

The Pioneer Historians of Iowa

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AS WE CELEBRATE the 125th year of the founding of the State Historical Society of Iowa, it seems appropriate to give attention to those early men—and a precious few women—who pioneered in the collection of Iowa's historical records, who wrote the first monographs dealing with the history of the state and who, under the authority granted them by the Sixth General Assembly, organized by the State Historical Society on 7 February 1857. This paper, it should be made clear however, will not be concerned with those persons who are generally regarded as the first historians of Iowa: Albert Lea, J. B. Newhall, John Plumbe, Isaac Galland, or even the greatest story teller of them all, Chief Black Hawk. For although these men produced documents of inestimable value to later historians, they were not, with the possible exception of Black Hawk, conscious of writing history as such.

Rather than these first chroniclers, attention will be given here to those who quite consciously and purposefully, through their own writings and through the written records and oral expressions of others, created a corpus of Iowa history. As writers, editors, and members of the board of curators, persons like T. S. Parvin, Frederick Lloyd, Samuel Storrs Howe, Sanford Huff, F. M. Irish, Hiram Price, Charles Negus, Benjamin

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Gue, William Donnel, Nettie Sanford, William Salter, N. Levering, D. C. Bloomer, J. B. Grinnell, Hawkins Taylor, and Eliphalet Price were the true pioneer historians of this state.

From the biographical data available, they would appear to have been a remarkably homogeneous group. Most of them had been born in either upper New York State or in New England, most notably Vermont. They had moved to Iowa either as children with their parents soon after the territory had been opened to settlement in 1833, or as young adults in the late 1840s and early 1850s. They were by and large professional men—lawyers, ministers, and rather surprisingly, physicians. But whatever their profession, they had a catholicity of interests and talents that approached the Renaissance ideal. Most had received some formal higher education—at Amherst, Middlebury, Hamilton, or lesser-known academies in New York or Ohio—and were well grounded in classical learning. On this frontier where most of the population were barely literate, they were able quickly to rise to prominence not only in their chosen professions, but in community service. Whatever their political antecedents may have been—and it was usually either Whig or Free Soil Democrat—they nearly all were active in the formation of the Republican party in Iowa in 1856 and remained ardent Republican partisans for the remainder of their lives, with only one or two straying off with that maverick Iowan, General James B. Weaver, into the wilderness of Greenbackism and Populism. Because of their prominence and their political competence, most of them sought and successfully obtained office at the county, state, and national level. They belonged, in short, to the elite of the open prairie, and they created an elitist society, with all of the strengths and weaknesses implicit in that kind of organizational structure.

Those who were not ministers were at least active Protestant church members, with the Presbyterian, Congregational, and Quaker sects in predominance. Most were strong temperance men who pushed actively for statewide prohibition of alcoholic beverages, and, if not open abolitionists, as many were, they were certainly united in their opposition to the extension of slavery. It had been their violent reaction to the threat the Kansas-Nebraska Act posed to Iowa, "the only free child of the

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Missouri Compromise," as Parvin called his adopted state, that led them to form a new political party.

As historians, they were, of course, strictly amateurs, but their amateur status led them to give a broader meaning to the word "history" than their more professionally oriented colleagues in the East, men like Edward Channing and George Bancroft, who tended to agree with the English historian, E. A. Freeman, that "history is simply past politics." Unfettered by narrow disciplinary training, they quite happily and naively crossed anthropological, sociological, economic, and literary boundaries and called it history, with the result that much of their writing in both substance and methodology strikes a curiously contemporary note.

Most of these men, even the physicians among them, had dabbled in frontier journalism, as proprietors, publishers, and editors of their communities' newspapers or church journals. Quite naturally then, as soon as the Society was organized, they began to consider establishing a journal of history.¹

The Sixth General Assembly may have given the State Historical Society its blessing, but it gave precious little else. With an annual appropriation of only five hundred dollars, it was not until late in 1862 that the board of curators felt there were sufficient funds to venture forth with a periodical which would be edited by whoever might be the corresponding secretary of the Society, elected on an annual basis. The first issue of the *Annals of Iowa* bore the historically significant dateline January 1, 1863—the day on which Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation went into effect. It actually made its belated and timid appearance late in February of that war-torn year.

The first editor of the *Annals of Iowa*, the Reverend Samuel Storrs Howe, after graduating from Middlebury College in his native state of Vermont, had attended theological seminary in both Andover and Princeton. After serving as minister in two small upstate New York towns, Howe had come to Iowa City in 1849 as minister of the Presbyterian church. Active in the for-

1. Biographical material on these early Iowa historians was obtained from a variety of sources, particularly Johnson Brigham, *Iowa, Its History and Its Foremost Citizens* (Chicago, 1915); Benjamin F. Gue, *History of Iowa* (New York, 1903); and Edgar R. Harlan, *Narrative History of the People of Iowa* (Chicago, 1931).

mation of the State Historical Society, he was ambitious for office in the organization he had helped to found, and was consequently quite available for the position of corresponding secretary of the Society and editor of the *Annals*. It proved not to be a happy choice. The Reverend Howe may have been an excellent minister of the gospel and a morally exemplary man, but these qualities do not necessarily go hand in hand with effective editorship. Howe not only crossed traditional academic disciplinary lines, he meandered all over the field of human and animal life. He seemed to have no concept of what history is, even in its broadest connotation, nor what should be included in a historical journal. An article on a bifurmed kitten born in some small town in Iowa would get the same prominence as the major discovery of Indian relics in Clayton County. In the curious and often revealing funereal style of that day, the author of a biographical sketch on Howe that appeared in 1896 wrote "Like the toad, locked in the rock of ignorant companionship, he seemed dull and shrivelled, but when liberated into the enlightened sphere of educated society, he expanded into the dimension of a genius." Unfortunately, the editorship of the *Annals* apparently had the effect of locking him "in the rock of ignorant companionship," for the product of his editorial efforts was indeed "dull and shrivelled."²

After two years, the secretaryship of the Society and editorship of the *Annals* passed to Theodore S. Parvin, and the journal's style noticeably improved. With his state-wide contacts, Parvin was able to solicit articles from correspondents throughout the settled parts of the state. It was he who found Eliphalet Price up in Clayton County and first introduced Price's genius for storytelling to the readers of the *Annals*. Parvin, to be sure, like Howe, also wrote a large number of articles for the magazine, but his literary style was as superior to Howe's as was his editorial judgment.

The first series of the *Annals* was to find its ablest editor, however, in Sanford Huff, an Iowa City physician, born in Erie County, New York, who a few years after graduating from the University of Buffalo medical department, immigrated to Iowa

2. Frederick Lloyd, "Samuel Storrs Howe," *Annals of Iowa*, 3rd ser., 2 (April 1896), 371.

and began medical practice in Iowa City in the year that the Historical Society was founded. After serving as field surgeon and participating in battle with the Twelfth Iowa Infantry from Vicksburg to Mobile, this remarkable man returned to Iowa City, resumed his medical practice and on the side, edited the *Iowa (City) Tribune* as well as the *Annals*. Under his editorial direction, the magazine grew in both quality and quantity, increasing from a thirty-page to a hundred-page issue. New writers were discovered who were to serve well both the *Annals* and the *Iowa Historical Record* for the next twenty years. Huff even induced the state legislature to double the annual appropriation from five hundred dollars to one thousand dollars.

WHAT WAS THE SUBSTANCE of the articles that appeared in the *Annals of Iowa*, first series, in the twelve years of its existence? A compilation of the topics dealt with reveals that the largest single category was that of county histories, there being eighty-three individual articles in this area with most of them being parts of serialized chapters of the history of a specific county. The very first article in the first issue of the *Annals* was "History of Scott County" by Willard Barrows. Barrows' history ran for five issues which greatly helped Howe in filling the first volume of the *Annals*.³ These were lengthy installments which happily did not leave too much room for Howe's accounts of bifurcated kittens and Mrs. Dunlap's Dreadful Accident.

No particular plan was evident as to what counties would be considered or the amount of space that would be allotted to each county. The selection depended on whether the editor could find a local historian for a particular county, and how verbose that historian proved to be. In all, the histories of twenty-four counties were presented in the pages of the first series of the *Annals*, ranging in scope from D. C. Bloomer's "History of Pottawattomie County," spun out with Scheherazade longevity over fourteen issues, to Polk County, which

3. Willard Barrows, "History of Scott County," *Annals of Iowa*, 1st ser., 1-2 (January 1863-April 1864), 8-261 *passim*. (Volumes from the *Annals of Iowa*, first series, are cited hereafter as *Annals*.)

rated but a single installment.⁴ (None of the editors of the *Annals* had any great love for the capital city or its county.) There was one surprising omission—no history of Iowa's oldest county, Dubuque. Could it have been that this Protestant, teetotal historical society had no burning desire to immortalize Iowa's major center of German Catholicism and anti-prohibition sentiment?

As might be expected, the second largest category was that dealing with the military history of the Civil War, with forty-nine individual articles, fifteen of them concerned with Iowa troops engaged in the first campaign in Arkansas, and nine with a seemingly interminable and incredibly dull "Report of the Campaign Against Major General Sterling Price in October and November 1864," which began in January 1870 issue and was still going strong when the *Annals* folded some five years later.⁵ This series, covering two months of a minor campaign, lasted a year longer than did the entire Civil War.

The very broad category of general Iowa territorial and state history contains forty-two articles, over a third of which are the contribution of Charles Negus in his series, "The Early History of Iowa."⁶

Non-military biographical sketches was the fourth largest category, with twenty-six individual articles, many of them being obituaries, covering the major political and religious figures of the day. Twenty-four of the articles dealt with the Indians of Iowa, their culture, their leaders, and the relics they had left to their white successors. Considering the prevailing contemporary attitude of American whites toward the Native Americans, it is worth noting that many of these articles were

4. D. C. Bloomer, "Notes on the Early History of Pottawattamie County," *Annals* 9 (1871), 523-533, 666-683; 10-11 (1872-1873), 41-628 *passim*; 12 (1874), 31-283 *passim*; H. B. Turrell, "Sketches from the History of Polk County, Iowa," *Annals* 3 (October 1865), 559-565.

5. Samuel Prentis Curtis, "The Army of the South-West and the First Campaign in Arkansas," *Annals* 4-5 (1866-1867), 625-933 *passim*; 6 (1868), 1-270 *passim*; 7 (1869), 1-316 *passim*; "Report of Campaign against Major General Sterling Price in October and November, 1864," *Annals* 8-9 (1870-1871), 50-631 *passim*; 10 (1872), 207-226; 12 (1874), 53-319 *passim*.

6. Charles Negus, "The Early History of Iowa," *Annals* 5 (1867), 877-882, 933-940; 6 (1868), 13-283 *passim*; 7 (1869), 21-326 *passim*; 8-9 (1870-1871), 1-652 *passim*; 10-11 (1872-1873), 10-603 *passim*; 12 (1874), 1-14.

surprisingly sympathetic in tone to the Amerindians and their leaders.

There were seventeen articles concerned with regional areas of Iowa—in particular, the southwestern and northwestern quarters of the state which were only then being settled. Ten articles were concerned with the origin and meaning of place names of Iowa. The meaning of the words "Iowa," "Des Moines," and "Hawkeye," were gnawed and worried over throughout this period in articles and follow-up disputatious letters from subscribers. One of the curiosities of our state's history is that for its most basic place names including the name of the state itself, there has never been a consensus on either origin or meaning.

The subjects slighted or omitted entirely from the *Annals* are as interesting as what was included and emphasized. Curiously, given the sentiments of the editors and of most of the members of the Society as well as the subscribers to the *Annals*, virtually no attention was given to the abolitionist movement in Iowa. There was a series of three articles on "John Brown Among the PeDee Quakers" by Frederick Lloyd, and one short and not very complimentary report on a lecture that Frederick Douglass gave in Iowa.⁷ But there is nothing on the underground railroad, nor on the remarkable opinion rendered "In the Case of Ralph, a man of color." One of the first cases to be heard before the Iowa territorial supreme court, this case anticipated by twenty years the Dred Scott case, but came to exactly the opposite conclusion—namely that residing in a free territory did give emancipation to a slave. The few passing references to blacks that appear in the *Annals'* pages are almost uniformly derogatory in tone: "quite as black and as ugly as the black race," is but one example. Iowans may have opposed slavery, but these articles expressed little love for the slaves.

Women were given even shorter shrift than the blacks—nothing derogatory, to be sure; they were simply ignored. Few women, incidentally, appeared in print in the *Annals* during the twelve years of its existence—with the exception of histories of

7. Frederick Lloyd, "John Brown Among the PeDee Quakers," *Annals* 4 (1866), 665-670, 712-719, 759-764; Sanford W. Huff, "Fred Douglass," *Annals* 5 (April 1867), 858-862.

Marshall and Franklin counties by Nettie Sanford.⁸

Given the attention paid to the military aspects of the Civil War, it is also strange that there is nothing on the Reconstruction that followed: nothing on the revolutionary three amendments to the federal Constitution nor on Iowa's own *avant garde* action in amending its state constitution to give suffrage and the privilege of office holding to its black citizens. The only oblique reference to the social revolution that was then being written into our national and state constitutions was the praise given to Senator Grimes for having voted against the conviction of President Johnson on the impeachment charges brought by the House of Representatives. Clearly, if Iowa were, as Grant said, "the one bright Radical star of the Union," then that star did not twinkle in the pages of the *Annals*.

The basic purpose of the *Annals*, however, was not to be a journal of opinion but rather to record and preserve the histories of those men and women who within thirty years had pushed into these open prairie lands, had plowed up the tough sod and put the rich land into marketable crops, had built towns and schools and universities, had fought the biggest war in our history, and were still alive to tell their stories. The editors of and writers for the *Annals*, fortunately, were acutely conscious of this historical heritage, still available but unrecorded, and they were equally conscious of the fact that the time for harvesting this historical crop was rapidly drawing to a close. The methodology used, quite obviously, was largely that of oral history, but without the technological advantages of the modern oral historian. So from out of their own memory and the memories of their neighbors, Irish, Negus, Levering, Taylor, Price, and Bloomer wrote their accounts. The resulting histories have all the advantages of first-hand personal experience and all the disadvantages of faulty memories and inaccurate transcribing of the oral expression to the printed page. Except for the Civil War pieces which are largely based upon actual documents, these pages contain little evidence of standard scholarship—no footnotes, no sources cited, very little in the

8. Nettie Sanford, "History of Marshall County," *Annals* 8-9 (1870-1871), 366-593 *passim* and "Sketch of Franklin County," *Annals* 10 (January 1872), 51-54.

way of attribution—who said what, when, and where. These histories are as unsophisticated in scholarly form as are Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

In literary style, the authors tended to nod rather more frequently, however, than did Homer. Some of the county histories are incredibly dull as they plod on for installment after installment. Frequently, there will be long gaps in the series, but after an absence of several issues, just when one begins to think, "Well, at last we have had an end to Marion County even though the most recent installment of a year ago said 'To Be Continued,'" suddenly there will be Marion back again with a new lease on life that may continue for another year.

Occasionally, however, in these serial histories, there will be a flash of humor, an unexpectedly good anecdote where one would least expect to find it. For instance, in the series "Prison Life" by a former Iowa prisoner of war, a serial that one would not normally turn to for laughs, there is a perfectly delightful little vignette that is rich in frontier humor:

Major E. M. Van Duzee, the author of this series, had been taken prisoner at Shiloh, along with most of his company in the Twelfth Iowa Infantry. The prisoners were then put aboard a train to take them to a prison camp in Alabama. As Van Duzee tells the story, when the train pulled into a town in southern Mississippi, there was a large crowd gathered on the platform to see the damn Yankee prisoners. Outstanding in the crowd was a woman with feet apart, arms akimbo, the largest woman Van Duzee had ever seen—a veritable Amazon. She yelled up at Major William Stone, who would later be governor of the state of Iowa, to inform him that she was the champion wrestler of Mississippi. "Bring out the best and biggest man you've got, and I'll whip him in less nor half a minit—I'm just the woman as can do that there thing." After demurring a bit, Stone decided to go along with the affair. "Did you know, Madam, that Horace Greeley is aboard?" Stone then told the crowd that Greeley had been down at Shiloh reporting on the battle for his *Tribune* and had been taken prisoner. Now if there was one name that was known and hated throughout the South—even better known and more hated than that of Lincoln—it was that of Greeley. The Amazon "lowed as how" nothing would give her greater pleasure than to grapple with Greeley and to pin him to the

ground. Stone then went back into the coach and persuaded Lt. Col. Quinn Morton, a giant of a man, six and a half feet tall and weighing close to three hundred pounds, to come with him out on the platform. As the gigantic figure of Morton emerged slowly out of the coach door, Stone said to the Amazon, "Madam, I should like you to meet the Hon. Horace Greeley of the *New York Tribune*." "With mouth wide open, eyes extended, and hands uplifted, the discomfited heroine exclaimed, 'Is that Horace? Wal, stranger, I reckon I'll have ter back out of that ere fight,' and the old lady subsided into the dense crowd of spectators amid roars of laughter from both sides." From that time on Morton while in the prison camp was known as Mr. Greeley.⁹

Another unexpected flash of anecdotal humor can be found in F. M. Irish's otherwise quite straightforward and factual serial history of Johnson County. In dealing with the churches established in Iowa City in the 1840s, Irish gave in some detail the account of the First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City. Rev. Michael Hummer was the first minister of this church, from 1841 to 1846. In 1846, Hummer was instructed by the Presbytery to go east to raise funds for the building of Des Moines College at West Point, in Lee County. The Reverend Hummer proved to be a most successful fund raiser, but as Irish relates, "the small amount finding its way into the church treasury created a suspicion that a large portion of it stuck to the Rev. gentleman's fingers." He was brought to trial before the Presbytery and dismissed from the ministry. Claiming that the church in Iowa City still owed him back salary, Hummer decided to collect what was due him in a most forceful way. The First Presbyterian had only recently completed its new edifice and had just received a magnificent new bell, the finest west of the Mississippi, from the best bell maker in the United States, located in Troy, New York. Again to quote Irish:

On a certain day in the year 1848, the peaceful citizens of Iowa City were thrown into a high state of excitement by the report being spread that Michael Hummer, accompanied by his pliant tool, Dr. Margrave, had arrived in the city . . . intending

9. E. M. Van Duzee, "Incidents of Prison Life," *Annals* 6 (January 1868), 63-64.

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to take the bell from the Presbyterian church. . . . Ascending to the belfry by the aid of a long ladder, they proceeded to unhang the bell and lower it to the ground. . . . By this time a number of citizens had gathered at the church and seemed bent on interrupting the plans of the ex-Rev. gentleman. They first removed the ladder, rendering his descent impossible. A conveyance appeared upon the ground, the bell was quickly loaded into the wagon, and escorted by some six or eight citizens, moved rapidly out of the city. . . . The Rev. Michael viewing the whole proceedings from the belfry, venting his rage and mortification in violent jesticulations and expletives, which would sound strangely coming from a pulpit. . . . The whereabouts of the bell remained a sealed mystery to him, and to nearly all of our citizens for some years. At length the following facts were developed: The company taking the bell from Hummer, proceeded up the river . . . where the bell was sunk in deep water. This was to remain a profound secret until the difficulty between Hummer and church could be settled. . . .

But they had a traitor among them who secretly removed the bell to another point in the river, and when it was sought for by the parties hiding it, it could not be found. Nothing further was ascertained of the whereabouts of the bell until the return of some of our citizens from California, when the mystery was revealed.

David Laumreau, a native of England, who belonged to the Mormon church and had been living in the city for some years, and James Miller, started in company for California. They took the bell from the river. . . . It was secretly loaded upon an ox-wagon and transported across the plains, over the Rocky Mountains to Salt Lake City, where it was sold to Brigham Young, for a sum far below its value, and is now being used to call the "latter day saints" together to their strange and heathenish worship.¹⁰

This is the conclusion of Irish's account of "Hummer's Bell," but not the end of the story. The readers of the *Annals* were so moved by this account, that many sent in poems celebrating Hummer's deeds in the belfry. The pastor of the Presbyterian church in Iowa City, still lacking a bell for his church, took more pragmatic action. He wrote directly to Brigham Young in Salt Lake City asking if the bell was still there and if

10. F. M. Irish, "History of Johnson County, Iowa," *Annals* 6 (October 1868), 305-307.

so, he would like to have it back. Young's prompt response, faithfully reprinted in the *Annals* of January 1869, informed Reverend Osmond that indeed "The bell is still laying [*sic*] here idle, as it always has done, and is at your disposal . . . whenever you please to send for it, accompanied with sufficient evidence that you are authorized to receive it for the congregation for whom it was manufactured."¹¹

Unfortunately, that is the end of the story. Although new versions of the poem "Hummer's Bell" continued to appear sporadically in later issues of the *Annals*, there was no further mention of the return of the bell. Did the First Presbyterian Church in Iowa City ever get its bell back? The *Annals* never told its readers. One thing is certain, however. The Old Brick Church in Iowa City has a long and fascinating history of controversy that long predates the difficulties of the 1950s and 1960s.

OF ALL OF THE WRITERS for the *Annals* in these early years, the most colorful pioneer historian is Eliphalet Price of Elkader, Clayton County. He was a frequent contributor, and he never nodded—nor, for that matter, did his readers. Two examples only of his genius for storytelling will have to suffice. One is entitled, "The Maniac of the Border," an account of an adventure Price had in 1835, when with a couple of other hunters he went up the Volga River in northeast Iowa. Price is a master of descriptive narrative, of setting a mood through pathetic fallacy, and of telling a good yarn. He demonstrates some of the extraordinary talents of a Washington Irving or of an Edgar Allen Poe. In this particular story, Price meets a strange wild, white man, obviously demented, who offers them no harm, but rather bellows at them the words of Isaiah, "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Later, Price and his companions are taken by some friendly Winnebagoes deep into a cave and there in that underground cathedral, they again find the maniac

11. See Sanford W. Huff, "Hummer's Bell," *Annals* 7 (January 1869), 74-75, for Brigham Young's letter. Also see poems on "Hummer's Bell," in *Annals* 7 (April 1869), 193-194 and *Annals of Iowa*, 2nd ser., 2 (January 1883), 27.

standing high up in a natural rock pulpit. He again bellows the words of Isaiah, while the Indians, holding high their torches, murmur a response. "Without pausing for a moment," Price recalled, "he launched forth in the Anglo-Scottish dialect, with a strain of religious eloquence so marked with erudition that it was irresistible to believe otherwise than that his better days had been expended as a Scottish student. But what had brought him to these cavern wilds? What drove the exile from his native land? While we were resolving these questions over in our mind, he seemed absorbed with the contemplation of religious subjects, sweeping with biblical research among the allegorical gems of the prophets. . . . Again he would burst into the wild laugh of the maniac . . . and then, as the glistening tear drops coursed down his long beard, he would murmur in a plaintive tone some verse from Scotland's bard." Following this strange ritual, the maniac leads the Winnebagoes out of the cavern and into battle against an invading Sauk tribe. The maniac is as demoniac in battle as he is in the pulpit. The Sauks are defeated, and shouting from the hilltop, "Why England has no braver boy/ Than Scotland's gallant, bold Rob Roy," the maniac disappears up into the hills above the Volga. We never know who he was or what he was doing here in the wilderness. The story continues to haunt the reader a century and a half after the event.¹²

Another of Price's articles is entitled "A Scene of the Border," and it is a straight adventure story. The young Sioux Indian shoots and scalps a Winnebago, who he thinks has murdered his brother. He has, however, killed the wrong Winnebago. The Winnebagoes demand justice. The United States army, which is stationed at Fort Atkinson to keep the peace between the Winnebagoes and the Sioux, intervenes. A settlement satisfactory to both Indian tribes is reached. Three weeks from that date, the Sioux Indian, unarmed, will be given a twenty-yard lead. If he can outrun a band of twelve Winnebagoes and their tomahawks and get back to his tribe's encampment some twenty miles distant, his life will be spared. Otherwise, if the Winnebagoes capture him, they can kill and scalp him.

The young Sioux becomes something of a favorite of the

12. Eliphalet Price, "The Maniac of the Border," *Annals* 8 (January 1870), 19-28.

army. Two officers in particular, Lieutenant Reynolds and an army surgeon, take pity on him and decide to train him during the three weeks before the race so that he can escape his would-be assassins. They put him on a rigorous training schedule, and within two weeks, to quote Price, he is able "to perform the incredible feat of a mile in three minutes and 9 seconds." Incredible, indeed.

The day of the race arrives. The young Sioux, his face painted black with a white horseshoe imprinted on his forehead, takes his place at his starting point, twenty yards ahead of his adversaries. He has been carefully tutored that when the signal is given, not to run directly forward but to veer sharply to the right for two yards and then straight ahead. He does as he is told. His enemies' tomahawks whizz harmlessly past him two yards to his left. For several miles, twelve of the Winnebagoes are able to keep within twenty yards of him, but without their tomahawks, which they have expended, they are unable to hit him, and with his speed they are unable to catch him.¹³

The many stories of Eliphalet Price which appear in the *Annals* should be collected and reissued. Did Price write true histories of his early days on the frontier with the Indians? Probably not, but the question is as irrelevant as that asking whether or not Irving wrote true histories of the Hudson Valley or Mark Twain of life on the Mississippi. Here is a forgotten genius that needs revival.

In spite of the editorial skills of Dr. Huff and his successor, Frederick Lloyd, and in spite of the popular appeal that Price's stories had among the subscribers, the State Historical Society by the early 1870s was in serious financial difficulties. More and more frequently such plaintive notes as the following, of January 1872, began to appear in the *Annals*:

Five hundred dollars a year is the meagre appropriation granted by Iowa toward the support of her historical Society; whereas, Wisconsin, two years her junior as a state, grants hers six thousand three hundred dollars a year, and Minnesota, still younger, gives hers three thousand five hundred dollars a year—this in money. But besides, those young states appropriate to the

13. Eliphalet Price, "A Scene of the Border," *Annals* 6 (January 1868), 31-36.

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uses of their Historical Societies spacious rooms, fuel, light, postage stamps, and stationery, and are equally as liberal as Iowa in the gift of public documents. And above all of this, Wisconsin and Minnesota extend the hand of encouragement and approbation to their Societies, while on the contrary, Iowa seems to treat hers as an intruder and beggar.

It would seem as if no state had more use for, and did so little to encourage, historical work, as Iowa. . . .

The report of the Board of Curators asks the restoration of the appropriation made by the twelfth general assembly (which was three thousand dollars a year, in addition to five hundred dollars a year permanent appropriation) and a sum sufficient to erect a suitable fire-proof building for the society. . . .

Volumes on volumes of Iowa newspapers lie unbound, and therefore useless; hundreds of pictures remain unframed, and so invisible; scores of maps are unmounted, and consequently of no present utility—all for the want of a few hundred dollars, which the legislature from year to year strangely withholds. The Historical Society asks nothing from the legislature as a boon . . . believing as it does, that there are in both branches of the fourteenth general assembly statesmen and scholars enough to secure a just recognition to so important and valuable a public institution as the State Historical Society.¹⁴

Alas, there did not prove to be quite as many statesmen and scholars in the Fourteenth General Assembly as Editor Lloyd had hoped for. His impassioned words fell on deaf ears. The only response from the legislature in respect to history was to cut the appropriation for a professor of history at the state university and to dismiss T. S. Parvin from his job. The state historical association's annual appropriation remained at five hundred dollars.

Two years later, the first series of the *Annals of Iowa* ceased publication. Although D. C. Bloomer hastily finished his history of Pottawattamie County for the final issue of October 1874, we never did get the concluding chapter, if indeed there ever was to be one, of the campaign against General Price, October and November 1864. The series ends abruptly with the notation, "To be continued."

14. "State Appropriation for the Historical Society," *Annals* 10 (January 1872), 77-79.

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

The *Annals* reappeared briefly for three years, 1882 through 1884, as a private venture under the direction of its first editor, Samuel Storrs Howe, with disastrous results, which blessedly were short-lived. The only memorable issue of this second series of the *Annals* was the last for which Howe, having turned the publication over to a group of unnamed Iowa City citizens, was not responsible. This entire issue was devoted almost exclusively to an article by Jennie McCowen, M.D. Entitled "Women in Iowa," it is quite a remarkable document that must have entailed a great deal of quite sophisticated research. Although more sanguine in tone and in its conclusions than most feminists would approve of, it nevertheless provides specific data on the number of women in various occupations, including the professions, and then compares the wage differentials between men and women engaged in the same occupations. It remains today an important piece of quantitative historical research.¹⁵

The *Annals of Iowa* was to reappear, phoenix-like, a third time, in 1893, again under state sponsorship, with the creation of a separate State History Department in Des Moines. It has been in continuous publication ever since.

Meanwhile, the State Historical Society in Iowa City managed just barely to survive the 1870s, but without a publication and with virtually no funds to continue its important work of collecting and preserving Iowa's history. By 1885, however, the Society was finally able to launch a new historical journal, the *Iowa Historical Record*. Some of the old writers were still around to send in their contributions: N. Levering, who had moved to Los Angeles; Frederick Lloyd; and the ubiquitous and seemingly immortal, T. S. Parvin. But Eliphalet Price and Hawkins Taylor were gone, and new writers, Benjamin F. Shambaugh, Johnson Brigham, and Laenas Weld were beginning to give to the journal a professional tone. Footnotes began to appear and there were regular scholarly reviews of recent books on American history. The age of the pioneer historian was over. In 1902, the Society changed the name of the *Iowa Historical*

15. Jennie McCowen, "Women in Iowa," *Annals of Iowa*, 2nd ser., 3 (October 1884), 97-113.

Pioneer Historians

Record to the *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* with Benjamin Shambaugh as editor.

SO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY BEGAN with high hopes for historical scholarship in Iowa. The state at last had a truly professional journal of history which was—and would be for the next sixty years—the equal of any state historical journal in the country. The fortunes of the State Historical Society never looked brighter. Johnson Brigham could conclude his lead article, "A General Survey of the Literature of Iowa History," in the first issue of the *Iowa Journal* on this high note:

At home there has also been much history-making. The files of our newspapers are rich in stories of the State's unhalting progress from good to better. Iowa has apparently settled for all time the status of the saloon. In handling the railroad question, having well survived the excesses of grangerism and the reaction from those excesses, it begins the new century with promise of a full and fair solution of that question also. Its citizens, having individually and collectively mastered the problem of financial independence, are now turning their thoughts toward the higher problems of individual and community life, thereby giving abundant promise for the future of the Commonwealth.¹⁶

To give added emphasis to Brigham's optimism, the Society in that same first issue told its readers that a chair of American history had at last been established at the university. Furthermore, the Society proudly announced that the board of curators had provided funds "for the compilation and publication of the Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa. The entire compilation will . . . contain all of the Inaugural Addresses, Biennial Messages, Veto Messages, Special Messages, and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa from 1836 to 1902. The complete set . . . will be issued before December, 1903. The subscription price has been fixed at six dollars."¹⁷

Has the Society and the State of Iowa lived up to the sanguine hopes that Brigham and Shambaugh had for the preserva-

16. Johnson Brigham, "A General Survey of the Literature of Iowa History," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 1 (January 1903), 104.

17. "Notes and Comments," *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* 1 (January 1903), 126.

tion and recording of the history of this state in the twentieth century? To a great extent, the answer must be yes. The Society has continued to flourish. Under William Petersen it finally got its permanent, fireproof home that Lloyd had called for back in the 1870s, and the Society has continued to serve the people of Iowa as their collective memory. It has published many distinguished books, particularly in the field of biography. Most recently, it has all but bridged the unfortunate chasm that existed with the creation of a separate Historical Department in Des Moines in 1888.

But lest we become overly sanguine, it must also be emphasized that we have never really replaced the late and much lamented *Iowa Journal of History*. Both the present *Annals of Iowa* and *Palimpsest* are valuable publications. Each serves a purpose and has its own constituencies. But neither is a substitute for the *Iowa Journal*. If three publications are too much for this state to bear, then let us keep the *Palimpsest* as a journal of popular history—our local version of *American Heritage*, but let us also put more resources into the *Annals* so that it can be what the *Iowa Journal* once was.

And finally, let us resume the work begun in 1902 and once again begin the publication of the state papers of the governors of Iowa. We have quite a gap to fill—almost the entire twentieth century. But there would be no more appropriate way in which to celebrate the 125th anniversary of Iowa's most venerable public institution than by these publishing ventures.

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