are unknown to me, Some of them may be taken to Kansas or Nebraska (?), for ought that I know, but if so, I have no knowledge of it & had not instrumentality in their going

This is altogether the most *investigating* Genl. Assembly I ever knew. There are doubtless one or two other comtees projected, if not under weigh, by this time.

The democrats generally, are going to sustain Buchanan. They are gradually coming over & by midsummer, the greater part of the rebellious will be fighting valiantly for the "spoils" under the presidential banner. I think that after this winters work at Des Moines, the passage of the Lecompton bill will be the only thing that can save our party. If I believed, therefore, that the end even —tified the means, I think I should pray for its adoption.

Burlington, March 11, 1858

Hon. S. J. Kirkwood

Your friend, truly

James W. Grimes

<sup>41</sup>George W. McCleary, Secretary of State, 1850-56, Adj. General, 1855-57.

Burlington Dec. 29. 1858

Dr Kirkwood

I have had a long search for the receipt for the two land warrants & have at length found it.

It is dated 28th Feb. 1857 & signed by Clarke, Kirkwood & Lucas

The warrants are No 11771 for one hundred & twenty acres dated 20th Augt. 1855 & issued to Alden (?) Walker; and No. 77425, for one hundred & twenty acres dated 19th June 1856 & issued to David Smith. The above discription of the warrants is as found in the receipt, that being the only memorandum or description that I have of them

I am very truly

Your friend

James W. Grimes

Dr Kirkwood (Between us)

Did you ever conceive of a more absurd & ridiculous production than the enclosed.<sup>41</sup> Is the man really demented? or is he only a natural born fool? A state officer—appointed by the Governor & paid by the State, yet, it seems that he actually refuses to serve those counties that will not agree to pay him additional compensation. If his proposition was made privately instead of openly, it could be regarded in no other light than as an attempt to secure a bribe.

This thing will play the d——l with his ducks for Congress this fall. It would beat any man in the world and it ought to. Our friends cant' defend his position in this circular & must not attempt it.

I wonder why, according to his theory, the state pays him a salary of \$2000 at all?

I have not mentioned this circular to any one and am ashamed to.

Let me hear from you. You will *have* to be a Candidate for Congress. I do not see how we can get along without you. With you & Curtiss<sup>42</sup> I will be willing to go to Washington

Your friend

Grimes

<sup>41</sup>Circular of Jas. Thorington, re being made the agent of counties in the matter of swamp lands in their county.

<sup>42</sup>Samuel R. Curtis, West Point graduate, engineer, lawyer, and Civil War soldier, was a Republican member of Congress from 1857-61, when he resigned to enter the army.

Nearly dead with rheumatism. Shall see you at Iowa City soon

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Dr Kirkwood

I reced. yesterday, a letter from Tim. Davis saying that he did not wish to be & would not be a candidate for re-election & that he was for you as his successor. He also wished to know what I thought about it & whether or not you would consent to be a candidate. I have not yet answered him. What shall I say to him?

I have just written Wilson about a Bank Commission & asked him to consult you. He will tell you what I think about that matter & save me the trouble of re-writing. Let me hear from you soon. Your friend

James W. Grimes

[1857 or 1858]

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There is going to be no doubt of our success in October. The result in New Hampshire, where we have gained largely and in the township elections in New York, show that the predicted reaction has not taken place. The recent decision in the Dred Scott case is driving all the Fillmore & strait whigs into our ranks and some democrats. Kansas will make a heavy draw upon us during the year, but our majority will increase nontheless.

Let me hear from you

Your friend  
James W. Grimes

[1858]

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(Private)

Burlington, April 24, 1859

Dr Kirkwood

I have just seen Judge Stone<sup>43</sup> of Knoxville & Wooden of Sigourney, on their way from Washington County to Jefferson. Wooden as you know perhaps, belongs to W. P. Clarke & Morris, I have had no conversation with him, but with Stone I have.

I learn that Clark & Morris are resolved to oppose & defeat

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<sup>43</sup>William H. Stone, judge of the district court, Col. of the 22nd Iowa, and justice of the state supreme court following his term as governor, 1864-68.

you-if possible. They think that they can do it by obtaining a strong delegation to the State Convention who will be opposed to you. This, I learn, they boast that they can do and give out that they intend to set about doing it at once. A part of the *programme* is to elect Morris to the Senate from your county. Price<sup>4</sup> of Scott is to be their man for Gov. He hates them all most heartily I know, but they have concluded that they would rather have an enemy than to take you. Especially as Price's selection would not so much militate against the aspirations of Clark to the Supreme bench.

Now, the question is, are you going to allow this thing to happen? It depends with you precisely, whether or not it shall be done. I do not think that Lowe can be nominated. Price is a first rate man personally, but he will be a weak candidate His connection with the M & M. R. R. Co. will weaken him & then he has said some very bitter things as a temperance advocate that will be remembered against him. It is possible that he may secure the German vote of Davenport in some way, but I fear that he would lose it elsewhere. These things would not effect him at all, were the election to take place next year with the Presidential election, but they certainly would to a greater or less extent, this year.

Let me hear from you

Your friend truly  
James W. Grimes

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Burlington, April 28, 1859

Dr Kirkwood

Your favor of the 24th inst. is at hand.

Were it not for Penn Clarke & Morris there would be no opposition to you any where to amount to any thing, but they are resolved, as I learn, to stir up all the strife that may be possible. To be forewarned is to [be] forearmed & I will therefore tell you their *programme* & their arguments. They intend & profess to expect to carry your county of Johnson against you and then select a strong & bitter delegation against you. They then intend to urge two arguments against you,

<sup>4</sup>Hiram Price was an outstanding financial and business leader of Davenport, an ardent temperance man, a figure in railroad building in Iowa, a member of Congress from 1863-69, 1877-81.

first, that you did nothing in the last canvass & second, your connection with the State Bank. I get this from Judge Stone who got it from Clarke & Wooden. It is a part of their plan, for some reason or other, to elect Martin L. Morris to the State Senate from your county. The whole of this movements is is (sic) instigated by these men for the purpose of making Clarke a Judge of the Supreme bench and to prevent any man from Johnson County save themselves from holding any position of honor or trust in our party. They are equally bitter against Judge Smyth and every other man in your part of the State except Price, and then only favor him because they wish to use him as an instrument with which to demolish you.

It is very evident that you & all other decent men in your part of the state have got to have a fight with this clique. You have got to succumb entirely or fight & conquer. You, Smith (sic) &c. are all in the same catagory. Now, you can subdue them if you but will it. But you must go at it at once & secure the votes in convention of Johnson Linn & other central counties. See Smyth & consult with him. Write to all your acquaintances throughout the state telling them that you are a candidate, that you want to be nominated & that you want their aid to bring that result about.

As for canvassing the state for you if you are nominated, it would be wholly work of supererogation. You cant' be defeated if you are nominated.

Go to work with a will, Do not let these rascals have their way.

Your friend, truly  
James W. Grimes

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Dr Kirkwood

Your letter came to hand & was shown to Cook. He now promises to be at the convention. You will be there of course. It is going to be no contest at all. It seems that nearly every body is in your favor. Even Lee County delegates will only vote for Lowe once by way of complement and then cast their votes for you. I was there twice last week & saw all parties each time. Lowe did not mention the

subject to me, but I could see by his appearance & acts and I was told by others that he does not expect to be re-nominated. His great hope now, is that he may be taken up for one of the Judges of the Supreme Court. In this he will be disappointed for they all wish Sam Miller<sup>46</sup> for that place. Danl Miller<sup>47</sup> too is a candidate for the bench, but entirely without votes or influence.

If delegates favorable to you are appointed in Johnson County I can not conceive where the opposition to you is to come from. Morris & Clarke are resolved to defeat you if effort & money can do it. Why does not your paper republish some of the articles from its exchanges favorable to you? I do not see that a paper in the state advocates the re-election of Gov. Lowe.

Your friend, truly

Burlington 24 May 1859

James W. Grimes

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Burlington, May 29, 1859

Dr Kirkwood

Your favor is at hand. I cant believe that there is any truth in the report about the state aid project. No man with a thimble full of brains if he desired the success of our party would seek to have our convention endorse in any way, either directly or indirectly, such a scheme. It would blow us at once to the d——l. No man standing on such a platform could get any votes in this county. Jefferson, Henry, Louisa, Wapello, Van Buren & I would not vote for such nominees myself I am a republican upon principles, but my republican-ism does not require me to become instrumental in a great scheme of state & private swindling as in Minnesota. Our policy is to say nothing about it, *pro* or *con*, and this, you will find, will be the view of the convention, when assembled. A few men in Du Buque & Keokuk may attempt to secure Lowe's re-nomination by this dodge secretly, but they cannot be fools enough to do it openly.

Our democrats are all for Lowe, of course. They hope his

<sup>46</sup>Samuel F. Miller, prominent Keokuk lawyer, later elevated to the U. S. Supreme Court by Abraham Lincoln.

<sup>47</sup>Daniel F. Miller, member of 3rd territorial and 25th state legislatures, was elected a Whig member of Congress in a disputed election in 1849, was seated and served 1850-51.

nomination & then they will publish some of his foolish letters in favor of state aid written by him last autumn. In this way they hope to get the question drawn into the canvass, by which they can lose nothing & may gain. Outside of Lee, Polk & Du Buque counties I do not know any body in favor of his nomination in our party.

Your compromise with Clarke is probably prudent & is certainly safe. He has no friends, no strength any where. I would like to know who the many republicans are residing in other parts of the state who want him nominated as stated by the "Republican" of your city. The truth is he is exceedingly odious & could not be elected if he was nominated.

You must keep at work, remembering that "no one can tell who is Governor until he is *elected*."

Cook<sup>47</sup> says he will go to Des Moines. You must not fail to be there.

Your friend, truly  
James W. Grimes

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Burlington, 25th June 1859

Dr Kirkwood

I hope it is not necessary for me to say to you how much I am gratified at your nomination. The truth is, the entire ticket suits every body here. I have not heard a word whispered against it, and I have not learned that there is a particle of dissatisfaction with any part of it, any where, except among the democrats. They, I am sorry to say, are very much incensed at the nomination of Mr. Rusch.<sup>48</sup> His nomination has deprived them of their entire capital upon which they expected to conduct the campaign. What is the use of talking about the Mass. Constitutional amendment whilst Rusch's name is on the ticket as a constant reminder that we do not uphold the principle of that amendment? Why were you so cruel as to spoil their nice investment in "Col. Schade"<sup>49</sup> who was imported hither expressly to meet

<sup>47</sup>John P. Cook, member of the 5, and 6, territorial, the 2 and 3 state legislatures, was elected a Whig member of Congress, 1853-55.

<sup>48</sup>Nicholas J. Rusch, German emigrant, and Republican candidate for Lieutenant-Governor in 1859 to secure the German vote.

<sup>49</sup>Louis Schade of Burlington, a Democratic German newspaper editor, later of Washington, D. C.

the exigencies of this contest? They are exceedingly angry at your want of consideration of their desires to carry the state this fall & upon this question, for they could make no votes on any other, they thought, & hence they have been compelled as an after thought to dig up the temperance question, state expenses, negro schools &c & try to galvanize them into life in their platform.

The democrats intend to give us a hard fight, but we shall carry the state by not less than 5000 maj. I think. They think that they have nominated their best man & I agree with them in that, so much the greater will be the credit due to you for defeating them. I am told that they intend to place Dodge on the stump with you to make a general canvass of the state. Harlan, I learn, will also be in the field until the day of election. Dodge is expected here to day. Had you not better come down & make up your list of appointments with him. I want to see you.

I shall write to Rusch to day urging him to write to his German friends all over the state to organize the German vote so as to bring it to the polls *en masse*. There are two, or three thousand Germans in the state who have not yet secured their last papers. The names of all such should be discovered, they should get their final papers and be brought to the polls.

How is friend Clarke? I hope he possesses his soul in peace & patience

Can't you get some of your Ohio friends to make us a speech or two in the State, Sherman<sup>60</sup> or Ford?

Your friend, truly  
James W. Grimes

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Burlington June 26, 1859

Dr Kirkwood

I wrote you yesterday. Since then I learned that Col. Warren on the cars & boats (?) on the way to Des Moines was very busy repeating that a regular bargain was entered into between you & I two years ago when you went north with me, according to the terms of which I was to be elected to the

<sup>60</sup>John Sherman of Ohio, then a Rep., later a Senator and a cabinet member.

Senate and you was to be Harlan's successor: that you was [to] be the candidate for Gov. and canvass the state thus making yourself as popular as possible & the man to go before the Legislature for election. This story was designed to influence Harlan, Hiram Price, Davis, Bissell & Wiltse<sup>51</sup> & their friends all of whom, it is said, have some aspirations senatorward. You know precisely how much truth there is in this cunningly devised fable and you will of course know how to counteract its evident design.

I am told that a great many men professed to see the hand of Ahab in the doings at Des Moines. What fools some men allow their suspicions to make of themselves.

Your friend truly

James W. Grimes

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Burlington July 14, 1859

My dear Sir

I have caused the enclosed to be copied & now return the original to you.

I wrote to Kasson<sup>52</sup> yesterday to cause your & Harlan's appointments to be published at once

Do not fail to take the proper steps to learn specifically the precise steps taken by the democrats at their meeting in Des Moines, on the 28th inst. and get the information to me.

I have no news from any quarter. I am satisfied that every thing is right throughout the state, still you must work early and late to place the result beyond a peradventure. Dodge will not get *one* republican vote in this County, you must get as many democratic votes in Johnson as possible.

Yours truly

James W. Grimes

Remember, wherever you go, & in all your speeches to speak a good word for Rusch. He must not be allowed to drop behind his ticket.

[S. J. Kirkwood]

<sup>51</sup>Henry A. Wiltse, a prominent lawyer of Dubuque, at one time was U. S. Surveyor General in that city.

<sup>52</sup>John A. Kasson, chairman of the state Republican committee in 1859, was Republican member of Congress, 1863-67, 1873-77, 1881-84, and a successful diplomat in the foreign service as well as a delegate for the United States in many international conferences.

Burlington July 15, 1859

My dear Sir

Your favor of the 8th inst. has just come to hand.

It has been the constant policy of Gen. Dodge & his friends to boast of his ability, but he has never been known to display any of it. The real truth is, between us, he is a great vain pompous blockhead, who relies for his popularity upon the effect of indefatigability in shaking hands & inquiries for peoples families. He never did any thing & is incapable of doing any thing that evinces the slightest forecast (?) on statemanship. He came to Iowa with a commission in his pocket, he's lived here twenty-one years come September—has held office a little more than 19 years of that time & has drawn therefor from the public treasury \$105,000.

I never knew him to do any thing that excited attention at all except when in 1844 he published a letter urging the people of Iowa to divide the state by a line running north & south midway between the Miss. & Missouri rivers and when ten years there after, in 1854, he declared on the floor of the United States Senate as a fact of national importance "*that he had always blacked his own boots*" Notwithstanding the large amounts he has reced from the public chest, (more than an average of \$5000 per annum.) he has never been known to aid in building up any village or city in the state or to give to any charity, unless it be the catholic church of which his family are members, including his wife & children.

In a word, Gen. Dodge is about such a man as your Mr. Duncombe except that Duncombe is more fast (?)—a man of *quicker* parts than Dodge. You remember that intelligent Greeks & Romans hewed Gods from blocks of wood, gilded them & worshiped them. The democrats of Iowa have selected for their political god a material as near wood as possible and set him up for the admiration of their voting platoons. The gods of the Greeks & the democratic god will all receive the same fate. The latter will be tumbled down as unceremoniously in Oct. as the former were when light burst in upon the heathen minds of their owners.

Kirkwood was here three days trying to get Dodge to agree to make joint appointments with him, but Dodge declined,

first on one pretext & then on another. His keepers and grooms are too keen to allow him to get on the same stump or address the same crowd with Kirkwood. Kirkwood at length addressed him a letter making the proposition so that he would be compelled to decline in writing, which, if necessary, may be published. We shall do better this way than ever before. Our party is thoroughly united & harmonious. There is not a murmur of dissatisfaction with either the platform or ticket.

I am sorry that I have no more documents to distribute. I am entitled to only such as may be printed by order of the Cong. of which I am a member, & that Cong. has not assembled yet. Gen. Jones was entitled to all ordered up to the 4th March last. The few I did get were borrowed, to be returned in kind hereafter.

We hope to hear good accounts from your region of the state in Oct. I do not doubt that we shall carry the state by a greatly increased majority over that of any previous year. I shall be pleased to hear from you at any time.

Very truly your friend  
James W. Grimes

[C. C. Carpenter]

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(Continued)

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