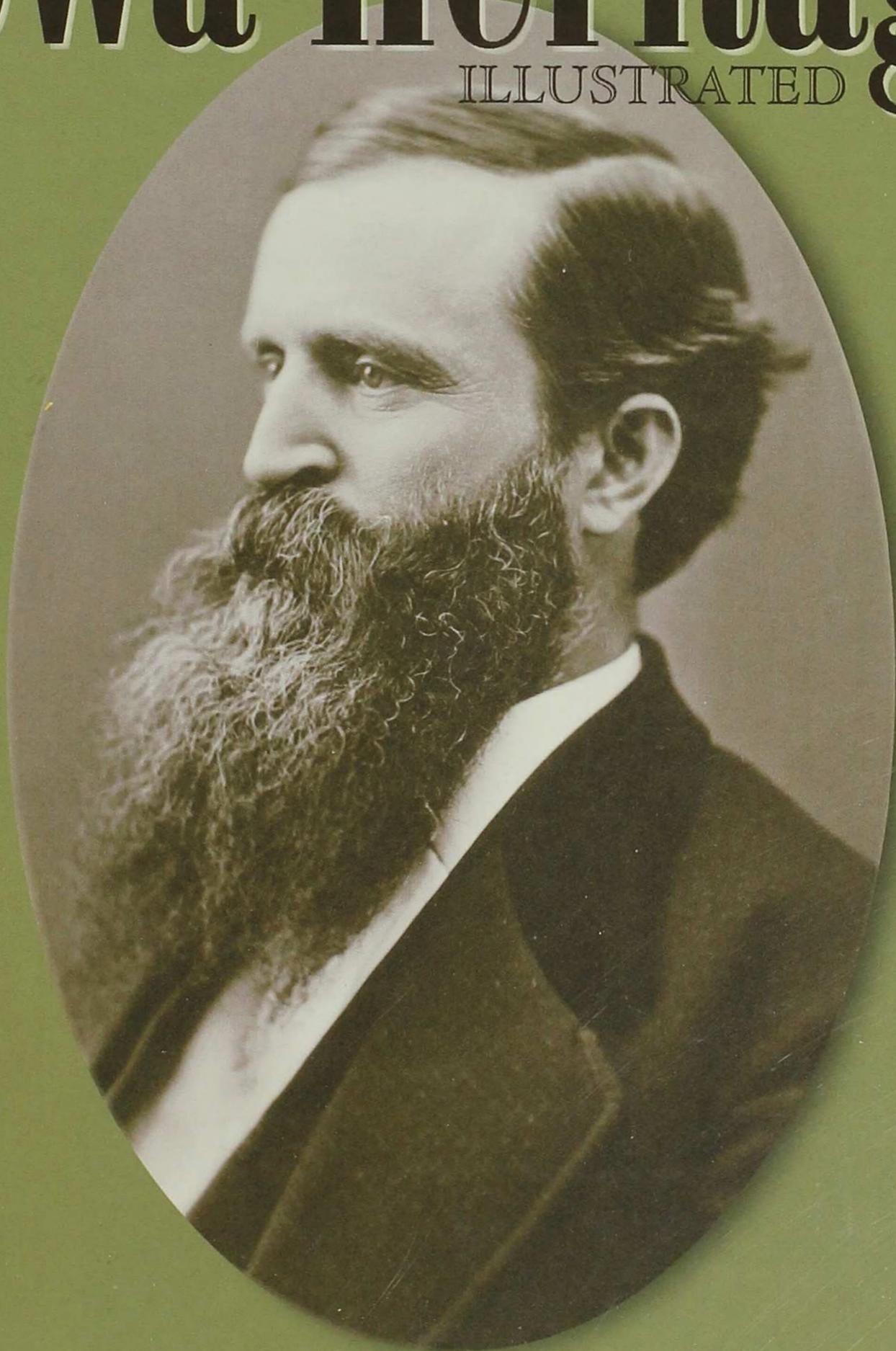


Keyes Among the Bohemians • Moving Calvin Hall • James Baird Weaver • Iowa Governors

Fall 2006 • \$9

# Iowa Heritage

ILLUSTRATED



# Front Porch

Dear Readers,

Late one November of an election year, citizens in Oskaloosa noticed a frantic reminder on the front page of the local newspaper: "There is no day to be lost—for it is just . . . 1436 days until the polls are opened for the [next] election of a democratic president."

Sound like today, when presidential campaigns begin dismayingly early? The breathless countdown to Election Day—a mere four years away—appeared in the *Oskaloosa Times*, on November 1880.

At least there weren't television ads then.

Dave Holmgren, one of our writers in this issue, found evidence of voters' dismay over too-early campaigns as he scanned rolls of microfilm for 20th-century political cartoons. Longtime Iowans will be pleased to see several cartoons by J. N. ("Ding") Darling, whom historian Leland Sage called "one of America's most perceptive cartoonists." Holmgren traces Iowa's political history through the medium of cartooning, interpreting the personalities of Iowa's 20th-century leaders and the issues they faced. By the way, his article ties in with the State Historical Society's museum exhibit "Portrait of a Governor: A Life, A Legacy." Make sure you check it out when you're in Des Moines.

This issue also presents one chapter in the life of an amazing Iowa politician—James Baird Weaver. Writer Bob Mitchell shows us Weaver as a passionate champion of the third-party Greenbackers. In researching the story, Mitchell delved into the State Historical Society's collection of microfilmed newspapers

from southern Iowa. He also used the James Baird Weaver Papers in the Society's Special Collections. Special Collections also holds the photos and ephemera that appear in Mitchell's article.

There's a lot more in this issue—partly because the State Historical Society of Iowa comprises far more than manifestations of our state's political history. The Society's collections of newspapers (from the 1830s to today), personal papers, and photographs inform many of the stories we present to you in this magazine, but those collections are only a fraction of what the Society has to offer you. Historic preservation, theater, children's programs, exhibits, libraries, state archives, historic sites, a museum, publications, assistance from the state curator, our scholarly journal *Annals of Iowa*, conservation labs—all devoted to Iowa history.

History is invaluable, and the cost of collecting, preserving, and sharing that history with you is hefty. That's where the Iowa Historical Foundation comes in. The foundation is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization; its sole mission is to generate support for the State Historical Society of Iowa and its programs.

Foundation director Sarah Pritchard loves to talk about the many ways you can help the Iowa Historical Foundation help the Society. Here's how to reach her: Sarah.Pritchard@iowa.gov, 515-281-8823, or at IHF, 600 E. Locust, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.

Thanks for your support of all that we do.

—Ginalie Swaim, editor

## Iowa Heritage Illustrated

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Share your thoughts with the editor and readers here on the Front Porch. Send letters or e-mail to address above. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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From the Society's Foster Collection

SHSI (IOWA CITY): FOSTER COLLECTION



Young orator John E. Foster, Iowa Falls, 1900



SHSI (DES MOINES): WEAVER COLLECTION

## On the Cover

In the late 1870s, Iowan James Baird Weaver exploded into national prominence over monetary policy, the nation's "colossal issue." He pushed Congress to vote with him: "Let there be no dodging to-day, no hiding in the cloakroom. . . . [This issue] is vital, permeating all classes." His dramatic story appears inside.

# Preparing for War in the Fat Land

by Charles R. Keyes

## Introduction

Archaeology was a lifelong interest of Charles R. Keyes, a native of Mount Vernon, Iowa, and a professor of German language and literature at Cornell College. Despite his lack of formal training in archaeology, Keyes's scientific approach distinguished him from other untrained archaeologists and led to his 1922 appointment as director of the Iowa Archaeological Survey, a position he held until 1950. His efforts resulted in one of the Midwest's premier collections of museum-quality specimens of Iowa's prehistoric artifacts and archaeological research data.

The following story, untitled and undated, was recently discovered in a box of memorabilia and manuscripts in the Keyes Collection. Set in 1917, it is a fictional account of how Keyes built his personal collection as a young man in Linn County. Due to its agricultural productivity and industrious Bohemian farmers, he refers to the area as the "Fat Land."

The story reflects Keyes's talents as a creative writer and his literary background, but it also refers to questionable collecting methods and reveals his lack of formal training. First, his early practice of buying specimens for his collection would be frowned upon by modern archaeologists. But the story also explains why he abandoned the practice, and readers would be well advised to learn from his experience. Second, he mentions excavating "with only hands to dig with"—the kind of pot-hunting to which professionals are opposed. Third, Keyes describes human skeletal remains

exposed by erosion, although he does not explicitly say whether any were collected. Possession of such remains today probably would be illegal, but the story took place when attitudes about Native American burials were different. The conclusion, in which he refers to Native Americans as "sneaking" and "marauders," also reflects stereotypes of that time. Keyes later developed a more respectful view.

The story has a ring of truth to it. Several specimens described in detail in the story correspond with actual specimens in his collection, the details of which he logged into a large catalog. Even though he used pseudonyms and created composite characters from the Bohemian farmers he knew, it is clear that Keyes drew upon personal experience and acquaintances to develop the story. His log lists the names and dates of the Bohemian farmers he visited. When this information is compared to historical plat maps showing land ownership, it becomes clear that he often visited several farm families on an afternoon or day-long trip. In the process of building his collection, Keyes was indeed "something of an itinerant preacher," as he calls himself in the story. One can easily imagine him boarding the interurban at Mount Vernon with a knapsack of cigars, getting off at the Indian Creek station at the east edge of Cedar Rapids, hiking along the Lincoln Highway or a local branch road, and stopping at each farmstead along the way to talk with his Bohemian friends.

—Michael Perry

**T**he season of 1917 was one of unusual stress in the Corn Belt. Not only had the mighty Fat Land failed to pour its usual superabundance into humanity's bread-basket, but everywhere was felt the strain of a country preparing for war.

Both these facts have more or less to do with the following story and also they were chief factors in our faculty's decision to hold its autumn picnic as usual. This had long been postponed and was presumably, indeed, given up—when suddenly our nerves showed symptoms, and our Social Affairs committee was instructed to proceed.

It was late November before we reached our favorite glen above the Palisades of the Cedar. On the ground

about us the aspen leaves were dancing along before the chill breeze from up the river; on the hills above us the purple-brown foliage still clung to the oak trees; above the hills the gray clouds parted now and then and bright light fell upon a landscape of rare beauty.

With appetites satisfied and the almost frosty air inviting to activity, how many of the colleagues would care to go on an Indian relic hunt?

Now generally I have to go alone, for one must be honest when questioned as to distances to be covered and the nature of the country to be traversed. This time, however, the three main objectives were reasonably close at hand and the attractiveness of the route was visible and indisputable.



With knapsack and walking stick, Charles Reuben Keyes prepares for a hike, probably at Linn County's Palisades-Kepler State Park in the 1920s. Keyes was born in Mount Vernon, Iowa, in 1871; he later taught there at Cornell College. Before joining its faculty in 1903, he was principal of Blairstown public schools, a graduate student at Harvard, and an instructor at the University of California-Berkeley. He died in 1951, after nearly three decades directing the Iowa Archaeological Survey.

This last to the increasing wonderment of Smith, the new botany man. Three months previously he had come to us in a very bad mental state after hours of whirling through an unending succession of cornfields, oatfields, cornfields, and ever more cornfields.

"Iowa!" he had snorted, in answer to our well-meant but foolish questions as to how he liked the country, "Iowa! Why, Iowa is a desert! Fat Land? Fat Land, bah!" Very down-hearted at first, he was now learning that Iowa's rivers always bear with them a broad train of timber-covered hills, and that the Palisades region of the Red Cedar especially, with its miles of undisturbed native flora easily accessible from the campus slope, might be quite as productive for the botanist as it was claimed to be for the collector of Indian relics. He would be pleased to go on an afternoon's tramp. Miller, professor of musical theory, had pondered much over the melodies of the modern Indian tribes and would try to interest himself for a few hours among the remains of the tribes that were. Other colleagues preferred the trail down the river along the cliffs or, with the women, the comforts of the fine campfire.

The ancient Indian cemetery across the river is situated in the angle where a small creek enters the main stream. It is in no way to be distinguished from the level, sandy soil of the river bank at this point and would certainly have kept its own secrets except for the annual spring excavations of the river itself, uncovering now some broken pottery, now some flint arrowpoints, and again some fragments of human bones. We were delayed in reaching this prehistoric burial-ground only by the botanist, who lingered in surprised interest over a clump of ninebarks and rattleboxes. With only hands to dig with, no great discoveries could be expected; nevertheless, a number of potsherds, some plain and others ornamented as though by impressions of twisted cords—these and a few broken arrowheads were enough to create the atmosphere for an afternoon of possible adventure and to give edge to the imagination.

Why, for instance, were some of the Indian burials of this region in mounds along the higher ridges and others in the level sands along the river's bank? Different tribes? Different periods? What ceremonies attended the making of these solemn deposits? When were they made? Where lay the Indian village from which the slow procession moved?

And then these arrowheads? Who made them? Where did the arrow-maker establish his workshop? To what years of the White Man's history did his activities correspond? Who came to purchase the product of his skillful hands? Quickly one's mind is lost in a maze of fancy.

Apparently very few of our questions could be an-

swered at all and then only in case conditions were just right and good fortune abounded. But this was to be our lucky day.

Along the foot of the hills lying perhaps a quarter of a mile from the river the ground slopes gently toward the floodplain and had been cleared and brought under cultivation. A Bohemian farmer had here turned the soil, the fall rains had completed the work of discovery—and there before us lay the clear answer to at least two of the queries that had run idly through our minds not ten minutes before. Scattered here and there over the surface or projecting from it were fragments of pottery made of hard-burnt clay, quartz-tempered, and showing exactly the same types of ornamentation as those found at the burial-ground. But pottery is an appurtenance of domestic life and where found over a large area its testimony cannot be mistaken. No doubt about it whatever, we were walking across an ancient Indian village site. Moreover, many chips and flakes of flint told their story of peaceful occupation as contrasted with the deeds of war-path or hunting trail. In one place they seemed to fill the soil. With such evidence before us there was again no need to guess; on this very spot in the long ago

*Sat the ancient Arrow-maker,  
Making arrow-heads of sandstone,  
Arrow-heads of chalcedony,  
Arrow-heads of flint and jasper.*

As Longfellow was wrong about sandstone as a material for arrowheads, just change this to hornstone and all would have been as literally true here as it was in the Land of the Dakotahs. Blue hornstone, milky-white chalcedony, pink flint, and brown jasper were all represented in the arrowpoints from the cemetery or the flakes that lay scattered about our feet. Another Indian village site located; another fine addition to Iowa's archeological map; another spot that would ever retain its interest, ever produce its treasures of stone and burnt clay.

ur further objectives were, respectively, Mr. Joe Kratoska and Mr. Frank Louvar. On the way to their steep-sided farms among the hills I had to explain to my companions that these river bluffs were settled years ago by Bohemian immigrants who might have had prairie farms but who took these up-and-down ones by preference, perhaps because they looked more like the land from which they came.

These were the people whose acquaintance had

been of first importance to me in the making of a collection of Indian relics. Big, patient, good-natured fellows they were, for the most part, who worked their farms, hauled wood to town, raised a family of Joes, Franks, Marys, and Annas, saved their money and perhaps, in time, added a prairie farm to their possessions and sent the children to college; or, in some cases, didn't save their money and dropped somewhere along the broad highway of alcoholism. They could tell an Indian ax or arrowhead when they saw one, for most of these people had a little collection of such somewhere about the homestead—in the nail-box in the tool-shed, on top of a barn girder, or in the sewing-machine drawer, nearly all found when plowing the corn the first and second times over, when the ground is mostly bare and every flint chip washed clean by the rains of May and June, and when the eyes must in any case be directed toward the soil.

Mr. Kratoska and Mr. Louvar had hauled wood to town earlier in the fall and had answered affirmatively my inquiry concerning the finding of "Indiansky šipki" ["Indian things," in Czech]. So often have my roadside interrogations, answered from atop some fine load of seasoned wood or hay, or good, fat swine, had favorable outcomes that I have become almost superstitious on the point and now felt much confidence as to those good new specimens that were to be acquired, or at least entered into my record of local antiquities.

A fortunate guess as to direction over the hills and through the timber from this roadless river approach and by mid-afternoon we were passing the time of day with Mr. Kratoska. "I suppose you want to look at those Indian darts," said he, "just wait a minute and I will bring them out."

Every collector of Indian relics who gathers his specimens from the original finder knows well the peculiar clinking sound of flint implements when jostled together, and every collector of anything at all will appreciate the tension of interest with which one awaits the forthcoming revelation. With a careless sweep of his hand Mr. Kratoska spread his boxful



**According to Keyes's catalog, farmer Frank Havlicek gave this celts to Keyes on May 22, 1915. Celts were used to gouge or hollow out wood. Actual size: 2x4 inches.**

ARTIFACT PHOTOS COURTESY THE AUTHOR

of relics over the well platform: about the regular run of arrowheads, both perfect and more or less broken, some of the stem-less type, others with shoulders, notches, or barbs; a small well-made and smoothly polished greenstone celts; a very good flint knife—all artifacts scarcely noted at the time in view of the magnificent specimen of even-toned pale gray flint that was nearly enough to disturb even a veteran collector's schooled composure.



**Perhaps 8,000 to 10,000 years old, this gray flint Dalton point was given to Keyes by Frank Blazek on the same day that Keyes acquired the celts. He describes just such an artifact—"a rare right-handed rotary spearhead"—in his fictional account. Today it is on display in the Museum of Natural History on the University of Iowa campus. Actual length: 5 inches.**

Now a flint spearhead five inches in length is not necessarily a great find, but this one was of a purity and beauty of material, perfection of workmanship, and rarity of form which would have made it a welcome addition to any collection [on] earth. From a deeply concave base the edges of the narrow blade expanded slightly in straight lines for the first inch; then, tapering evenly toward the point, twisted in a gentle spiral over toward the right until the blade formed an angle of some thirty degrees with the base—a unique and undescribed form of the rare right-handed rotary spearhead, delicately and regularly chipped throughout, the very climax of the flint worker's art.

But this relic, for the like of which wealthy collectors would fight each other at an auction sale with good American dollars, was the possession of an honest Bohemian farmer whose property rights ought to be respected and had to be satisfied. What method of acquisition would be successful and still leave the transaction on a reasonably ethical basis? This last is important, if one is to live pleasantly with one's own conscience; and in the long run, if one collects year after year over the same territory, necessary also from the standpoint of self-interest.

Now I confess to a feeling that, although a collector of things that must in most cases be bargained out of other people, I have managed to keep above that level of godlessness on which some collectors who boast their

bargains appear to live and move. For instance, that furniture fancier who exulted over his exchange of an ugly Morris chair for a genuine old seventeenth-century beauty from the hand of a Flemish master; or that Chicago woman, a collector of old china, who came out to the Amana Society colony in Iowa one summer day, gave five dollars to an unsuspecting old German for a perfectly preserved Apostle pitcher and then, with a laugh, informed the old gentleman that the piece was worth [a] good three hundred dollars in the city any day. It does not offend me at all to be called in general terms a sinner, but certainly it would inspire my wrath if nominated one of this particular variety. However, I shall have to stand or fall on my action in case of the Kratoska spearhead, for, in very truth, it is typical of many other bargains made in these latter years. My two colleagues stood by and witnessed the proceedings and, whatever they may have thought, have not, so far as I know, accused me of base moral turpitude.

But first, a word of explanation. For several years I tried to buy my Indian relics for cash at the market price or, for a specimen that couldn't be passed by, often more than a dealer would ask for a similar one. Never a very successful method, still, during the later nineties, when to acquire the sum of twenty-five cents a farmer had to part with a bushel of corn or three dozen fresh eggs, my collection made moderate progress. With the early years of the present century, which saw land values leap skyward and prices of products increase by leaps and bounds, the cash system became dolefully ineffective. Not that these Bohemian farmers cared any more for their Indian relics than they did before; left in their hands they were, as usual, lost amid the litter of the farmstead, hammered to see the sparks fly, or thrown at the cat; only, in the latter instance, they, the relics, never, never came back. I was constantly losing to the joys of collecting and the uses of science many an interesting and valuable arrowpoint, spearhead, or grooved ax, and sometimes the rarer bannerstone, plummet, or pierced tablet. It became necessary to do some effective thinking.

Why, after all, should a prosperous farmer, every item of whose possessions had suddenly trebled and quadrupled in value, be interested in the small sums that his relics were really worth? Why not crack nuts with them, use them to weight the cover of the pickle

jar, or let the boys use them as ammunition against blue jay or bull-frog—if it were any pleasure so to do? Moreover—and I suspect this was the chief reason for the failure of the cash method—the offer of money was bound to conjure up every evil spirit that presides over property rights, to display the lure of lucre, to arouse every instinct for the making of a good bargain. These sons of Bohemia knew the market value of the product of the corn rows, but not of the Indian relics that were picked up between them; the fellow from town might be offering far too little and making undue profits for himself; so better keep on the safe side—that is, keep the relics—or take one's own pleasure in losing them. The logic of this situation was perfectly clear: avoid the bugaboos raised by the suggestion of money.

Well then, what did these Bohemian farmers earnestly desire in life outside the realm of clinking coin and seductive specie? The answer occurred to me one day and I have not ceased since then to wonder at my earlier obtuseness and enjoy the benefits of my tardy wisdom: just cigars; yes, cigars and a little plain sociability. These men generally smoked a corn-cob pipe and cigars were a special compliment and good enough for Sunday; moreover, the same as other folks, they liked an extra ray of sunshine now and then. Lucky the man who could at once create interest and establish confidence by proving some knowledge of those things with which the farmer has to deal: by estimating closely the weights of the big horses hitched to the hay-rack or making a reasonable prediction as to the yield in bushels of the grain fields, and was will-

ing, withal, to sit on the fence and talk a while. Fortunately my life in the Fat Land had sent some roots into the soil; my output of farm talk was ample and, now that I was facing the light of a new day, my collection began to grow apace.

After some exchange of opinion with Mr. Kratoska on the respective merits and demerits of Plymouth Rocks and Laced Wyandottes, I finally dropped in the query: "Well, Mr. Kratoska, how many good cigars do I have to give you for these Indian flints?"

"Oh, take them along," he said, "they don't do me no good and just get lost around here. I've lost that many already. Leave me a smoke if you want to."

And for the contents of my cigar case one of the finest spearheads recovered from the Mississippi val-



**A diorite groundstone ax head, with groove for shaft. Keyes was given this artifact by Frank Havlicek on his collecting foray on May 22, 1915. Actual size: about 2x3 inches.**

ley, along with a dozen other good specimens, and a box and some old newspaper to insure safe transportation thrown in, took their place along with the relics from the Indian cemetery in the bottom of my knapsack.

Now I realize that the above sounds very much like the regular run of collecting literature—mere boasting over a finely driven bargain. I do not think it is such. Long experience in forming my collection has shown this to be the one and only successful method. And, after all, have I failed to give value received? Is there nothing on a parity with the dollar? The money method having failed, was I really getting something for nothing when I substituted for money cigars and sociability? If my new plan were wrong in principle it ought to break down from its own inherent weakness. As a matter of fact, the years confirm its soundness. Instead of being greeted at the farm-house door, as in the earlier years of my collecting, with the statement "Yes, we have found a few relics but don't want to sell any," I am now given the welcome of an old friend and the relics are produced without the asking. And I pay for them by visiting a while on the back porch, suggesting a different adjustment for the sickle of the new mower, or perhaps even by staying for dinner in the summer kitchen (and these people live well too).

Criticize, ye who will, this reversal of all economic law; I have plenty of friends among the Bohemian farmers who inhabit the hills and from them comes my strength in this contention, as with them often I take my refuge.

O, the human experiences that the years have gathered since taking the road of adventure after Indian relics! One cannot enter the farmyard precincts year after year without at the same time looking into the inner room of many a human life and learning the story of its joys and its sorrows. Yes, by George, contrary to every expectation I cherished as a cub college professor fifteen years ago and quite by slow degrees long unrecognized, I find I am becoming at last something of an itinerant country preacher. And the fact that I happen to be a Protestant and nearly all the people of my wide parish Roman Catholic has not thus far occasioned either question or comment. When, as in 1917, a cold summer and an early frost meant a fifty percent failure of the corn crop, there is some occasion for dispensing comfort and encouragement; but when I stop, say in August, to see Mr. Zahradnek, who two years ago gave me that finely polished ax of mottled green and white diorite, and find him bravely struggling, in kitchen as well as in cornfield, to keep together the little brood who lost their mother in April, there is nothing to do but sit down and talk things over for a while.

Still deeper in the hills we found Mr. Louvar helping a neighbor remove from a long, high crib the corn—three thousand bushels of it—husked and cribbed only two weeks previously and now giving off to the cool air a light, almost imperceptible vapor that told of destruction begun in the depths of this pile of yellow wealth. The cobs on which lay the close rows of full and flinty kernels contained just a trifle too much water and so the great ears in the center of the golden mass were now steaming and turning black.

"Hard luck, Mr. Louvar," I called, "but you've done well to discover your trouble so early; this cool weather will help you out too; and say, everything you save this year, hard or soft, is going to be worth while; the corn expert was down from Ames the other day and said he was sure none of this year's crop would drop a cent below one-fifty."

"Yes," replied Mr. Louvar, "and if we had only had some good warm sunshine in October this corn would have dried out completely; or, if November had only stayed cold instead of throwing in those five hot days last week, these ears would never have heated and started to mold. Well, we'll scatter it out over the yard and save what we can; it's the first time this ever happened and I guess there's no use making much fuss about it now. Since I saw you in town mother has found some more of those Indian flints about the house and will give them to you if you care to walk that far."

My colleagues declared themselves good for another half mile and would this time watch the sunset from the high bank at the roadside while I was announcing my errand to Mrs. Louvar. This worthy lady understood at once my inquiry concerning the "šipki" and briskly, in spite of her eighty years, whisked into a front room for a small work-basket, the clinking contents of which she poured out with dangerous energy upon the bare-topped walnut kitchen table.

It may be unwise to tell here a second story of unusual collecting luck, but this narrative aims at the simple truth and collectors from the Mississippi country, at least, will understand and believe. If I am not greatly mistaken, understatement of the contents of Mrs. Louvar's work-basket will be much more likely than the reverse. Iowa has by no means received her dues yet as a field for archeological collecting and research.

Several of the arrowheads that lay before me were very good specimens indeed, especially the barbed and serrated point to which the ball of beeswax had evidently adhered one summer's day; a notched spearhead of pink flint would have satisfied an ordinary afternoon's ambition; but the two large, finely wrought

and beautifully translucent stone knives, the one of glittering, pale-brown quartzite, the other of bluish-white chalcedony—I could hardly believe my own eyes. Both in size and in outline, though not in thickness, they made one think of river croppies—just large enough to cover one's open hand. Double-pointed and very thin blades they were, scarcely reaching a maximum thickness of three-sixteenths of an inch, and with both widely convex margins worked down by the finest of chipping to a most delicate cutting edge. How implements thus fashioned could have passed intact through all the vicissitudes of their history was a wonder. My collection contained many Indian knives, but not one of this type and size and of this fineness of material and workmanship; and here lay two beauties together, as perfect as when they left the hands of the master workman with flaking and chipping tool.

"My son said you had a collection of these things," said Mrs. Louvar, "if these are of any use to you, why you are welcome to them; just sit down here by the fire and get warm; it's getting pretty chilly again."

Mrs. Louvar's generous heart, her kindly old face, and the wave of her hand toward the cane-bottomed chair by the kitchen stove were not to be misunderstood or denied, so I sat down for a little visit. Smith and Miller were enjoying the shifting reds and purples of a gorgeous sunset and they could wait.

In conversational matter, experience does not always insure a good start and this time my tongue must certainly have borne to the left. Where is the person, I should like to know, who can infallibly detect behind a kindly, benevolent face and a generous, motherly disposition a habit, in oral expression, of pessimism and gloom?

"I just saw your son down the road helping a neighbor," said I, "a fine son you have, Mrs. Louvar."

"Yes, it's terrible," she answered, "I know he'll be drafted and have to go to war."

With this quick thrust, for which I was totally unprepared, the great conflict from which for one short day I had sought, with my colleagues, surcease, was

forced into my consciousness; no escape from an age of iron into an age of stone, not even in the hill country of the Fat Land. Well, I reflected, perhaps after all we have no right to expect a single full day's vacation when the world's on fire. But it's pretty tough on such as botanists, musicians, and teachers of literature (and the Lord a' mercy if this literature happens to be that of our chief enemy), who have a hard enough time anyway to convince themselves of their own usefulness in a world of khaki, bombs, and bayonets.

"But, Mrs. Louvar," I expostulated, "your son is surely beyond the draft age and anyhow the government would probably exempt an experienced farmer on whom the entire field work depends."

"O, but my son is only fifty-two and he is such a good, strong boy; I know they will take him," said this fond old mother. My mention of the age limits of the draft by no means reassured her.

"And then too," said Mrs. Louvar, "every few days we have to buy a Liberty bond or give more money to the Red Cross or help the Y.M.C.A. or the K. of C. Somebody is canvassing all the time, and the corn is all spoiling; O, I know we'll starve this winter."

In vain I referred to the unusually fine harvest of small grains, the probable salvage of much of the corn crop, the life-sustaining possibilities in the two hundred and some chickens that swarmed about the farmstead.

"They wouldn't last long; we would have to give a good many to the neighbors," said Mrs. Louvar.

"But we must try to keep up our spirits," I exhorted, "it's surely been a long time since the corn went bad; we must try not to complain. When, after all, did we have a year when the corn spoiled in the crib?"

A smile crept across Mrs. Louvar's face and then vanished. "This is the only one in fifty-three years," she said, "O, I know we shall starve this time. And then this awful war! O dear, O dear."

"Well, but our boys are in it now," I ventured, "things are turning for the better and we will win and the war will be over."



In Keyes's story, he marvels over two "finely wrought and beautifully translucent stone knives" and the craftsmanship of "the finest of chipping to a most delicate cutting edge." The larger of these two chert bifacial knives was given to Keyes by Frank Pitlik on July 18, 1918; the smaller, by Frank Blazek on May 22, 1915. Actual size: 2 1/2 x 4 3/4 inches; 1 1/2 x 4 1/2 inches.

A solemn look of incredulity came into Mrs. Louvar's face and I added hastily: "You surely think we will win this war, don't you, Mrs. Louvar?"

She shook her head slowly but decisively. "No, I don't think so," said she.

"Why Mrs. Louvar," I exclaimed, "why don't you think so?"

"We're too wicked," she said.

"Too wicked!" War as a punishment for sin; down the centuries through the mouths of poet and preacher and peasant has this simple philosophy of war perpetuated itself, but it was amazing to hear it pronounced in so few words and with such a tone of conviction and finality by the kindly old lady who sat opposite me at the kitchen table beside the stove.

"Do you think people are worse than they used to be?" I asked.

"I'm sure they are," said Mrs. Louvar, "the men don't go to church on Sunday any more; they just sit around the house or visit the neighbors and drink and swear all day."

Some cases of wrecked homes in the hill country occurred to me and for a moment I pondered again over a legal situation that had stopped the flow from the breweries but had forgotten about the more deadly product of the home vineyard and cider-press.

"It's hard for me to believe that your people are very bad," I finally ventured, "certainly they're no worse than the rest of us; they have always been very good to me."

"Then we shall die in our sins," said Mrs. Louvar. "I am sure we shall all starve this winter." And as I arose to go she added: "It's kind of you to come and see an old woman like me and I have enjoyed the visit; come again—and next spring Frank and I will save you some more Indian relics."

**D**arkness had settled thick along the timber trail before we reached the edge of the bluffs that overlooked the river gorge and stretching away infinitely beyond that, the rolling reaches of the Fat Land. Fortunately we ought soon to catch upon the water the ripples of light from the Palisades tavern or, failing this, to have at least the guidance of the white mists rising from the river.

But on some days and under some circumstances it is not possible that the merely ordinary should happen. From somewhere in the big cottonwoods on the river bottom came a sound that for a long, long time my ears had not heard, the regular, deep-toned hooting of a great horned owl. Quickly the uncommon passed into the unreal and the unreal became the only true reality. The

Fat Land vanished completely; the wilderness took its place. Here and there, and then everywhere, in the Indian village below us the dead campfires were rekindled and the white smoke floated away; from the river came the distinct sound of paddle dip; from the darkness beyond the range of campfire-light shadowy form stole forth; in and out among the wigwams dusky figures were moving. The deep reverberations of the tom-tom sounded. At first slowly, then more and more swiftly, the dancers began to circle about the medicine tree, stooping, peering, leaping, twisting, as the war chant of the Iowas resounded. The sneaking Sauk and Fox marauders of Algonquian origin would fare badly on the morrow. The grim-visaged warriors of the blood of the Sioux were gathered together. ❖

*Michael J. Perry discovered this manuscript in the Keyes Collection and researched its connections to actual artifacts in the collection. A project archaeologist at the Office of the State Archaeologist in Iowa City, Perry has found Charles R. Keyes's work to be a tremendous source of inspiration and utility.*

#### THE KEYES COLLECTION

Housed at the Office of the State Archaeologist on the University of Iowa campus, the Keyes Collection contains over 108,000 artifacts along with related notes, documents, and photographs. Readers are directed to the University of Iowa's Museum of Natural History to view some excellent specimens acquired by Keyes. Former State Archaeologist Marshall McKusick noted in 1963 that the collection contains numerous outstanding specimens of aesthetic and interpretive significance. The collection contains materials associated with all of Iowa's prehistoric cultures and time periods, a record that spans at least 12,000 years. Keyes's original catalog of the artifacts has been completely overhauled, and the artifacts and documents correlated to modern site records, making the collection much more useful to modern researchers. As an invaluable source for reconstructing Iowa's past, materials in the Keyes Collection have been and continue to be used for scholarly research.

#### NOTE ON SOURCES

Keyes's manuscript is presented here with minimal editorial modification. "Preparing for War in the Fat Land" also appears in the *Journal of the Iowa Archeological Society* (vol. 53, 2006) with in-depth analysis and additional commentary by Michael J. Perry.

The Dalton point on page 101 was photographed by William Lane Shields and John L. Cordell through the courtesy of David Brenzel, director of the University of Iowa's Museum of Natural History, where the point is on display. Cordell also provided access to the Keyes Collection documents and specimens.

Margo J. Perry, David M. Gradwohl, and Joseph A. Tiffany provided advice, comments, and encouragement in developing the introduction.

For more on Keyes, see Marilyn Jackson, "Charles Reuben Keyes: A Groundbreaker in Iowa Archaeology," *The Iowan* (Winter 1984).

# Untamed Greenbacker

## James Baird Weaver

by Robert B. Mitchell

**O**n the afternoon of April 4, 1879, as the House of Representatives neared the conclusion of a rancorous debate, one of Iowa's newest members of Congress stood to address his colleagues. Remarks by a first-term member of Congress usually attracted little notice, but in the highly charged atmosphere that permeated Capitol Hill, James Baird Weaver could expect to command attention.

The aftermath of the 1876 election—in which President Rutherford B. Hayes had lost the popular vote but was elected with disputed electoral votes from southern states with Reconstruction governments—embittered Democrats and fueled white-hot partisanship with strong sectional overtones. Now Democrats and Republicans were deadlocked over legislation to fund the U.S. Army, forcing Hayes to call a special session of the new 46th Congress. As Weaver, a 45-year-old Civil War veteran from the southern Iowa town of Bloomfield, prepared to speak, passions remained intense.

Many wondered how Weaver would align himself on the issues paralyzing Washington. The new congressman, a former Republican, belonged to a third party known variously as the "Greenbacks" or "Greenbackers." In the House, where Democrats held a tenuous 18-vote majority, the votes of this new party could help determine the balance of power. From the city's streetcars to the White House, conjecture about the strength and in-

tentions of the Greenbacks had flourished for weeks, and a front-page item in the city's new newspaper, the *Washington Post*, fanned the curiosity. As the crucial vote on the army bill neared, the paper reported that Weaver planned to address the House but noted a surprising twist. Weaver "will not say much" on the army funding, the *Post* stated, but instead "proposes to take advantage of the opportunity to 'outline the policy of the Greenback Party.'"

As predicted, Weaver spent little time addressing the controversy that consumed the House. Instead, speaking in what one account described as an "easy and earnest" style, he argued that the economy, caught in a prolonged depression and afflicted by devastating deflation, was now the most important problem facing the country. Republicans and Democrats preferred "to fight over sectional issues like maddened gladiators bent on mortal combat," Weaver charged, rather than vote on "measures of relief for the people." It was time, he declared, for Congress to stop bickering about the issues of the past.

"The people of this country have witnessed for many years with painful impatience the continuation of this sectional strife. It has become distasteful to them in every part of the Union where they have the control of their right reason," Weaver warned. Given the shortsighted obsession of Democrats and Republicans with

J. B. WEAVER

*Copy*

D. H. PAYNE

LAW OFFICE OF

WEAVER & PAYNE

Stoomfield, Iowa Aug 29<sup>th</sup> 1877

Hon Geo H Gear  
Burlington Iowa

My dear Sir:

Differing, as I do, widely with the Republican party upon questions of finance, I find it impossible for me to go before the People and advocate a continuance of that Policy.

Neither do I feel that it would be right for me to remain silent and withhold my protest against what I conceive to be a significant wrong.

I wish therefore to be released from my pledge of personal support, assuring you, sincerely, my action is not dictated by considerations personal to yourself.

I shall act with the Independents with high respect  
I am very respectfully  
J. B. Weaver

"I shall act with the Independents," James Baird Weaver asserts in an 1877 letter (above) to party rival John H. Gear. Weaver broke from the Republican Party over "questions of finance,... finding it impossible for me to go before the People and advocate a continuance of that policy [or] to remain silent and withhold my protest." In the background: a broadside announces "the people's grand round-up," a political rally for Weaver in Oskaloosa in 1888. The broadside invited "every laboringman and woman that ... wants to prevent corruption and corporation tools from defrauding the people out of their votes and their rights."

General J. B.

Weaver!

The People's

GRAND ROUND UP



Carver  
1888

Oskaloosa  
has a true love  
from defrauding  
HOUSE at 8  
joins us in the  
upon fraud.

sectional issues, he said, a new party was needed to work for prosperity: "The Lord is raising up that party now. The workmen are all at work in the quarries, and every block in the temple shall be peace."

Weaver's speech foreshadowed the course of his eventful first two years in Washington, during which he emerged as the national spokesman for the Greenback Party. Four years earlier, after a string of stunning defeats in Iowa, Weaver's once-promising political career had appeared finished. With his election to Congress in 1878, his fortunes revived. Eloquent, energetic, and driven by a deep religious faith, Weaver thrived in his national political debut, vaulting from failure in Iowa to the vanguard of agrarian radicalism as it developed into a potent force in American politics.

**W**eaver's experiences growing up in southern Iowa laid the groundwork for his emergence as a third-party leader. Like that of many Iowans of his generation, his story began in Ohio, where he was born in 1833. Two years later, the family moved to Michigan, and then, when James was nine, settled on a farm in Davis County, Iowa. James attended a log schoolhouse, where Friday afternoon spelling bees "stimulated youthful ambition to blood heat," he later recounted, and where he discovered a lifelong love for public contests of wit and wordplay—a passion later demonstrated in the U.S. Congress.

Early on, James was exposed to frontier politics and partisanship. His father, Abram, served as one of the county's first commissioners and maintained his political involvement after the family moved from the farm to Bloomfield, the county seat. Although Abram Weaver was a Democrat, his son-in-law was a Whig. Kentucky-born Hosea B. Horn edited a Whig newspaper in Indiana supporting Henry Clay before moving to Davis County, where he married Margaret Weaver and quickly established himself as a leading lawyer and businessman. After the discovery of gold in California, Horn headed west and published an overland guide with detailed notes about water, terrain, and trail conditions. Upon returning to Iowa he ran for state treasurer on the Whig ticket and later edited the pro-Republican *Davis County Index*. James followed the trail blazed by his brother-in-law Horn, both in his choice of professions as well as in a more literal sense. With three companions, 19-year-old Weaver went to California in March 1853 in search of gold, returning to southern Iowa about a year later.

Religion, like politics, occupied an important place in the Weaver family. Late in life, Weaver recalled the spirited worship services conducted by frontier circuit riders who "reminded us of God and duty" and presided over worship services where "Amen and Hallelujah resounded as a matter of course." This fervent faith made a lasting impact, and Weaver remained devoutly religious throughout his life. As an adult, he was an active Methodist layman whose piety became a political trademark. Weaver "does not smoke; neither does he drink nor swear," the *New York World* wrote in 1892. "Once in a while he sings. He has a good baritone voice, and when he was superintendent of the Sunday school in Bloomfield he was a noted singer."

Although Weaver was exposed to politics and developed his faith growing up in Davis County, he forged the link between the two while studying law at the Cincinnati Law School in the mid-1850s under Professor Bellamy Storer. A former Whig congressman who in his youth had organized a squad of traveling evangelists known as "flying artillery," Storer expounded on the duty of lawyers to look out for the common good of all social classes and to base moral and political choices on biblical teaching. The "healthy vigor of no government can be preserved, where the same rule that teaches man to fear his Maker is not equally the controlling motive of the law giver," Storer asserted. Weaver embraced Storer's teachings and regarded him as such a significant influence that he proposed naming his first son after him. Echoes of Storer's views on religion and politics resonated almost 40 years later in Weaver's Populist manifesto, *A Call to Action* (1892). Weaver described the agrarian radical movement to which he devoted his political career as "the religion of the Master in motion among men," mobilized to oppose "extortionists, usurers and oppressors" who reject the Golden Rule and embrace "the law of Cain."

Returning to Iowa with a law degree and a commitment to oppose slavery, Weaver joined Davis County's small band of antislavery activists and settled into the life of a rising young professional in Bloomfield. He opened a law practice in 1856 and wooed Clarissa Vinson, a Keosauqua schoolteacher. Intellectually inclined, politically aware, and possessed of a tough-minded independence, Clara made an ideal partner for the principled and politically ambitious Weaver. "The man has not yet been made that I would be afraid of," she advised him while they were courting. Like James, she loved intellectual inquiry and was "determined to learn all I can, even if I cannot show it off to advantage." Perhaps most importantly, she shared his deep religious beliefs. "I have been trying to live the life of a



Weaver entered the Civil War as a first lieutenant in Company G of the 2nd Iowa Infantry. A regimental history describes him as “rather brilliant,” a man of “dignity and self-assurance.” Right: Today a private residence, James and Clara Weaver’s brick home in Bloomfield is a National Historic Landmark.

Christian too long to give it up now,” she reassured him. The couple wed in 1858, beginning a potent personal and political partnership that lasted for the rest of their lives. Clara stood “in perfect sympathy” with her husband throughout his political career, Weaver biographer Fred Emory Haynes has written, and was active in her own right in the temperance and woman suffrage movements in Iowa.

In June 1859, the Weavers became the parents of a baby girl, Maud, the first of eight children born to the couple over the next 18 years. Almost two years later, the outbreak of the Civil War pulled Weaver away from home. He enlisted in an infantry company assigned to the 2nd Iowa Infantry and fought at two of the war’s most important battles, Fort Donelson and Shiloh. He rose through the ranks and found himself in command of the 2nd Iowa during the fall of 1862 at the battle of Corinth in northern Mississippi. Even in war, Weaver’s faith animated his politics; his battle report lionized the Union dead for giving their lives in “the cause of Christianity and constitutional liberty.”

As a war hero, staunch Republican, and active member of the Methodist Church (Iowa’s largest denomination and ally of the Republican Party), Weaver’s political prospects appeared bright. He assumed temporary editorship of the *Weekly Union Guard* in Bloomfield—

an ideal perch for a politically ambitious young man—and in 1866 received the honorary title of brigadier general in recognition of his war record. He was elected district attorney for Davis, Appanoose, Wapello, Monroe, Van Buren, and Wayne counties in 1866, and the following year President Andrew Johnson named him assessor for internal revenue in southeastern Iowa. As Weaver’s political horizons expanded, so did his family. Clara and James added five to their brood between 1866 and 1877 and erected a grand brick home that testified to their growing prestige.

Not long after moving into the new home, however, Weaver encountered a series of demoralizing setbacks that he attributed to his support for prohibition. The campaign to outlaw the sale and consumption of alcohol intensified in Iowa in the years following the Civil War. Party leaders grew increasingly uncomfortable over the divisive issue and tried to distance themselves from it. As historian Joseph F. Wall has written, prohibition “cut across conservative and liberal lines, dividing former political allies and creating new coalitions in ways that were most disturbing to the party professionals.” In 1874, Weaver was defeated by one vote at the Republican congressional district nominating convention in Ottumwa after appearing at a temperance rally in the same city. Years later he recalled that after

the votes were tallied, convention delegates exulted "that we have defeated the d—d prohibitionist."

In 1875, he campaigned for the Republican gubernatorial nomination and appeared to be the front-runner, but last-minute maneuvering on the floor of the state convention gave the nomination to former governor Samuel J. Kirkwood. Historian Leland Sage has attributed Weaver's defeat to factional infighting between supporters of U.S. Senator William Boyd Allison of Dubuque and former senator James Harlan of Mount Pleasant, a Weaver ally. But Weaver characterized Kirkwood's nomination as a "stampede to defeat me because of my very well known temperance views." Weaver returned to Davis County and won the Republican nomination for the county's state senate seat but was again defeated, he recounted, after Kirkwood "turned his guns against prohibition" during a campaign appearance in Bloomfield.

As the decade continued, Weaver gravitated to the Greenback cause, taking note of "the encroachments of confederated monopoly and . . . how completely this sinister influence had captured the leadership and machinery of the two great parties." By 1877, his disenchantment with the Republicans was complete. He joined the Greenback Party and in 1878 ran for Congress. Working skillfully to win Democratic support in the south-central 6th District, he campaigned as the "fusion" candidate of Greenbacks and Democrats and defeated incumbent Republican E. S. Sampson by more than 2,000 votes. Support for the Greenback Party extended beyond Weaver's district into central Iowa, where voters also elected Greenback Edward H. Gillette of Des Moines.

**W**eaver turned to the Greenback Party at a time when economic questions preoccupied many in Iowa and elsewhere. The nation was still recovering from economic depression brought on by the Panic of 1873. In 1877, rioting erupted in Chicago, St. Louis, and several eastern cities as striking railroad workers protested wage cuts. President Hayes called out federal troops to restore order in Baltimore and Martinsburg, West Virginia. Economic dislocation caused by the depression was not confined to the big cities. Farmers were increasingly hard pressed to pay mortgages and other debts as commodity prices fell. Historian Gretchen Ritter observes that between 1865 and 1879, prices fell by half throughout the economy, while output increased. In a congressional speech, Gillette vividly described how the

crushing impact of debt and deflation in central Iowa had filled "the highways . . . with emigrant wagons" carrying farmers "who are starved out from the richest garden land in the world" to seek new homes farther west. "This," Gillette concluded sardonically, "is at present the reward of industry in the United States."

Several factors contributed to the decline in commodity prices. The number of acres devoted to farming increased dramatically in the years after the Civil War, and production of staples such as corn and wheat skyrocketed as improvements in farm equipment increased output. Monetary policies also contributed to the downward pressure on prices. In 1875, Congress passed the Resumption Act, to reduce paper "greenback" currency in circulation and to return to the gold standard. "Distracted Iowans," however, "joined others in calling for an inflationary program based on increasing the amount of greenbacks in circulation," historian Thomas Burnell Colbert writes. Still others favored fighting deflation by the reintroduction of silver, removed from circulation by Congress in 1873. Those who favored more liberal use of greenbacks and silver were known as advocates of "soft money," while defenders of the gold standard were said to favor "hard money."

The Greenbacks also criticized the banking system instituted during the Civil War in which large national banks—many located in the East—bought interest-bearing federal bonds and issued currency notes. Capital and reserve requirements, as well as regional differences in the banking system, tended to concentrate cash in northeastern banks and restrict the flow of funds into rural areas.

Greenbacks charged that the banking system, in tandem with the management of the nation's money supply, operated for the benefit of eastern and foreign financiers and against the interests of farmers and laborers. Gillette characterized the system as "an injustice to the people and favoritism to a class . . . without a rival." Financial conservatives, on the other hand, argued that banks properly played a vital role in administering the nation's currency.

Across the country, voters distressed by the economy turned to the Greenback Party in the 1878 congressional elections. The party's candidates received more than one million votes nationwide—a tenfold increase in two years. In addition to Weaver and Gillette, the Greenback camp included former Republicans, such as Rep. William D. Kelley of Pennsylvania; a Methodist minister, Rep. Gilbert De La Matyr of Indiana; southerners, such as Rep. William M. Lowe of Alabama; and disaffected Democrats, such as Adlai Stevenson of Illinois, who later returned to the Democratic Party and served as Grover Cleveland's vice president.

LEGAL TENDER. LOW INTEREST.

**3.65**  
**BONDS.**

LET US **United States** IN THE

INDEPENDENT PARTY  
**GREENBACK CLUB**

1776  
INDEPENDENCE  
1876

ACT OF JUSTICE, 1876.

AWAY WITH MONOPOLIES.

National Legal Tender Money, interchangeable with government bond, the only means of restoring National Prosperity, securing the respect the rights of labor and money capital, and preventing Financial Ruin.

Bank paper must be suppressed, and the circulation restored to the nation, to whom it belongs.—THOMAS JEFFERSON.

"It is labor and not coin that sustains the nation's credit."

GREENBACKS, PROSPERITY AND PEACE.




### DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.

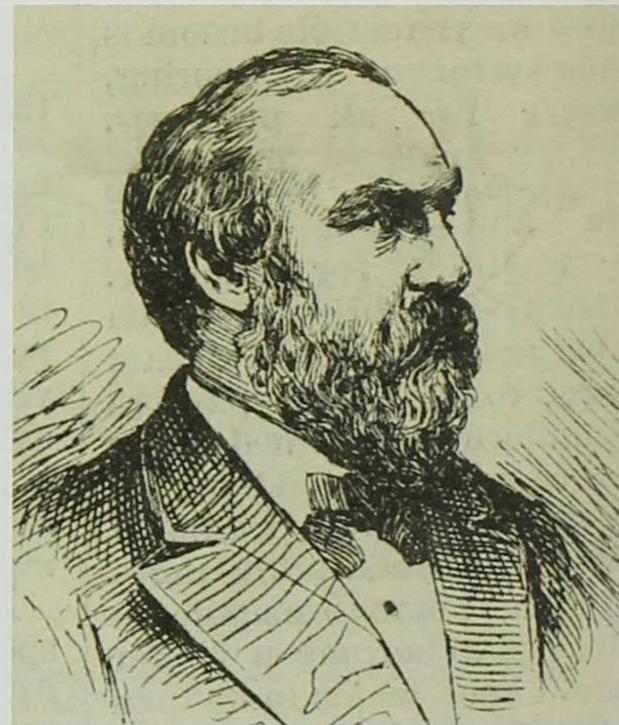
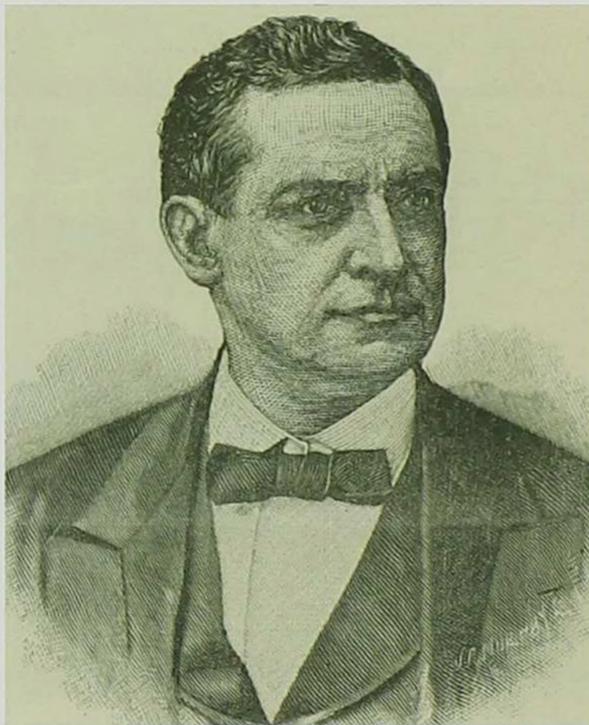
Our Government is founded solely upon the consent of the people, and its powers are subject to their control. The evils we now live under have resulted from the acts of unfaithful representatives, who have set the interests of the party above that of the people. These evils are chiefly displayed in our monetary system and the monopolies which it has engendered; this system being monarchical in its principles and subversive of Republican Government. And as experience demonstrates that we can have no hope of reform from existing political parties, it becomes our imperative duty to organize a new party, to the end that we may resist the encroachments of the money power upon the rights of the people, stay the tide of corruption and extravagance which overflows the land, and place the control of the resources and finances of the country in the hands of the people. We therefore establish the Independent Party, and declare its principles to be as follows:

1. It is the duty of the Government to establish a monetary system based upon the faith and resources of the nation, in harmony with the genius of this Government, and adapted to the demands of legitimate business. To this end the circulating notes of all National and State banks, as well as all local currency, should be withdrawn from circulation, and a paper money issued by the Government directly to the people without the intervention of any system of banking corporations, which money shall be a legal tender in payment of all debts, public and private, duties on imports included (except that portion of the interest and principal of the present public debt that is, by the express terms of the law creating it, made payable in metallic money, shall be so paid). This money to be interchangeable, at the option of the holders, with registered Government bonds, bearing a rate of interest not exceeding 3.65 per cent, per annum.
2. This system of finance will, by stimulating our industries and commerce, soon make the United States the depository of the precious metals of the world.
3. The adoption of this system, by furnishing sufficient money at low interest, will solve the question of cheap transportation, because it will enable the railroads and carrying trades to relieve themselves of their loads of debt, lower their rates, and enable the people to construct additional lines whenever internal commerce may require.
4. It is the duty of the Government, in all its legislation, to keep in view the full development of the agricultural and mineral resources of our country and its manufacturing interests.
5. That the great interests of productive industry claim their just recognition at the hands of the Government, and through the monetary system here proposed all these interests can be fully secured.
6. That as the public domain is the rightful heritage of the people, it should not be distributed to speculators or corporations but reserved for actual settlers.
7. That it is the duty of the Government to equalize the bounties of soldiers, and to bring to a speedy settlement all other just claims arising out of the late war.
8. All rights, privileges and immunities recognized by the Government should be based on the fact of citizenship, equal rights before the law being secured by the constitution.
9. That we demand and insist upon severe retrenchment and economy in all branches of the public service.
10. The rivers and harbors being under the jurisdiction of the Government, should be by it improved when necessary to the commerce of the people.
11. Through the monetary system herein proposed, there will be established between the citizens of this country, East, West, North and South, a firm and lasting bond of union, by giving a common interest in a common Government, and bringing peace and prosperity to each and all of its inhabitants.
12. As all special privileges, immunities and powers conferred on corporations of any kind or nature are granted at the expense of the people, these privileges and powers must be held subordinate to the rights of the people, and subject to the supervision and control of the power creating them.

We, the undersigned, indorse and subscribe to the above Preamble and Declaration of Principles; and for the purpose of inculcating a more thorough knowledge of and adherence to these principles and having the same enacted into laws, and adopted as the controlling policy in our National and State Governments, we hereby absolve ourselves from all former party allegiance and organize ourselves into *Independent Party Greenback Club, No. 1, of Washington, County, State of Iowa*, subject to such rules and by-laws as may be adopted by said Club.

To establish a local Greenback Club, members signed this Declaration of Principles. The preamble reads in part: "The evils we now live under . . . are chiefly displayed in our monetary system and the monopolies which it has engendered. . . [With] no hope of reform from existing political parties, it becomes our imperative duty to organize a new party."

BOTH IMAGES: SHSI (IOWA CITY)



In the 46th Congress, Republican James Garfield (far right) lost to Democrat Samuel Randall for Speaker of the House. The Democrats held a slim majority.

Two political professionals hardened by the battles of Reconstruction and Hayes's controversial election led the House of Representatives. The Speaker of the House, Democrat Samuel J. Randall of Pennsylvania, had come to Congress from the machine politics of Philadelphia and earned, Stevenson recalled, a "national reputation" as a skillful partisan. "He was an excellent presiding officer, prompt, often aggressive," and "rarely vanquished." James A. Garfield, the Republican leader from Ohio, was a principled financial conservative who opposed the Greenback program. He had served as an officer in the Union Army and fought at Shiloh. "Gifted with rare powers of oratory, with an apparently inexhaustible reservoir of information at his command, he knew no superior in debate," Stevenson wrote. Garfield also possessed, as historian Ray Ginger has noted, a capacity for shrewd political calculation.

With Democrats and Republicans separated by a handful of votes in the House, Weaver and the Greenbacks seemed well positioned to extract concessions and win influence. But Republican and Democratic leaders shunned the insurgents. Support from the Greenbacks and a few disenchanted Democrats could have elected Garfield Speaker of the House, but the Ohioan wanted nothing to do with the new party. "The political pot in the city is boiling fiercely over organization of the House," Garfield confided in his diary in March 1879. Even so, he instructed his Republican lieutenants "to say to everybody for me that we would make no trade with either Greenbackers or Democrats on the subject of the Speakership."

Although the House retained Randall as Speaker,

Garfield noted with relief that "the boast of any strength in the New Organization calling itself the Greenback Party amounted to but little." Randall shared Garfield's discomfort with the Greenback caucus. When the two leaders met to discuss committee composition, Randall expressed his gratitude "for keeping our people aloof from the Greenbackers," Garfield wrote, "and is disposed to do whatever I suggest in regard to the Republican cast of the committees."

Kept at arm's length by the Democratic and Republican leadership, the Greenbacks could do little but promote their agenda through floor debate and oratory. Such a situation was made to order for Weaver, and he seized it with relish, beginning with his debut speech in April 1879. Over the next three months, Weaver intervened in House debates whenever there was a chance to argue for the Greenback position.

When the House debated a proposal by Ohio Democrat A. J. Warner to authorize unlimited coinage of silver, Weaver moved quickly to become one of the bill's most prominent advocates. Adopting the tone of a displeased schoolteacher, Weaver lamented the "levity, sarcasm, and abuse" showered on supporters of the Warner bill. In a lengthy floor speech, he warned that dependence on gold "will lead us into inevitable decline and pauperism" and he blamed the Resumption Act for the nation's economic difficulties. He also took aim at the relationship between the banks and the U.S. Treasury, which produced "permanent national banks and permanent national debt, the banks resting upon the debt."

After Weaver concluded, skeptical conservatives peppered him with pointed questions. Republican John

Mitchell of Pennsylvania asked Weaver if he had voted for President Grant, who supported the monetary policies Weaver now denounced. Weaver allowed that he had but explained that he had done so prior to his conversion to Greenback principles: "I was in the same condition with Saul of Tarsus when on his way to Damascus." William Fletcher Sapp of Iowa demanded that Weaver concede that the banks were in no way permanent institutions, that their charters expired after 20 years. Weaver would have none of it. "As the law now stands [the banks] are about as perpetual as the human family," Weaver answered back. "The Almighty says that the days of a man's years shall be three score and ten. Was it the intention that at the death of my friend [Congressman Sapp] the human family shall cease?" The *Congressional Record* noted that Weaver's riposte provoked "great laughter" in the House. Weaver and like-minded lawmakers effectively used debate on the Warner bill to put forth their views on the currency question to a national audience.

During these first months in Congress, Weaver attracted the attention of newspapers and politicians nationwide. His debut speech in April had established him as the spokesman for the Greenback bloc. "The Rev. De La Matyr, who it was supposed would be the leading orator of the Greenback Party, will have to surrender his claims to Weaver, of Iowa, 'the silver-tongued soft-money man of the Northwest,' as his friends are fond of calling him," the *Iowa State Register* reported. He made a particularly strong impression in New York, where reaction in the city's political and journalistic establishment ranged from approval to predictable condemnation. The city's reform politicians invited him to speak at the prestigious Cooper Institute. The *New York Times*, however, was not impressed, complaining that "the spirit" of Weaver's remarks about the Warner silver bill was "practically as bitter and as uncompromising as that shown by the Socialists of Germany, or the Nihilists of Russia in their respective countries."

**W**eaver's skirmishes in the first session foreshadowed the dramatic battle that would propel him to unquestioned leadership of the Greenback movement. When lawmakers returned to Washington in early 1880 for the second session of the 46th Congress, Weaver pursued a new strategy—one that would turn the antagonism of congressional leaders to the Greenbacks' advantage and catapult the new party's agenda to the forefront of national politics. He drafted a two-part reso-

lution reflecting Greenback principles. The first called for an end to the banks' role in monetary policy by placing the federal government in charge of issuing currency and controlling its volume. The second declared that the federal government should repay the federal debt as rapidly as possible, using all currency, including silver and "such other coinage" as may be required.

Beginning in January, Weaver began to seek recognition for his resolution on Mondays, when members could ask for recognition from the Speaker to bring bills directly to the floor. This put Samuel Randall on the spot. Either he could recognize Weaver and allow a debate that would call attention to the deep divisions within the Democratic Party on the incendiary monetary question, or he could block consideration of the measure by refusing to recognize Weaver.

Stumbling into Weaver's trap, Randall chose the latter course, and the standoff became a regular feature of congressional business during the winter and early spring of 1880. On February 10, the *Washington Post* alluded to the emerging confrontation when it reported that "Weaver, the untamed Greenbacker from Iowa, made another effort to get the floor" only to be blocked by Randall, "which provoked some little discussion."

Randall confided to Weaver that he did not want Democrats put on record regarding "mere abstractions" in a presidential election year. But the Speaker had not counted on the Iowan's stubbornness. "After a few weeks of fruitless effort," Weaver recalled, "the [resolution] got into the papers and began to attract very wide attention. Crowds began to throng the galleries on Mondays" to observe the drama. Even the *New York Times*, usually hostile to Weaver, objected to the tactics used against him. Weaver, the paper editorialized in early March, can "enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that the cowardice and evasion" of Democratic and Republican leaders will help Greenbacks more "than a frank and fair disposal of his resolution by a vote of the House." As the weekly drama continued, pressure on Randall increased. The Speaker was flooded with mail, Weaver recounted, half of it praising Randall for his firmness, and half "denouncing him as a tyrant worthy of death."

Randall was not the only figure in the drama who came under attack. The *Washington Post* declared that "Weaver, of Iowa, is rapidly becoming a grand Congressional nuisance." Sniping from newspapers was nothing new for Weaver, but he was startled by the storm his tenacity provoked elsewhere. In early March, *Harper's Weekly* published a full-page cartoon by caricaturist Thomas Nast, whose talent for lampooning politicians had helped end the corrupt career of New York's Boss Tweed in the previous decade. Nast now ridiculed

Weaver as a toga-wearing donkey braying on the House floor, with "inflation resolutions" tucked under his arm. The Speaker's back is turned, and legislators hide under their desks or cover their ears. "The imaginative genius of Nast was called upon to swell the volume of misrepresentation and ridicule," Weaver wrote later. He called Nast's cartoon a "full page scurrillous travesty."

Nevertheless, Weaver characteristically found a way to turn the sketch to his advantage by referring to a well-known Old Testament story. When Garfield asked Weaver on the House floor to identify himself in the drawing, Weaver replied: "The large figure with the long ears, of course, represents me. You know that the ass in the Bible saw the angel before Balaam, his rider, saw him."

The jovial exchange suggests that Garfield's initial suspicion of the Greenbacks had begun to lessen.

Since arriving in Washington, Weaver had worked to keep lines of communication with the Republicans open, often siding with them when it suited his purposes. This proved crucial as signs of a break in the standoff multiplied. Voicing growing weariness with the controversy, the *Washington Post* editorialized that if Randall had only recognized Weaver, "the wheels of legislation would doubtless have moved on without jar or friction." In early April rumors circulated—apparently with Randall's approval—that Weaver finally would be recognized and allowed to present his resolution. But Weaver knew this was only half the battle. To get the roll-call vote he wanted, he would need more support than the small Greenback caucus could provide. Without additional backing, Weaver recalled, the likelihood of a recorded vote was "exceedingly dark."

Weaver then approached Garfield with an audacious proposal. Weaver pointed out that Republicans had long opposed the Greenback monetary program, and that many Democrats waffled on the issue, supporting currency expansion at home but backing contraction on Capitol Hill. A recorded vote, Weaver suggested, would pin down Democrats and allow Republicans to go on record against the Greenback measures. "We asked him," Weaver recounted years later, "if he

could not, in view of these facts, assist in securing a yea or nay vote?"

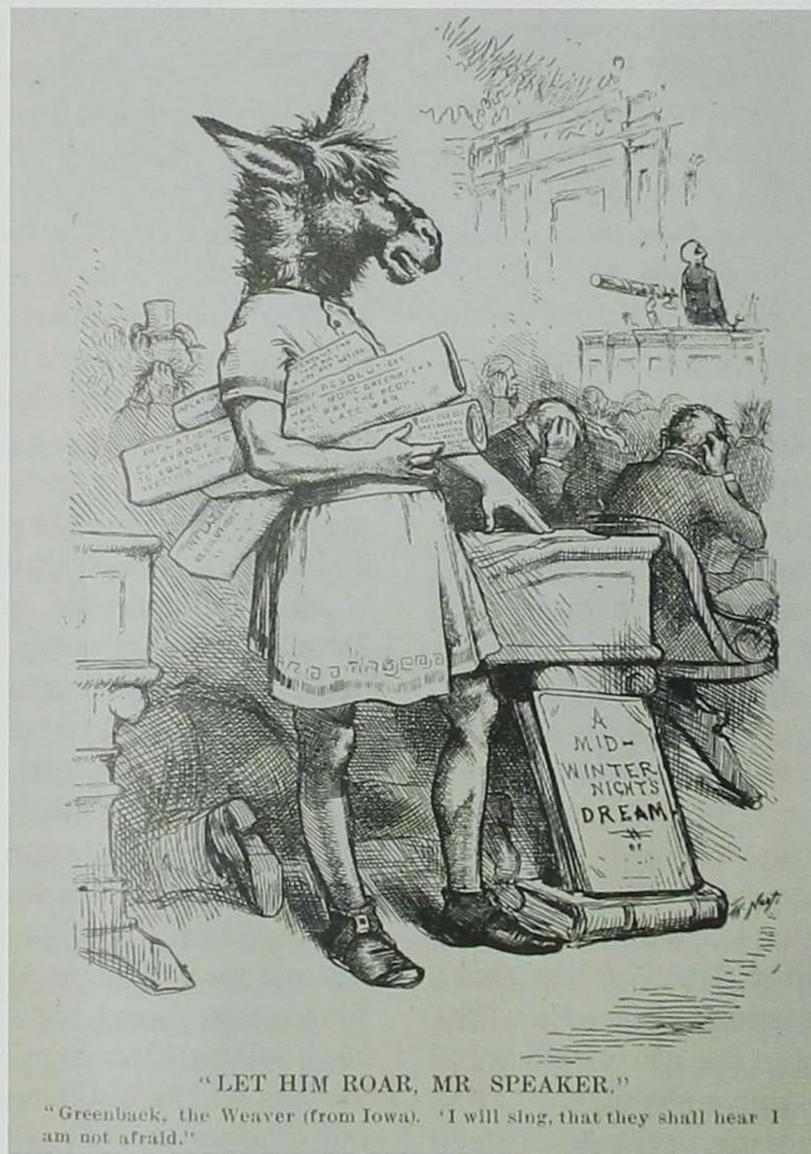
With another bitter presidential campaign looming, this appeal to Garfield's partisan instincts could not have been more perfectly timed. Only a year earlier, Garfield had implacably opposed any dealing with the Greenbacks. Now he found that Weaver's proposal, which offered the prospect of sowing dissension among Democrats, merited consideration. Garfield "replied that he would consult with his colleagues and give us an answer that afternoon," Weaver wrote. "In the course of an hour he reported that his side of the House would join in the demand for a record of the vote."

Ending the long standoff, Randall recognized Weaver on Monday, April 5, as he stood to offer his two-part resolution. As promised, Garfield inter-

ceded on Weaver's behalf when objections were raised to proceeding, and the House, with many members abstaining, voted 81 to 27 to continue. The debate for which Weaver had agitated since early January was finally under way.

Garfield took full advantage of the opportunity to declaim against the Greenbacks. He charged that Weaver's resolution would put undreamed-of power in the hands of the government if it, rather than the

JAMES BAIRD NAST, A CALL TO ACTION, PAGE 64



Using the Nast cartoon to his advantage, Weaver declared that it had "grossly slandered" the Speaker of the House, because it portrayed him "standing with his back to me, when in fact the most that he had ever done was to shut his eyes."

banks, regulated currency volume. Paying off government obligations as quickly as possible was an irresponsible formula for inflation. Garfield concluded with a burst of indignation that must have rung hollow to those aware of his role in bringing the measure to the floor. "This monster is to be let loose on the country as the last spawn of the dying party that thought it had a little life in it a year ago," he thundered melodramatically. "Let both parties show their courage by meeting boldly and putting an end to its power for mischief."

Weaver fired back. "Who shall issue the currency and control its volume?" he demanded. "That I say is the colossal issue, and in it is involved the very existence of this Government and the freedom of the people." He scoffed at accusations by Garfield of dictatorial "centralism," noting that the Greenbacks favored putting currency under the control of the democratically elected Congress, whereas Garfield believed "bankers . . . who are not chosen by the people, or elected by them, are to be trusted with this great power involving the happiness and welfare of fifty millions of people."

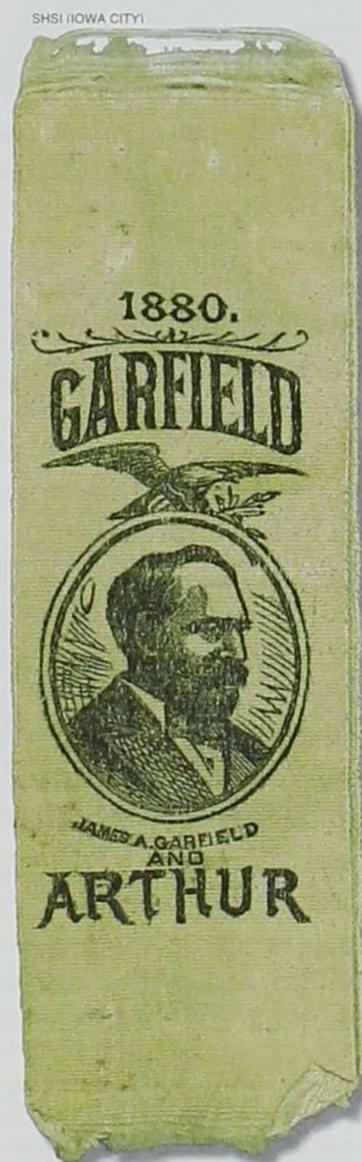
Weaver's eloquence failed to carry the day. The resolution was defeated, 117 to 84. Most votes in favor of the measure came from Greenbacks and southern and midwestern Democrats, while Republicans supplied most of the opposition. Significantly, 91 members, including 48 Democrats and 40 Republicans, did not vote. This suggests that Weaver's belief that Democrats preferred to avoid monetary issues was correct, but also indicates that many Republicans were uncomfortable with the resolution as well. Noting that he had won recognition but lost the debate, the *Washington Post* called it "Weaver's Paradoxical Success." Yet the episode could hardly be called a defeat. Despite the resistance of its leadership, the House had debated the central tenets of the Greenback program. The vote had measured support for the Greenback monetary position among rank-and-file Democrats and foreshadowed divisions that would dominate American politics in the next two decades.

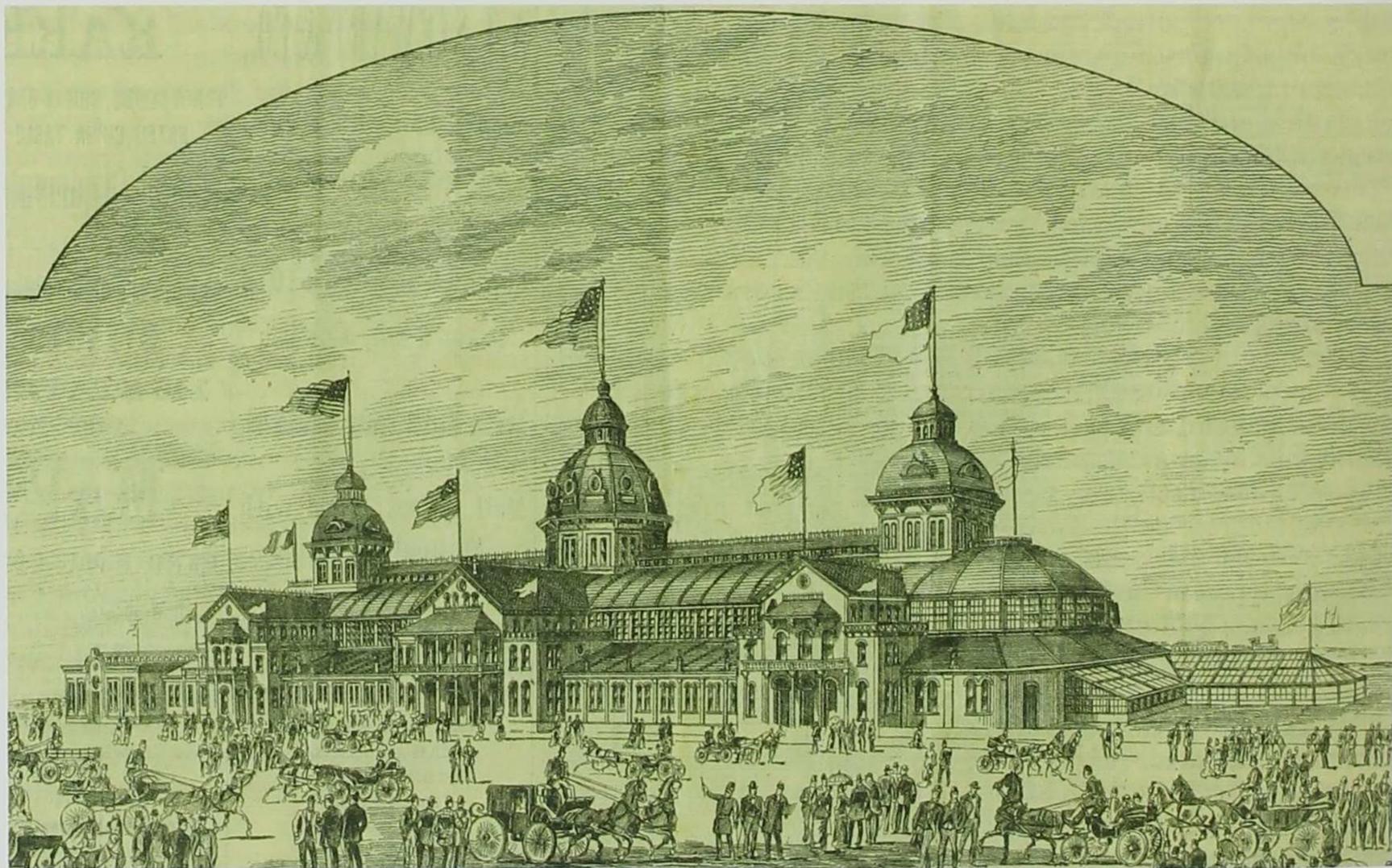
Referring to Garfield's characterization of the Greenbacks, the *New York Times* observed sourly: "The 'dying party' mustered 42 per cent of the entire vote cast. Among these were 50 per cent of the Democratic votes in the House, and 60 per cent of all the votes from the South. . . . Politically, and with reference to its sectional distribution, the vote was extremely significant." Moreover, the lengthy controversy put the Greenback Party, its economic platform, and its leading spokesman at the center of the national political debate on the eve of the presidential campaign. Weaver's perseverance, political acumen, and love for the cut-and-thrust of debate had served the insurgent movement well.

Weaver's prominence ideally positioned him as the Greenback standard-bearer when the party met in Chicago in June to pick a presidential nominee. Talk of a bid by Weaver had begun not long after he first arrived in Washington in early 1879. Now he left no doubt that the nomination was on his mind. He told the *Post* in February that the Greenbacks "shall nominate a third ticket in any event. We expect nothing from either the Republican or Democratic parties. The people demand relief, and we cannot get it from Congress. Now we propose to appeal to the people."

Behind-the-scenes maneuvering intensified as the convention approached. Weaver and Gillette met with Illinois Senator David Davis to discuss the campaign. Weaver recalled in *A Call to Action* that he and Gillette urged the corpulent Davis, a political independent and longtime associate of Abraham Lincoln, to accept the party's nomination, but Davis declined. Whether Weaver and Gillette met with him to encourage his candidacy or simply ascertain his intentions, the Illinois senator's lack of interest meant that the only candidate with a national reputation rivaling Weaver's was Benjamin Butler of Massachusetts, whose prominent record as a Civil War Union general made him a highly controversial figure in the South.

On June 9, Greenback delegates filed into Chicago's Exposition Hall, where only one day earlier exhausted Republicans had concluded a marathon 36-ballot nominating convention by picking Garfield as their presidential candidate. Portraits of Lincoln, Thaddeus Stevens, and other Republican heroes still hung in the hall as the Greenbacks gathered. The often chaotic Greenback assemblage included Denis Kearney, leader of the anti-Asian Workingman's Party of California, woman-suffrage champion Susan B. Anthony, and a delegation from the Socialist Labor Party. Reflecting this motley assortment of re-





Chicago's Exposition Hall was the site of the 1880 National Republican Convention. A day after Republican delegates departed, having nominated James Garfield and Chester Arthur, the National Greenback Convention began in the same building.

formers, idealists, and demagogues, the convention adopted a platform that called for Chinese immigration restrictions, universal suffrage, a graduated income tax, and prohibition of child labor.

When delegates finally got around to selecting a presidential candidate, it became apparent that support for Benjamin Butler was limited. In the early morning hours of June 11, on an informal first ballot, Weaver stood almost 100 votes ahead of Representative Hendrick Wright of Pennsylvania, and Butler ran a distant fourth. Weaver's advantage quickly turned into a stampede. "Before the announcement of the first ballot, it became evident that Weaver had a clear majority, and all the delegates hastened to change their votes to that candidate," the *New York Times* reported. "Motions sprang from every part of the convention to make his nomination unanimous, and just as the sun shone through the eastern windows, the result of the ballot was announced as 718 for James B. Weaver . . . and without any motion his nomination was made unanimous." The convention then nominated B. J. Chambers of Texas for vice president, pairing a southerner with a Union

army veteran at the top of the ticket. "At 6 a.m.," the *Times* reported, "Gen. Weaver came into the hall, apparently fresh after a good night's sleep, and accepted the nomination which a sleepless convention tendered to him."

In his formal acceptance statement, Weaver endorsed the party's platform as "comprehensive, reasonable, and progressive." He also signaled his intention to actively campaign for votes and in so doing break with a tradition of 19th-century politics. Presidential nominees typically stayed close to home, reluctant to appear too eager to hold the highest office in the land, content to address visiting delegations and leave the campaigning to state party leaders. This approach did not suit Greenback needs. "In consequence of the great avenues to public opinion . . . being mainly under the control of the enemies of our movement, [the Greenback convention] thought it proper to request its candidates visit various sections of the Union and talk to the people. It is my intention," Weaver added, "to comply with this request to the extent of my ability."

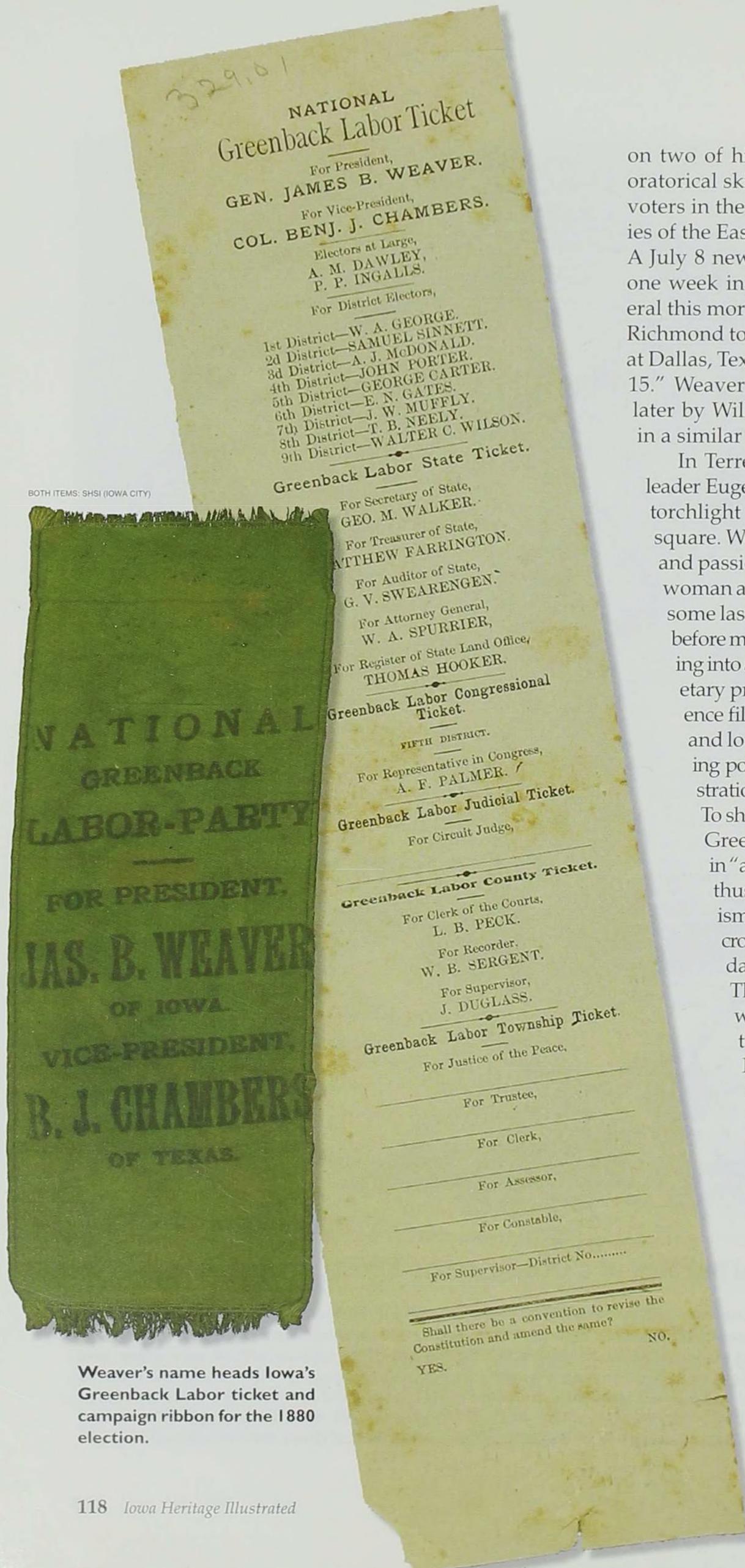
During the summer and fall of 1880, Weaver drew



**What the Different Political parties are Doing in the Presidential Campaign.**

A rare political cartoon in the *Legal Tender Greenback* (Bloomfield, Iowa) spells out the differences between the Democratic, Republican, and Greenback presidential nominees: "Garfield has a spade and is digging up issues twenty years dead—the bloody shirt, fear of rebel claims, etc. [Winfield Scott] Hancock has stuck a pick-ax into the bag of Republican official corruption, and the foul matter spurts out and besmears Garfield from head to foot. Weaver (the people's champion), with a record as clean as the driven snow, goes forth and with arguments unanswerable pleads the cause of the people and in masterly efforts proclaims the principles of a Franklin with the eloquence of a Patrick Henry. The work of Weaver insures the final triumph of Truth and the safety of the Home and Factory. The seed HE is sowing will in due time give us a harvest of Good Will, Peace and Plenty."

LEGAL TENDER GREENBACK, 1021/1860



BOTH ITEMS: SHSI (IOWA CITY)

Weaver's name heads Iowa's Greenback Labor ticket and campaign ribbon for the 1880 election.

329.01  
**NATIONAL  
 Greenback Labor Ticket**

For President,  
**GEN. JAMES B. WEAVER.**

For Vice-President,  
**COL. BENJ. J. CHAMBERS.**

Electors at Large,  
 A. M. DAWLEY,  
 P. P. INGALLS.

For District Electors,

- 1st District—W. A. GEORGE.
- 2d District—SAMUEL SINNETT.
- 3d District—A. J. McDONALD.
- 4th District—JOHN PORTER.
- 5th District—GEORGE CARTER.
- 6th District—E. N. GATES.
- 7th District—J. W. MUFFLY.
- 8th District—T. B. NEELY.
- 9th District—WALTER C. WILSON.

**Greenback Labor State Ticket.**

For Secretary of State,  
 GEO. M. WALKER.

For Treasurer of State,  
 MATTHEW FARRINGTON.

For Auditor of State,  
 G. V. SWEARENGEN.

For Attorney General,  
 W. A. SPURRIER.

For Register of State Land Office,  
 THOMAS HOOKER.

**Greenback Labor Congressional Ticket.**

FIFTH DISTRICT.

For Representative in Congress,  
 A. F. PALMER.

**Greenback Labor Judicial Ticket.**

For Circuit Judge,

**Greenback Labor County Ticket.**

For Clerk of the Courts,  
 L. B. PECK.

For Recorder,  
 W. B. SERGENT.

For Supervisor,  
 J. DUGLASS.

**Greenback Labor Township Ticket.**

For Justice of the Peace,

For Trustee,

For Clerk,

For Assessor,

For Constable,

For Supervisor—District No.....

Shall there be a convention to revise the  
 Constitution and amend the same?  
 YES. NO.

on two of his greatest resources—ample energy and oratorical skill—to take the Greenback case directly to voters in the railroad hubs of the Midwest, the big cities of the East, and the cotton fields of the Deep South. A July 8 newspaper report from New York described one week in his campaign's frenetic pace: "The General this morning left for Washington. He will speak in Richmond to-night and go thence to Alabama, arriving at Dallas, Texas, in time for the great meeting there July 15." Weaver's example would be emulated 16 years later by William Jennings Bryan, who courted voters in a similar nationwide campaign.

In Terre Haute, Indiana, the hometown of labor leader Eugene Debs, Greenback supporters paraded by torchlight with a marching band to the courthouse square. Weaver seemed slightly flustered by the size and passion of the crowd. "I do wish that every man, woman and child would keep still for I want to leave some lasting impression on the minds of the people before me," he exclaimed in frustration before launching into a detailed explanation of the Greenback monetary program. At Faneuil Hall in Boston, the audience filled "every available inch of standing, sitting and lounging room" and "emphasized every telling point made by the gallant general with demonstrations of enthusiasm," the *Boston Globe* reported. To shouts of approval, Weaver proclaimed that the Greenback Party had buried the "Bloody Shirt" in "a grave between Mason and Dixon's line" and thus would not stir up North/South sectionalism left from the Civil War. In New York, a large crowd serenaded him with "God bless our candidates" to the tune of "God Save the Queen." The energetic campaign enraged Democrats who viewed Weaver's candidacy as a threat to their candidate, General Winfield Scott Hancock. The *Washington Post*, which was supporting Hancock, called Weaver "the assistant Republican candidate for the Presidency" who "has satisfactorily proved himself in the last month to be a foul-mouthed demagogue and an unconscionable liar."

Despite the excitement he generated on the campaign trail, Weaver's candidacy faltered almost as soon as it began. Shortly after receiving the vice-presidential nomination, Chambers fell off a railway platform and sat out the rest of the campaign at home to recuperate. In the South, Weaver's hope of winning support from both white and black voters encountered resistance from conserva-

tive Democrats who in many locations obstructed or threw out Greenback votes by blacks. As recounted in the *New York Times*, Weaver complained during his appearance at the Cooper Institute that southern Democrats "didn't think it a crime in the old slavery days to deprive a black man of his liberty, and now they didn't think it so very wrong to rob him of his vote." Weaver also faced allegations from Democrats and Greenback dissidents that his campaign was intended to throw support to Garfield. Weaver angrily denied the charges—"I defy all traitors in Christendom to injure me in the least"—but the accusations threw him on the defensive and became the basis for attacks throughout the campaign. Most significantly, historian Ray Ginger has concluded, the economy improved. Following crop failures in Europe, U.S. wheat prices revived, jumping in 1879 from 78 cents to \$1.11 per bushel. "Wheat farmers prospered, and in the north the Greenback Party collapsed."

**F**rom the Greenback standpoint, the results of Weaver's 1880 presidential campaign were mixed. On the one hand, he received more than 300,000 votes—almost four times the number for the party's 1876 presidential nominee. On the other hand, he did not come close to carrying a single state. The defeat might have seemed a setback to many, but Weaver professed optimism. "We did not expect to elect our presidential candidate, but we expected to establish ourselves as a party to be respected," he declared. The *New York Times* unhappily concurred that the new party's platform possessed staying power: "Greenbackism as an independent movement has a possible

future that cannot safely be ignored" and added that "forces are working silently, but steadily and constantly, in its favor which may have to be reckoned with by the time another great national contest approaches." The *Times* proved prescient. Although the Greenback Party collapsed before the end of the 1880s, it was the forerunner of the Populist Party, which altered the political landscape in the 1890s.

As for Weaver, he remained active on the Iowa political scene. He ran for governor in 1883 and won two more terms in Congress in 1884 and 1886. Taking stock of his continued power at the polls, Iowa Republicans invited him to rejoin the party in exchange for "any position that I might desire," he recalled. But his break with the party was permanent and he declined the offer. In 1892, he mounted a second presidential bid, this time as the nominee of the Populists, and carried four states. By 1896, the Populist and Democratic parties were closely allied, sharing presidential nominee William Jennings Bryan as well as positions on monetary policy and other issues.

As the *Times* had predicted, 1880 was only the beginning. Weaver—Iowa's "untamed Greenbacker"—and the movement that he led during his first term in Congress would indeed have to be "reckoned with" before the century ended. ♦

*Robert B. Mitchell is a 1980 graduate of Grinnell College. He wrote "'Get Ready for '96': The Decatur County Press, Partisanship, and the Presidential Campaign of 1896" for the Fall 2003 Iowa Heritage Illustrated. His biography of Weaver, Skirmisher: The Life, Times and Political Career of James B. Weaver of Iowa, will be published in spring 2008 by Edinborough Press. Mitchell is an editor with the Los Angeles Times-Washington Post News Service and lives in Woodbridge, Virginia.*

#### NOTE ON SOURCES

James B. Weaver was a prolific author and speaker whose writings and speeches offer the best insights into his personality and beliefs. As a member of Congress, Weaver's remarks on the House floor are recorded in the *Congressional Record*. Many of Weaver's other speeches, as well as his correspondence with his wife, Clara, can be found in the collections of the State Historical Society of Iowa in Des Moines. Microfilm of the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Iowa State Register*, and other newspapers provide another rich source of material on Weaver and his career. Particularly useful is the *Legal Tender Greenback* of Bloomfield, Iowa. Weaver's Populist manifesto, *A Call to Action: An Interpretation of the Great Uprising, Its Source and Causes* (Des Moines: Iowa Printing Co., 1892) illustrates his rhetorical style and the religious origins of his political beliefs. The book also gives some background on the events of his Greenback period. The articles he wrote for the *World Review*, a weekly survey of world and national events published in Chicago at the turn of the 20th century, contain valuable material on Weaver's life and insights into the politicians he knew.

*The Diary of James A. Garfield*, ed. Harry James Brown, Frederick D. Williams (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1981), vol. 4, details the behind-the-scenes maneuvering in the 46th Congress as witnessed by the Republican leader and future president. The monetary issues that Weaver championed as a Greenback can be maddeningly arcane, but two works are particularly illuminating: *Goldbugs and Greenbacks: The Antimonopoly Tradition and the Politics of Finance in America*, by Gretchen

Ritter (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*, by Ray Allen Billington (New York: Macmillan, 1975). Billington's work is also useful as a general guide to the period. Helpful on Iowa and national history are *Iowa: A History*, by Joseph Frazier Wall (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978); *A History of Iowa*, by Leland L. Sage (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1974); and *The Age of Excess: The United States from 1877 to 1914*, by Ray Ginger (New York: Macmillan, 1974).

Weaver has been the subject of a biography, *James Baird Weaver*, by Fred Emory Haynes (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1919); and two articles by Thomas Burnell Colbert ("Political Fusion in Iowa: The Election of James B. Weaver to Congress in 1878," *Arizona and the West*, Spring 1978, and "Disgruntled 'Chronic Politician' or Man of Political Integrity: James Baird Weaver and the Republican Party in Iowa, 1857-1877," *Annals of Iowa*, Winter/Spring, 1988). Sage wrote what remains the most complete account of Weaver's failed bid for the 1875 Republican gubernatorial nomination, "Weaver in Allison's Way," in the January 1953 *Annals of Iowa*.

Weaver's 1880 presidential campaign is the subject of a recent book by Mark A. Lause, *The Civil War's Last Campaign: James B. Weaver, the Greenback-Labor Party & the Politics of Race and Section* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2001).

Annotations to the author's original manuscript are held in the *Iowa Heritage Illustrated* production files (State Historical Society of Iowa-Iowa City).

# The first election I remember

by Himena V. Hoffman

It was the year 1896. I was seven years old, the daughter of as devoted a Democrat as there was in southern Iowa, always a delegate to state conventions, sometimes county chairman, and one of Decatur County's best campaigners before each election. It was not a time when women were active in politics. . . . For most little girls politics was a closed book. I was different. Where my father went, I wanted to go too, and he took me. I went to political rallies even if I slept through the speeches; was in his office when the Democratic County Committee met; and rode with him in our buggy, all over the county, campaigning every two years.

It is the first election I remember but I was not inexperienced. Though I can not remember it, I made my first political speech when I was two years old, standing on my father's desk and saying, "I'm a Democrat," and being rewarded by dimes from the committee members present (more pay than I've received for any political speech since). I had publicly refused to shake

hands with a Republican congressman because I was under the impression that he thought Democrats should be hung, and after the election in 1892 I'd been sure my father and someone named Cleveland had saved us from something terrible.

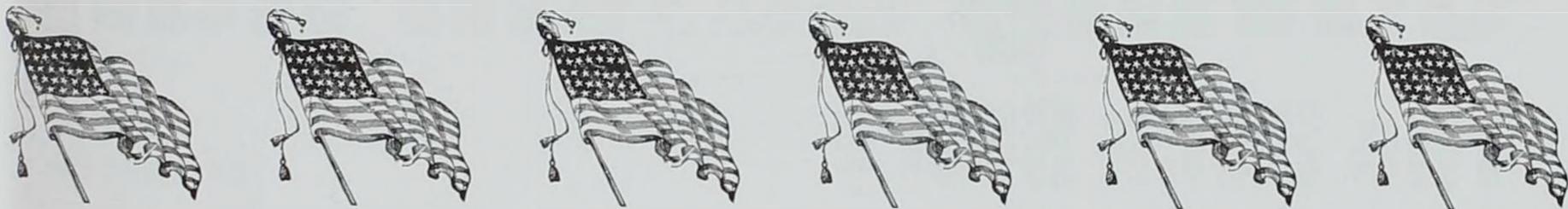
Also, I knew the Democrats needed to be elected. I'd heard my father say to a Republican, "I know how you vote but Ed's son should go to high school. Ed's a good neighbor and needs your help," or "I know you are a Republican but John's wife isn't well. If John's elected they can move to town. They are members of your church so I thought you'd want to know how things are."

Then, as now, election to county office depended on much besides party affiliation, and my father knew not only the politics but what almost every voter in the county thought important.

In 1896, I knew I was a Democrat and the months before the election were exciting ones that I still remember vividly. I wore a [William Jennings] Bryan button, had a Bryan hat, picked a weed we

called "silver rod" and scorned golden rod. I could, if asked "what did Bryan say?" declaim, "You shall not press down on labor's brow this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind on this cross of gold." I had no idea what that meant but it secured Democratic applause when I or any other Democrat quoted it. I went to campaign rallies and while I did not know what was meant by Protective Tariff or Free Coinage of Silver, neither did many of the adults. I knew something was wrong about the railroads and that we Democrats would do something about it.

I heard political discussion too. I've never forgotten hearing my Republican grandfather (my mother's father) say to his Populist neighbor, "Peter, if you'd fill that lumber wagon with paper dollars, those dollars would not be worth burning if they didn't have gold dollars back of them." From the election of 1896 I still have a memory of that wagon and how I thought it would look full of paper dollars and how gold dollars could be piled back of them. I also imagined a bonfire of paper dollars!



The campaign was one of many rallies, campaign slogans, and parades. Not since 1840 had the rank and file of the party been so involved, and never since has there been one like it.

I particularly enjoyed the parades, even the Republican ones. One was a torchlight parade with a baby buggy section. The baby boys had such signs as "I'll vote Republican in 1918" or "I can't vote but my papa can. He'll vote for McKinley. He's our man." I do not know if girl babies were in the parade. If so, I am sure none said, "I'll vote in 1918" or any other year.

The longest Democrat parade was said to be so long that when the last vehicle in it left Leon, the first entered Decatur, but the Republicans disparaged the claim by saying that there was so much space between each entry that they could have stretched it out to the county line! The winning float featured sixteen pretty girls in silver dress and one in gold, with the slogan "Sixteen to one" [the ratio of silver to gold]. There was also a float that carried sixteen little girls my age, a children's

chorus, but either because of my lack of musical talent or living on a farm, I was not a member. However I rode with my father, and our buggy whip had a big silver colored bow and I my Bryan cap.

**T**he summer was full of excitement and when fall came it was more intense. The two Leon papers, one Republican and the other Democratic, denounced and defended, young men fought after Saturday night dances, children staged battles pulling off each other's buttons, and speeches and parades continued. Even in the pulpit there was sometimes politics. Most Methodist ministers, for instance, shared with their parishioners the feeling that God was white, Methodist, and Republican, and doubtless other churches had their versions which sometimes differed.

As for me, no one was more certain of being a Democrat than I until the night of the election when I heard my father say, "If the Republicans win tomorrow, we'll

all live on cornbread." I was amazed. I loved cornbread. It was one of the few foods I liked.

By mid-morning I changed parties. I climbed on the fence and yelled to passersby to the polls, "Vote Republican! Vote Republican!" A man came to my father, campaigning near the polling place, "Cal, that little girl of yours is on your fence yelling 'Vote Republican.'" My father hurried down for an explanation and I think he understood. He loved cornbread too.

The Republicans won but we still ate white bread. I have never been tempted by any Republican promises since nor did I ever expect any magic from the Democrats. What I did gain was the conviction that I still have: that our government can stand after any election and our lives go on.

This is the first election I remember. I remember so many since, but never quite like the one eighty years ago. ❖

*The author wrote this essay in 1973 for an Iowa Commission on Aging contest. It is archived at the State Historical Society of Iowa (Iowa City).*

# Saving Calvin Hall

## The Back Story

by James Hill

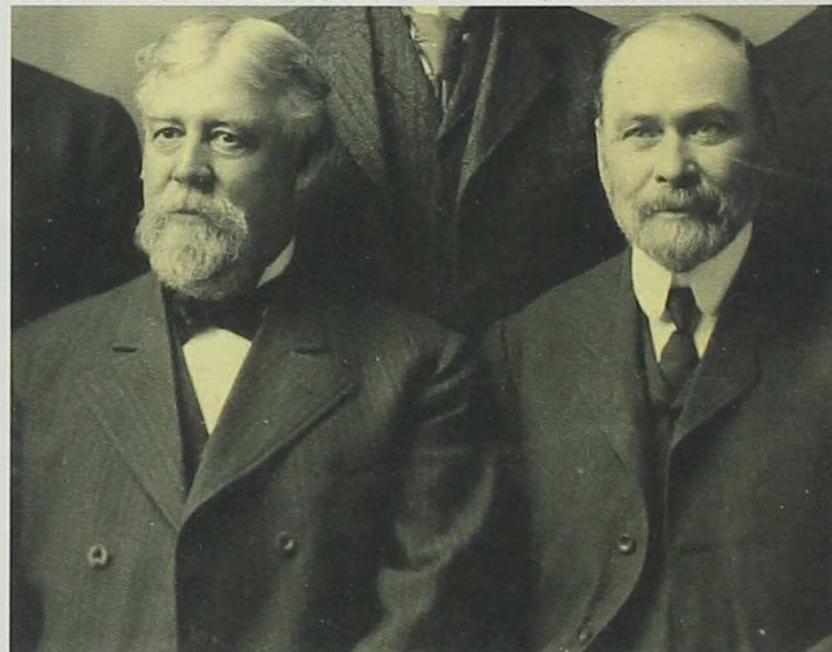
**A** good brick building shouldn't go to waste." University of Iowa geology professor Samuel Calvin's comment on the fate of Science Hall was understated and practical in its simplicity, but it signaled the start of a remarkable feat. Now, over a century later, that feat remains just as remarkable as it was in 1905, when the 6,000-ton Science Hall—now Calvin Hall—was successfully hoisted and rolled out of harm's way.

It's a story well known to Iowa City's local history buffs and university alumni: To make room for new construction on the campus, the University of Iowa arranged to have Calvin Hall cut from its foundation and moved to a new site. Less well known but no less important is the back story to this event, the set of circumstances—the engine—that powered the move. Underlying those circumstances was an unusual friendship between faculty members Samuel Calvin and Thomas Macbride, a bond that proved crucial to the life of one of the university's most admired buildings.

The long friendship of professors Calvin and Macbride began at Lenox College in Hopkinton, Iowa, where both were on the faculty in the 1870s, Calvin in natural science and Macbride in mathematics and modern languages. There they formed an immediate bond, based in part on what they shared. Both men had Scottish roots, both were from families that had immigrated to Iowa in the 1850s, and most important, both had a passion for the natural world around them and loved nothing more than an outing in the woods to collect specimens of the abundant flora.

That friendship continued after Calvin left Hopkinton for the University of Iowa to become professor of natural science in 1874. Five years later, when Calvin found the time was right for an assistant, he immediately thought of Macbride. In a letter that began, "Dear Friend Mac," Calvin showed his determination to bring his friend to the university. "The Board [of Regents] seem to be in the humor of giving me the help I need," he wrote, "and I have recommended you as the person I want. They will make you an adjunct pro-

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Friends and colleagues Thomas Macbride (left) and Samuel Calvin in 1905.

fessor of Natural Science with a salary of \$1200 per year. Will you come?"

Calvin didn't have long to wait, for Macbride accepted immediately. After he and his family had arrived in Iowa City and settled in, the two-man faculty began to build up their department of natural science, forging a collegial partnership in the process. In the rooms of Old Capitol, Macbride taught botany, zoology, and biology; Calvin handled geology and helped out with zoology. Actively engaged scientists as well as teachers, both men continued their collecting expeditions into the Iowa countryside and well beyond the state's borders, returning with specimens for the University Cabinet, as the natural history collection was called.

With the university growing, along with the demand for their classes and laboratory work, Calvin and Macbride soon led a campaign for a new building to accommodate the overflow of students and enlarged specimen collection. A new home for natural science was in everyone's interest, they argued, given present conditions and expected growth. The Board of Regents



SHSI (IOWA CITY)

**Science Hall was one of a handful of brick buildings stretching in a row from both sides of Old Capitol, on the University of Iowa's original campus. Between 1898 and 1924, four monumental buildings were constructed in the Beaux Arts style and in scale with Old Capitol. When Old Dental was torn down in 1975, the Pentacrest finally achieved its intended symmetry.**

agreed. In 1885, the new Science Hall, just to the north of Old Capitol, opened for classes. Three stories of red brick with gray stone trim, it was, in the estimation of the *Burlington Hawkeye*, "the nearest approach to elegance to be found in any of the University buildings."

Calvin conducted classes in geology on the first floor and Macbride in botany on the second (the natural history collection occupied the third floor). In the classroom, the two men were opposites in style: Macbride witty, charming, and entertaining, a natural showman, and Calvin dry, precise, and stern. One Iowa Citian who had attended their public lectures wrote to Macbride of his preference for the showman, noting that Calvin's "manner of presentation is not popular. I say this to you in confidence and with all respect for the Professor."

Teaching styles aside, both men proved to be excellent scientists, earning national reputations in their specialties, Calvin in paleontology and Macbride in fungi. As employees of the state, Calvin and Macbride performed service and research beyond the borders of Iowa City, traveling the length and breadth of Iowa, observing, classifying, and documenting its natural assets.

Calvin served as the Iowa state geologist for many

years, completing a geological survey of its counties. Macbride was an outspoken advocate of public wilderness areas, lecturing across the state, and, as president of the Iowa Park and Forestry Association, he furthered the development of state parks. Both men were ardent conservationists, in word and deed, and teachers of conservation who believed in the value of hands-on instruction—so much so that in 1909 Macbride spearheaded and Calvin supported the creation of the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory at Lake Okoboji for students and faculty in the natural sciences.

**B**y 1904, the natural science department and the natural history collection had outgrown Science Hall. The entire university was growing, in fact. A progressive construction agenda was already under way, thanks to the eighth and ninth university presidents, Charles A. Schaeffer and George E. MacLean. On the central campus, now known as the Pentacrest, the Collegiate Building (later renamed Schaeffer Hall) was already completed, southeast of the Old Capitol. Next on the agenda was a larger natural science building, to be built on the



UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA LIBRARIES, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, IOWA CITY, IOWA

To move Science Hall, 27 carloads of timber were used for cribbing. University librarian J. R. Rich described the feat: "Nearly eight hundred screws were set and began to turn, gently lifting the great structure into the air." It was then set onto nearly 700 4-foot rollers. "The pushing screws worked to a length of three and one-half feet in the drums, longer drums being substituted when the screws had reached their length, until it became necessary to carry the cables forward under the building, when the shortest drums were again used, and so on through the series." Rich was awed by the "turning [of] the building on its axis as it moved forward . . . in order to pass another building," and then a back turn "to bring the building over the new foundation." In the move across the street, the greatest distance achieved in one day was 17 feet.

site occupied by Science Hall. Although the other brick buildings in the central campus were far older and likely to be demolished, Science Hall, built in 1885, was still in good condition. Calvin and Macbride boldly proposed moving the building. After a persuasive campaign by the natural science faculty, the Board of Regents approved their plan and the hard part commenced.

Moving a 6,000-ton structure of brick, wood, and plaster is considered a formidable piece of work even today, but the engineering for such things had advanced far enough by 1905 to ensure it could be done. And done well, without harm to the building. It was just simple physics: Raise a mass by the incremental force of jack-screws, set it on rollers, prepare a track for the rollers, and push it, keeping it level all the while.

The Chicago company hired for the task, L.P. Friestedt, considered the move "a little job." It had moved greater buildings; all were considered portable given an engineering solution, the right tools (lever, screw, and wheel), and sufficient force applied along a vector. And time. Months rather than days were needed.

The movers began their work in the spring of 1905. After setting hundreds of jackscrews under Science Hall, they prepared a bed of cribbing and rollers, then cut the building from its foundation and settled it on the track. Using massive pushing screws, they inched the building along, using surveyor instruments to ensure that the levelness "would not vary by half an inch." And it was so. The natural science faculty continued to conduct classes in Science Hall, their students coming and going, their laboratory work moving along uninterrupted, through the months of that summer.

Science Hall reached its new home across the street on August 15. The prepared foundation was built up to meet the skirt of the building. The jackscrews were removed. And it was done.

UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES, SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA LIBRARIES, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, IOWA CITY, IOWA



Renamed Calvin Hall, the imposing brick building once called Science Hall commands attention on the Jefferson Street hill, opposite the Pentacrest on the University of Iowa campus.

One can imagine the satisfaction of Calvin and Macbride in this moment of vindication. One can almost see the conspiratorial wink, the handshake, the slap on the back, before they returned to Science Hall and their teaching.

In later years, Bohumil Shimek, who had joined the natural science faculty in 1890 and knew both men well, summed up the partnership of Calvin and Macbride: "Those two men worked together for years and years," he wrote. "They consulted each other on all important matters. When professor Calvin needed invigorating, Dr. Macbride was there to do it. When Dr. Macbride needed calming, professor Calvin was there."

A tireless teacher, Calvin remained an active and engaged faculty member until the very end. In the spring of 1911, during the weeks of his final illness, Macbride was at his bedside each day offering cheerful encouragement. He jotted into his diary how "much improved" Calvin seemed and was ill prepared when Calvin went into a sudden decline and died. Macbride was dumbstruck, if we can judge from the spareness of his entry for April 17: "He died! I cannot believe it. And the day so fair."

In the days and weeks that followed his death, Calvin was eulogized for his contributions to the university, the state, and the field of geology. But a greater honor lay far in the future. In 1964 the building once known as Science Hall was renamed Calvin Hall to honor its chief patron and presiding spirit. Similarly, the Hall of Natural Science, completed in 1907, was renamed to honor Calvin's friend and colleague shortly after Macbride's death in 1934.

Today, Macbride Hall draws students to its classrooms and visitors of all ages to its museum of natural history, while Calvin Hall, in its 12th decade and long past its life as a science facility, serves students through its offices of admissions, student services, and financial aid—bearing out the principle that a good brick building shouldn't go to waste. ❖

*James Hill has written extensively on 19th-century British literature and health care. He lives in Coralville.*

NOTE ON SOURCES

The patient staff and exceptional resources of the University of Iowa Archives were a great help in my research for this article. I found the personal letters of Samuel Calvin and Thomas Macbride and the diaries of Macbride to be particularly illuminating aids to understanding the long friendship of the men. Other fine resources were *A Pictorial History of the University of Iowa*, by John Gerber et al. (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 2005); Irving Weber's collected writings on the history of Iowa City; and issues of the *Palimpsest* from 1934 and 1985 that featured Macbride and the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory. For a detailed description of moving Science Hall, see J. W. Rich, "The Moving of Science Hall," *Iowa Alumnus* (November 1905). The development of the modern-day Pentacrest is explored in Nancy J. Brack and Jean W. Sizemore, "The 'New' University of Iowa: A Beaux-Arts Design for the Pentacrest," *Annals of Iowa* 51:2 (Fall 1991).

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**A**s David Holmgren ably demonstrates in the following article, no matter what the subject or point of view, political cartoons offer insight about public figures, events, and issues, whether they were published yesterday or 80 years ago. The medium of the political cartoon privileges one individual—the cartoonist—to express a personal point of view, usually in a prominent position on the editorial or front page. Capable of swaying the perceptions of thousands of viewers, an effective cartoon has the power to in-

fluence opinion, policy, and votes. Like today's media commentators and Internet bloggers, political cartoonists celebrate, exaggerate, discredit, and mislead. They might also express tenderness, sorrow, fear, and, almost always, a sharp sense of humor.

Political cartoons like the ones in this article are only one component of a richly illustrated museum exhibit at the State Historical Building in Des Moines. "Portrait of a Governor: A Life, A Legacy" reveals the personal lives and public achievements of Iowa's territo-

rial and state governors through artifacts, images, and information. Objects used by Iowa governors range from Tom Vilsack's Blackberry to Nathan Kendall's magnificent top hat; from Robert Ray's executive chair to George Clarke's electric car; and from Terry Branstad's motivational sign given to him by Rev. Robert Schuller to William Harding's "Icy-Hot" thermos. Items representing Iowa's newest governor, Chet Culver, are also included.

—by Jack Lufkin, curator

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# IOWA'S GOVERNORS IN CARTOONS

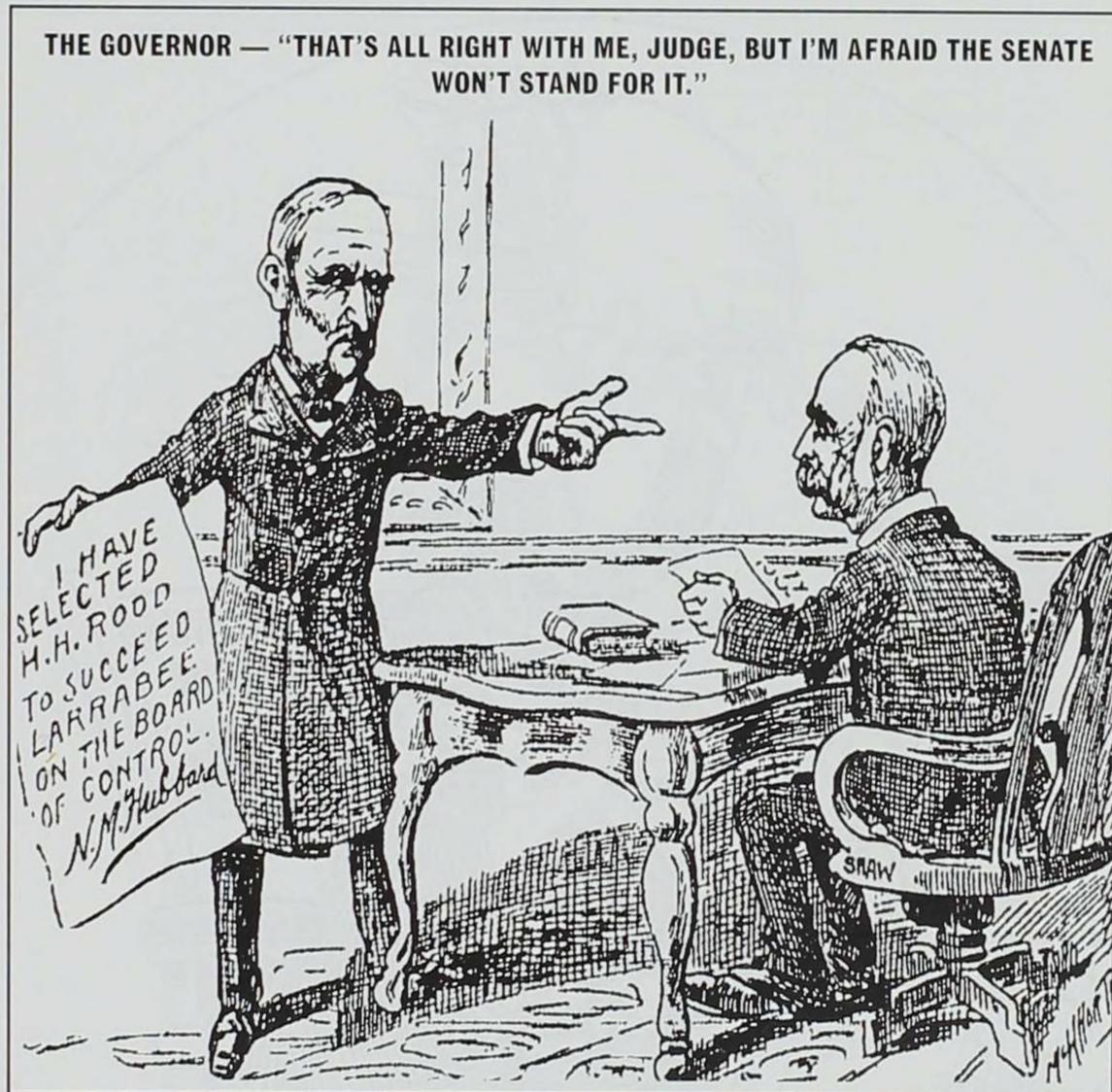
BY DAVID HOLMGREN

We Americans love a good laugh at our leaders. We generally take them dead seriously when we vote for them on Election Day, but that doesn't stop us from deeply imbibing all the media sources of humor directed against them. Whether those sources are newspapers, magazines, books, Internet, or late-night comedians, we never let our leaders forget that we're the boss and they are here to serve us. This irreverent national tradition of ours is a healthy reflection of life in a democratic society. We elect our leaders, usually respect them, and even love a few of them, but we are not expected to salute, idolize, or worship them, and we exercise the right to express our opinions. That right is held especially dear by political cartoonists.

Political cartooning is probably the oldest form of this irreverence through illustration—an American tradition older than the Republic itself. Before the Revolution, Benjamin Franklin lampooned the British in cartoons that he circulated among friends. In the 1790s, Thomas Jefferson was drawn quite harshly by those who feared he was an atheist or out to destroy the new

Constitution with its federal system. In the 1830s, Andrew Jackson was caricatured for issues ranging from Cabinet capers to his eradication of the Second Bank of the United States. Lincoln was depicted as an apish figure, a tyrant, and a primitive backwoods buffoon. The potency of any political cartoon diminishes as new controversies arise and new leaders take the stage, but the caricatures become icons, recognizable for decades—Theodore Roosevelt with his pince-nez and toothy grin, Franklin D. Roosevelt with a cigarette holder cocked arrogantly, Lyndon Johnson's gigantic Dumbo ears, and Richard Nixon's huge jowls and five o'clock shadow.

Political cartooning began in some Iowa newspapers by the end of the 19th century. Iowa's governors have been frequent targets, although less often during the world wars and the Great Depression. The following cartoons from the last century and the stories behind them remind us of the dramatic power shifts and the consuming issues in Iowa politics, as drawn by some of Iowa's most well-known and opinionated cartoonists.



# 1900

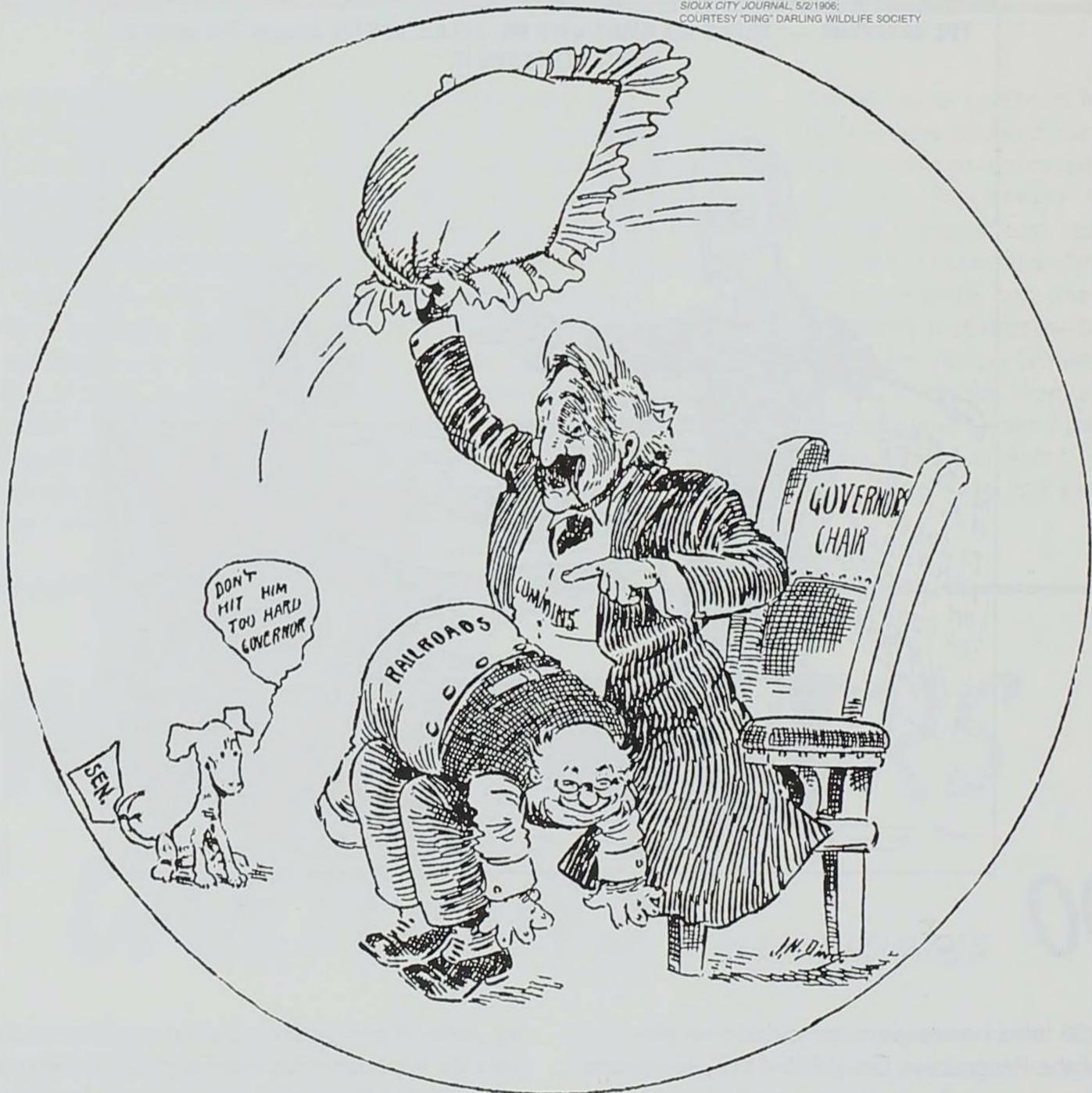
Cartooning in Iowa newspapers coincided with the beginning of the Progressive Era (1900–1917). In general terms, the progressives fought for political, economic, and social reform to address national problems created by the growth of industry and large cities, and by the shift from a rural to an increasingly urban nation. In Iowa, progressives focused on liquor control, education, woman suffrage, election procedures, and curbing monopolies and corporate power (particularly by the railroads). Until the election of Democrat Woodrow Wilson to the presidency in 1912, progressivism in Iowa, as well as in the rest of America, resided largely within the Republican Party, divided between the new, insurgent progressives, and the older, establishment groups known either as stand-patters or conservatives.

In 1900, conservative Republican Leslie Shaw was governor of Iowa. One of his political allies was Judge Nathaniel M. Hubbard of Cedar Rapids and Marion, attorney for the powerful Chicago & North Western Railway. In this cartoon, Hubbard is portrayed as exert-

ing political pressure on Governor Shaw in dictating political appointments. Hubbard disliked former governor William Larrabee's progressive inclinations, especially regulating Iowa railroads. Seated in the governor's chair, Shaw appears as a more passive but pragmatic figure, while Hubbard pushes Shaw to replace Larrabee on the Board of Control (which oversaw state hospitals and asylums, prisons and reform schools, the state orphanage and veterans home, and schools for those who were deaf or blind).

Other conservative allies of Shaw were U.S. Senators William Boyd Allison and John H. Gear; Congressmen John A. T. Hull, William P. Hepburn, and David B. Henderson (who was also Speaker of the House); and *Sioux City Journal* editor George D. Perkins. Some of these stand-patters would appear in other political cartoons during the Progressive Era in Iowa. This one was drawn by Tyler McWhorter, who began political cartooning in 1896 at the *Des Moines Leader*.

SIOUX CITY JOURNAL, 5/2/1906;  
COURTESY "DING" DARLING WILDLIFE SOCIETY



Cummins: "Remember What I Did to Him Last Time? Well, Watch Me Soak 'im Again."

## 1906

Progressive Republican Albert Baird Cummins was elected to succeed Shaw as governor in 1901. Early in 1906, Cummins broke Iowa's two-term tradition by running for a third term as governor. Among the issues that he addressed was railroad regulation. Many Iowans believed that the railroads dominated both political and economic life in Iowa; they exploited farmers by setting exorbitantly high freight rates to carry farm products to market and bought off elected officials and other influential Iowans with free passes.

Cummins was challenged for renomination by Republican stand-patter George D. Perkins, editor of the *Sioux City Journal*. Perkins received emphatic support from his paper's own political cartoonist, the young J. N. ("Ding") Darling. Even though Cummins was a progressive fighting for stronger railroad regulation, Darling depicted him as an ineffective reformer in this cartoon in May 1906. Darling left the *Sioux City Journal* later that year to start his long and distinguished career at the *Des Moines Register*.



# 1906

Despite the strong challenge by the conservative George Perkins, Cummins won renomination for a third term as governor. However, the fight had been cantankerous, especially at one head-to-head debate that nearly degenerated into a shouting match. A considerable number of conservative Republicans were further disaffected by Cummins's renomination. A few weeks before the election, Ding Darling portrayed Cummins's partial loss of Republican support. The cartoon fairly predicted the result on Election Day. Many Republicans chose either to vote Democratic or to sit at home on Election Day. Whereas Cummins had won his two

previous elections with margins of about 80,000 votes, he won reelection in 1906 by only 20,000.

Despite opening the fight between progressive and conservative Republicans, Cummins's reelection was partly due to the underlying strength of the Republican Party in Iowa, a continuing political heritage from the Civil War era. Although the Democratic Party had considerable support in Iowa, only rarely did it gain enough voter support to win the governorship or control the state legislature. During the 70 years between the Civil War and the Great Depression, only one Democrat, Horace Boies, served as governor (1890–1894.)



## 1907

Almost immediately after Cummins won reelection, he began casting covetous eyes on a U.S. Senate seat, an objective of his since 1893. In turn, many conservative and progressive leaders began dreaming about sitting in the governor's chair, and speculation and gossip rose rapidly. Today we complain about the never-ending nature of political campaigning, but this was also true a century ago. Ding Darling's cartoon in May 1907 reflected Iowans' exasperation with campaigns starting up even before the dust settles on the last one.

Cummins did not seek reelection as governor; he was expecting longtime conservative William Boyd Allison to retire from the Senate, where he had served

since 1873. To Cummins's chagrin, Allison announced his candidacy for another six-year term, even though he was nearly 80 and an invalid from prostatic cancer. Allied with conservatives in Iowa and old-guard Republicans in Washington, Allison won renomination in June 1908.

Meanwhile, for governor, Republicans nominated State Auditor Beryl F. Carroll, a conservative. He beat out Lieutenant Governor Warren Garst, a Coon Rapids farmer and Cummins's progressive protégé for the nomination. It now appeared that progressives were to be eclipsed in the Republican Party in Iowa and that Cummins's political career was over.



SATISFACTION GUARANTEED



PERFECTLY SATISFACTORY, THANK YOU

# 1908 & 1909

Then in August 1908, only two months after winning the renomination, Senator Allison died, and Iowa's political landscape suddenly changed. Intense political maneuvering and deal making followed. Cummins made no secret of his desire to run for the Senate. As governor, he called for a special session of the legislature to deal with the Senate vacancy for the next term. Legislators amended election law and allowed a primary in conjunction with the general election on November 3, to be followed in three weeks by a special election in the legislature.

On Election Day, it came as no surprise when Beryl Carroll was elected governor, and Cummins handily won the primary for the Senate seat. Three weeks later, the legislature met and elected Cummins to finish Allison's Senate term, initiating a sudden rapid-fire rotation in the governorship. Rather than serving out his term, Cummins immediately resigned as governor, and his lieutenant governor, Warren Garst, was inaugurated as governor for a tenure of only seven weeks.

Ding Darling commemorated this turnover with two cartoons that ran in successive morning editions of the *Des Moines Register and Leader*. And on inauguration



"WALK RIGHT IN AND MAKE YOURSELF T' HUM, MR. CARROLL."

day in January 1909, his friendly cartoon showed the Iowa public welcoming Carroll as he moves down the hall from the state auditor's office to the governor's office.



WHAT A VOTE WITH CARROLL, HULL AND SMITH MEANS

## 1910

By the late spring of 1910, the national Republican Party was entering the crisis that in two years would lead to a disastrous rupture between conservative supporters of William Howard Taft and progressive supporters of Theodore Roosevelt. The debacle would lead in turn to Republican defeat and changes in both progressive and national leadership of the Democratic Party.

This 1910 division within the national Republican Party was reflected precisely in Iowa. In Ding Darling's cartoon, progressive U. S. Senators Albert Cummins and Jonathan Prentiss Dolliver lead a crusade carrying the "Roosevelt Standard of Progressive Republicanism" to surmount "vested interests." Although Dolliver was a

more experienced and powerful congressman, a gifted orator, and a recognized leader of the progressives, Darling drew Cummins, not Dolliver, as the standard-bearer.

The smashed and stunned figures under "Vested Interests" are old-guard Republican leaders "Uncle Joe" Cannon, Speaker of the House, and Nelson Aldrich, senator from Rhode Island. On the right, a skeptical and disapproving Iowa public glowers at three Iowa conservatives digging in their heels, Governor Carroll and U.S. Representatives John A. T. Hull and Walter I. Smith. A week after the cartoon appeared, Carroll and Smith were narrowly renominated, while Hull, a Civil War veteran and congressman for nearly 20 years, lost the renomination.

# 1911

Under the nation's Constitution, U.S. senators were elected by state legislatures, not by the voters. As the Progressive Era unfolded in the early 1900s, however, demand for popular election of senators began to rise. Many states were nominating senatorial candidates through primaries, and state legislators pledged to support the voters' choice. In February 1911, the Iowa legislature voted for popular election, but the attempt to change was abruptly halted by Governor Carroll, who was just beginning his second term.

Carroll vetoed the bill on February 21, prompting Ding Darling's two-part, unflattering cartoon of the governor the next day, Washington's Birthday, which marked both events.

Two years later, the 17th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, which required popular election of senators in all states.



THE FIRST CONSERVATIONIST



P. S.—GEORGE WASHINGTON WASN'T THE ONLY ONE THAT DIDN'T KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PERFECTLY GOOD CHERRY TREE AND A BRAMBLE BUSH.



# 1915

Governor Carroll retired at the end of his second term and was succeeded in January 1913 by George W. Clarke. Early in 1915, just as Clarke was beginning his second term, he ruffled feathers in the state legislature by raising questions in his biennial message about the legislature's hiring practices. For example, he asked why the legislature was employing more doormen for the Capitol than there were doors in the building. He also questioned the hiring of well-to-do veterans for jobs in the Capitol while poor veterans were passed over for consideration.

Clarke blew the lid off the pot by charging that these hiring practices constituted graft. A host of legislators considered Clarke's accusations deeply insulting and "unmanly." Clarke responded that he did not mean to imply that laws had been broken, only that the legislature needed to be less political and more mindful about spending the taxpayers' money. The episode created the impression for some that the governor was calmly asking reasonable questions while the legislature was overreacting. Darling's cartoon on February 1, 1915, reflected that impression.

THEIR NEWLY FOUND FRIENDSHIP FOR THE FARMER IS VERY TOUCHING



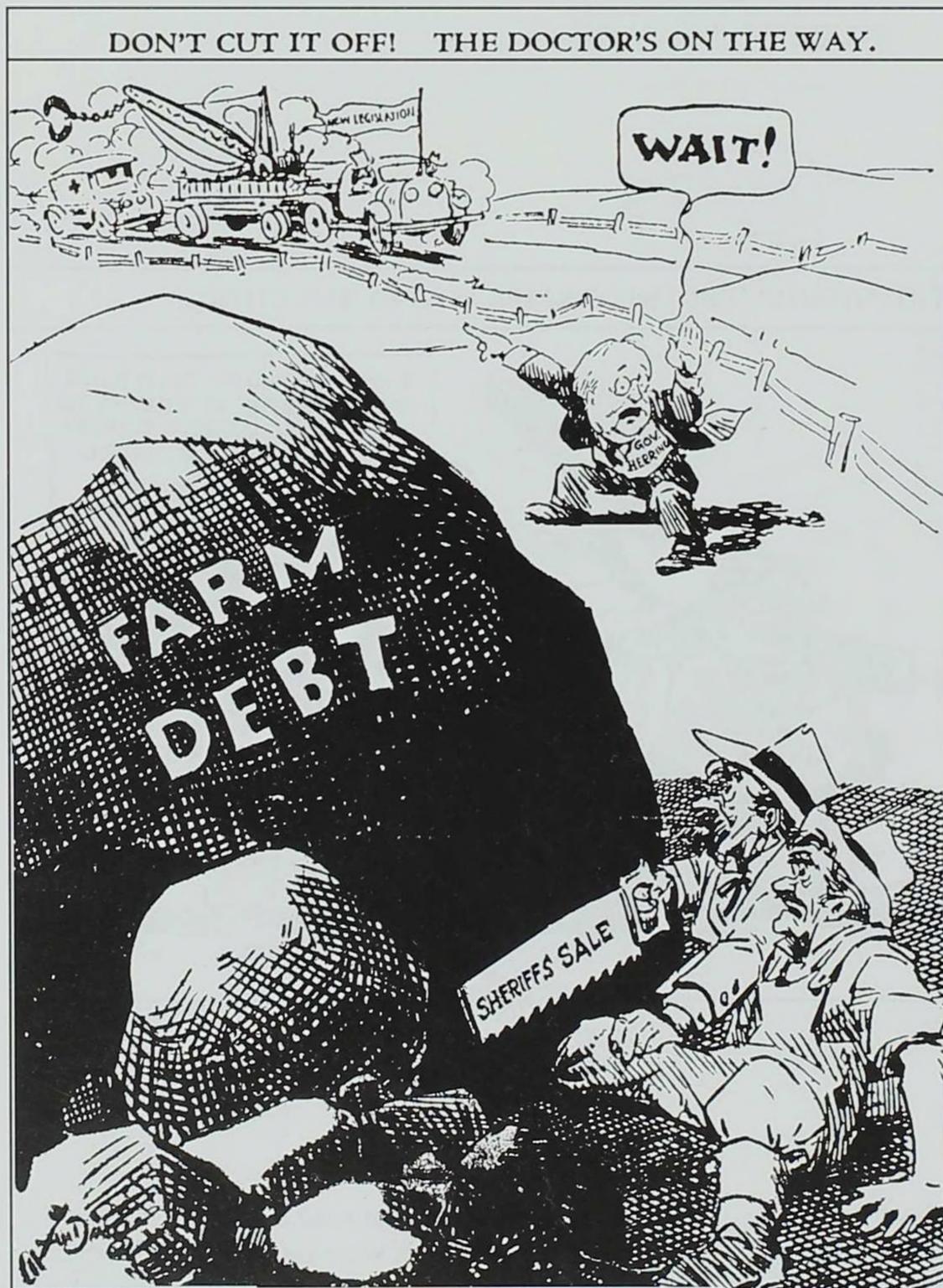
# 1916

In 1916, Republicans selected Lieutenant Governor William L. Harding to run as Clarke's successor. At that time, progressive elements in both parties were demanding road improvements and prohibition. Iowa's roads were still mostly dirt, especially in rural areas. Gravel and paved roads would help farmers market their crops more efficiently and profitably, leading to increased agricultural production and indirectly to increased commerce and industry. As to the second issue—prohibition—Iowa's long history of dissension among temperance crusaders, ethnic and religious groups, and liquor interests was reaching its climax.

The governor's race that year was unusual because neither candidate campaigned on traditional party positions. Republicans tended to be prohibitionists and at least the party's progressive wing supported the Good Roads movement, but their candidate, Harding, opposed

prohibition and claimed that road improvements were too expensive. Democrats were generally antiprohibition and proponents of small government and low spending, but candidate Edwin T. Meredith ran as a prohibitionist and was unable to deflect Harding's charges that he favored high state spending for road improvements.

In this confusing political year in Iowa, leading Republican newspapers supported Meredith. Ding Darling created a series of anti-Harding cartoons in the *Des Moines Register*. In this one, Harding's allies are unsavory liquor interests and greedy corporations who are deceiving the honest Iowa farmer while attacking citizens who favor good government and good roads. Several weeks later, Harding won the election, again probably because of Iowa's strong historical leaning to the Republican Party. He went on to serve two often stormy terms in office.



## 1933

During World War I and the 1920s, Republicans continued to dominate both the governor's office and the state legislature, but the coming of the Great Depression brought tremendous political changes. In 1930, shortly after the stock market crash, three-term governor John Hammill sought a U.S. Senate seat, and the Republicans nominated progressive Dan W. Turner, a former state legislator and progressive. He was elected that fall.

Unfortunately for Turner, the start of his term in

January 1931 coincided with a deepening of the Depression and the rise of farm militancy led by Milo Reno and the Iowa Farmers Union. By the summer of 1932, Republicans in Iowa, as across the nation, were facing hostile voters with a national election only months away.

Iowa Democrats nominated Clyde Herring, a former car dealer and 1920 gubernatorial candidate, to oppose Turner. On Election Day the Democratic sweep across the country led by Franklin D. Roosevelt also swept Herring into the governor's office. During the interim between election and inauguration, the economic crisis deepened nationally. Although Turner and Herring worked together amicably during the transition, they were unable to limit the burgeoning debt of farmers and increasing farm foreclosures. Two days after taking office, Herring issued a proclamation calling for a moratorium on farm foreclosures. Ding Darling's cartoon a few days later showed Herring's frantic, first effort to deal with the crisis. Just as a farmer crushed by farm debt is about to lose his farm by a sheriff's sale, the new governor points to imminent farm legislation.

Although Herring's proclamation had no legal force, the urgency of the moment helped Herring obtain first temporary, and later permanent legislative acts to aid struggling farmers. Herring went on to serve

two terms as governor and then one term in the U.S. Senate.

By the late 1930s, the Democratic tide across the nation began to ebb, and this was particularly noticeable in Iowa. After Herring's two terms as governor, and one term by Democrat Nelson Kraschel (1937–1939), the state began to resume its normal Republican voting patterns. In 1938 Republican George Wilson unseated Kraschel, and in 1942 Bourke B. Hickenlooper succeeded Wilson. Hickenlooper went on to win a U.S. Senate seat in 1944, and Iowans elected another Republican, Robert Blue, as governor.

## ADD CRIME WAVE.



DES MOINES REGISTER, 8/21/1946; COURTESY "DING" DARLING WILDLIFE SOCIETY

# 1946

This cartoon from August 1946 shows how a cartoonist can take out his personal wrath on an elected official. Skilled cartoonist Ding Darling was also a conservation activist whose vision and hard work led to a consolidated state natural resources agency. In the summer of 1946, Darling became increasingly disturbed with what he viewed as Governor Robert Blue's interference with the State Conservation Commission's operations by appointing political associates indifferent to conservation.

Darling's attack on Blue and Republican State Chair Willis B. York seemed sudden and harsh because neither conservation issues nor the commission's operations had

been in the news prior to the cartoon. Although the public response to the cartoon seemed favorable, Darling felt compelled to issue a statement the following day clarifying his reasons for the cartoon. He pointed to at least one of Blue's appointments to the commission as being very partisan on a commission that had an established nonpartisan reputation. Indeed, his public statement was at least as harsh on Blue as the cartoon had been.

The outcome was a standoff. Darling's popularity remained high, and Blue was easily reelected governor that fall.

THE MORE THE MERRIER.



DES MOINES REGISTER, 2/11/1950, BY TOM CARLISLE

## 1950

In 1948, Governor Blue lost his bid for a third term in the June primary to Republican William S. Beardsley, a druggist, farmer, and state representative from Warren County. Beardsley went on to win the election in November.

Little more than a year later, in January 1950, the Republican campaign pot in Iowa was already boiling. Beardsley and U.S. Senator Bourke B. Hickenlooper both announced their intentions to run for reelection. Beardsley was unopposed for renomination, but not Hickenlooper. Republican Harry B. Thompson of

Muscatine also announced his candidacy for the Senate, and there were rumblings of other Republican challengers. In this ironic cartoon, a happy Republican elephant seems to invite even more Republicans to throw their hats in the ring. Both Beardsley and Hickenlooper easily won renomination and reelection.

The cartoon was drawn by Tom Carlisle, who had started at the *Des Moines Register* in 1926 as Ding Darling's assistant. When Darling retired in April 1949, Carlisle became chief cartoonist for the next decade until his own retirement.



DES MOINES REGISTER, 7/28/1956, BY FRANK MILLER

## 1956

The Republican trend continued until the mid-1950s. Beardsley won a third term in 1952, and Republican Leo Hoegh was elected governor after Beardsley announced plans to retire. Yet another Republican, Leo Elthon, served very briefly as governor when Beardsley was tragically killed in a car accident on November 21, 1954, only seven weeks before Hoegh was to take office.

During the summer of 1956, northwestern Iowa suffered first from drought and then from hail storms. In a two-day tour inspecting the crop damage, Hoegh was in a National Guard plane when the fuel gauge appar-

ently malfunctioned. Out of fuel, the engine sputtered and died at 1,000 feet. The pilot skillfully guided the plane to a bumpy landing in a field near Harlan, and everyone on board escaped without injury.

Frank Miller drew this cartoon for the *Des Moines Register and Tribune* in the aftermath of what could have been a second tragedy for the governor's office in less than two years.

Miller joined the staff at the *Des Moines Register* in 1953. His cartoons usually appeared on the editorial page.



DES MOINES REGISTER, 11/16/1958, BY FRANK MILLER

## 1958

By the late 1950s, in Iowa and across the nation, the political tide was turning against the GOP. Republican governor Hoegh's bid for reelection was upset on Election Day by Democrat Herschel Loveless of Ottumwa. Loveless was the first Democratic governor in 18 years. Although Democrats across the nation increased their majorities in Congress, Iowa Republicans reelected Hickenlooper to the Senate and retained control of all other statewide elective offices as well as the legislature.

In November 1958, cartoonist Frank Miller caught

the joy of Democrats and the dismay of Republicans a few days after the election. Not only had Loveless won another term, but Democrats picked up a number of other statewide offices and sent three new Democrats to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Among the party's victors that year was political newcomer Harold E. Hughes, elected to the Iowa State Commerce Commission; and Neal Smith, elected to his first term in the U.S. House of Representatives. Smith would be reelected continuously until 1994.

## THE BIG BOTTLE BATTLE



DES MOINES REGISTER, 1/27/1963, BY FRANK MILLER

# 1963

In 1960, Herschel Loveless decided to run for a U.S. Senate seat instead of a third term as governor. The state attorney general, Republican Norman Erbe, was elected governor. In 1962, he faced reelection against State Commerce Commissioner Harold E. Hughes.

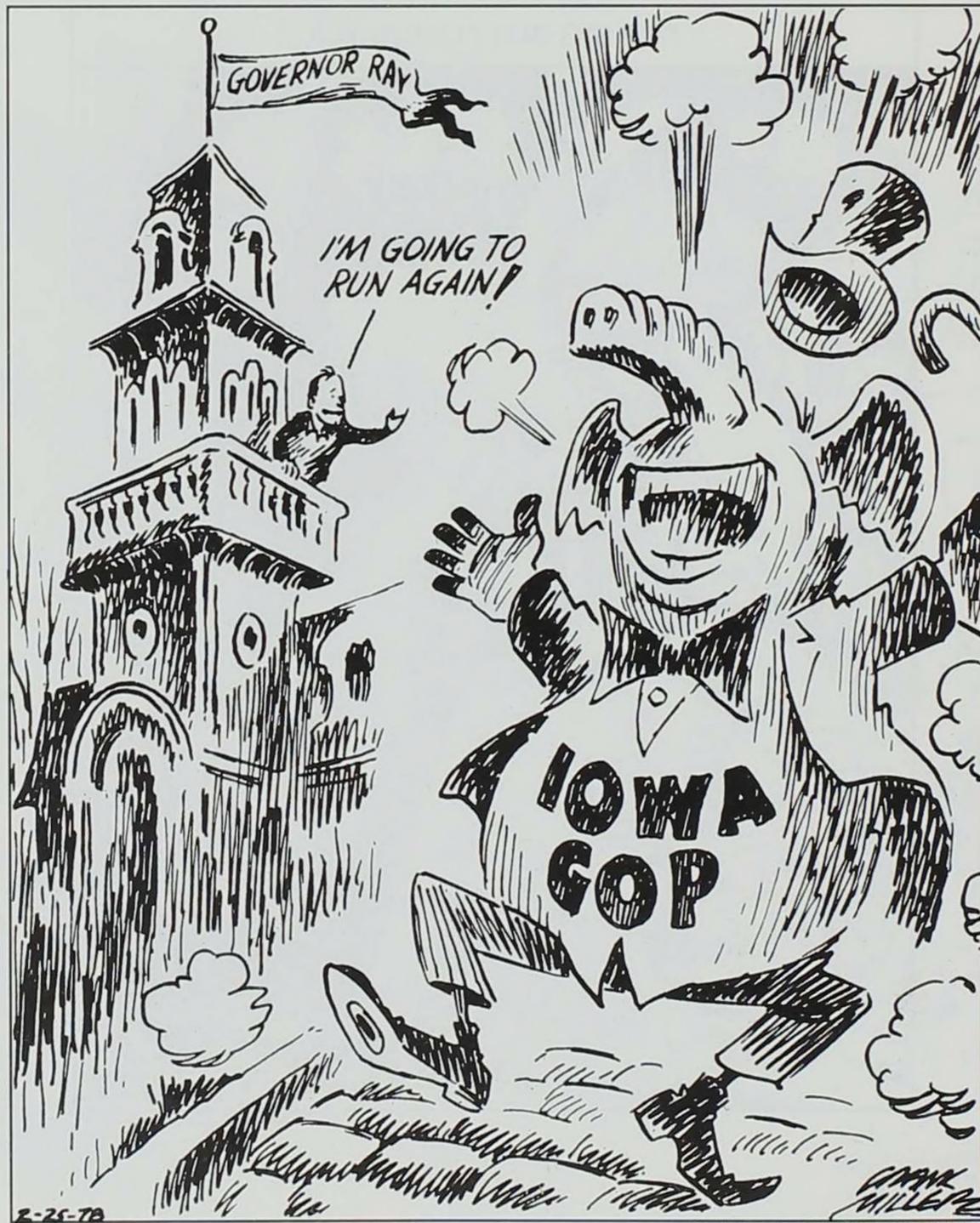
Perhaps the most charged campaign issue was liquor control, characterized for decades as “the wets” versus “the dries.” Iowa historically leaned politically and culturally toward liquor control, and in 1934, a year after national prohibition had ended, Iowa established the State Liquor Commission to control sales and consumption.

A reformed alcoholic, Harold Hughes opposed the existing system of liquor purchase: only state-owned stores could sell liquor by the bottle, which could then be served at home or at a private “key club.” Although a bar could sell a bottle of beer, it could not legally sell a

glass of liquor. Hughes argued that this system bred corruption and was unenforceable. Any bar could charge a dollar for membership and call itself a club. Hughes campaigned for liquor to be sold by the drink at establishments with liquor licenses.

Erbe was not able to clarify his position on liquor-by-the-drink, whereas Hughes took a clear and forthright stand in favor of it. On Election Day, Hughes upset Erbe’s reelection effort and entered office in January. Just ten days later this Frank Miller cartoon appeared in the *Des Moines Register*, showing Hughes charging into the treacherous political battle on liquor-by-the-drink.

In 1964 and 1966, Hughes went on to win two more terms as governor, both by landslides. Even in 1968, when Iowa went strongly Republican, Hughes won a seat in the U.S. Senate.



## 1978

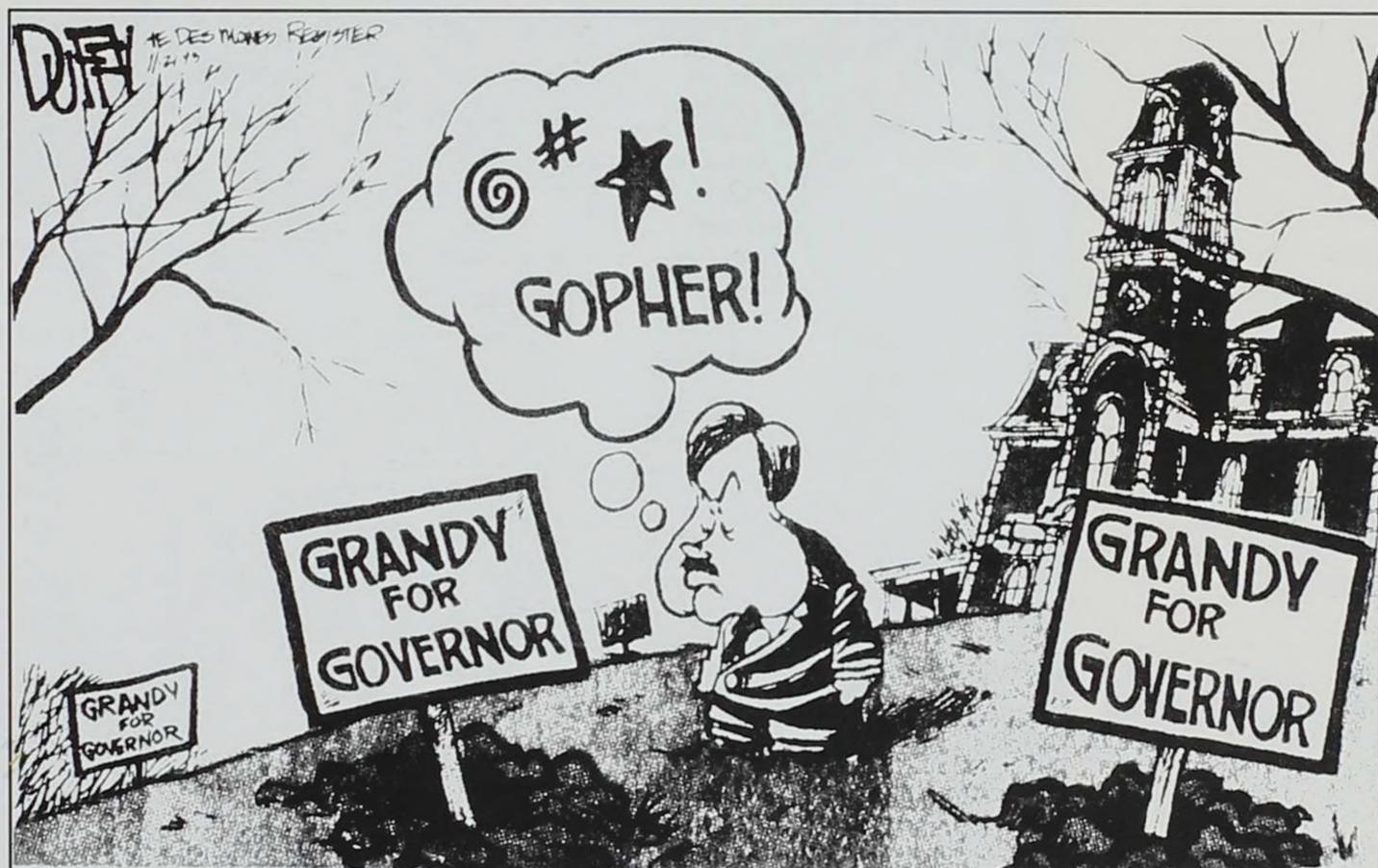
When Harold Hughes was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1968, Robert Ray, state chair of the Republican Party, was elected governor. In 1970 Ray was narrowly re-elected, but in 1972 he was reelected by a landslide.

In 1974, Ray ran for an unprecedented fourth term. Despite the drubbing Republicans took at the polls across the nation because of the Watergate scandals and economic inflation, Ray won again in a landslide. (A change in the state constitution increased the governor's term from two to four years, following a national trend.)

This fourth victory began to give Ray an aura of

political invincibility. By early 1978, with Democrats in control of the legislature and Republican prospects uncertain, Iowa Republicans were overjoyed when Ray announced that he would run for a fifth term. In February, Frank Miller drew this Republican elephant rejoicing in front of Terrace Hill, the governor's home. The cartoon captured the essence of Republican sentiment. In the fall, Ray was reelected in a landslide victory. He wound up serving as governor for a total of 14 years over five terms. No previous governor had even approached this record.

# 1993



DES MOINES REGISTER, 2/21/1993, BY BRIAN DUFFY

Robert Ray retired in 1982. Lieutenant Governor Terry Branstad was elected governor and was subsequently reelected in 1986 and 1990.

When Branstad announced his candidacy for a fourth term, he faced a primary challenge from Congressman Fred Grandy of Sioux City. Grandy had been a celebrity from the television show *Love Boat* in the 1970s and '80s, on which he had played the ship's purser, "Gopher." Back in Sioux City, Grandy had been elected to Congress in 1986, but many Iowans still informally referred to him as "Gopher" rather than as "Congressman Grandy." Late in 1993, as Grandy considered challenging Branstad, *Des Moines Register* cartoonist Brian Duffy drew this cartoon, suggesting what might have been the governor's discomfort at this prospect.

Grandy did indeed challenge Branstad for renomination. Nevertheless, Branstad won renomination and reelection.

These cartoons spanning a century are only a small part of Iowa's rich heritage of political humor. Our right to freely express our opinions of our leaders includes the right to enjoy an occasional chuckle while contemplating a cartoonist's pointed message, for political cartoons convey far more than humor. Through the art of illustration and caricature, they deliver strong opinions with the power to influence the public. ❖

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#### NOTE ON SOURCES

A search for political cartoons over the past century included many major newspapers in Iowa, including the *Des Moines Capital*, *Marshalltown Republican*, *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, *Davenport Democrat*, and *Council Bluffs Non-Pariel*. None of these appeared to have an in-house cartoonist dealing with state or local issues. Most of these papers reprinted syndicated cartoons on national and international issues, and even then seldom on a daily basis. One cartoon was found in the *Eagle Grove Eagle*, published in Governor Blue's hometown shortly after his election to office; it was not used for this article. The newspapers most likely to have a political cartoonist on staff were those published in Des Moines, Iowa's capital and largest city. Research in the *Des Moines Leader* and *Des Moines Register*, as well as in the *Sioux City Journal*, centered on those periods when the legislature was in session or during campaigns.

Secondary sources include David L. Lendt, *Ding: The Life of Jay Norwood Darling* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1979); Jay N. Darling, *Ding's Half Century* (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1962); Ralph Mills Sayre, "Albert Baird Cummins and the Progressive Movement in Iowa" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1958); Leland L. Sage, *A History of Iowa* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1974); Leland L. Sage, *William Boyd Allison: A Study in Practical Politics* (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1956); Thomas Richard Ross, *Jonathan Prentiss Dolliver: A Study in Political Integrity and Independence* (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1958); Harold E. Hughes, *The Man from Ida Grove: A Senator's Personal Story* (Lincoln, VA: Chosen Books, 1979); William B. Friedrichs, *Covering Iowa: The History of the Des Moines Register and Tribune Company, 1849-1985* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 2000); Frank Miller, *Frank Miller, Cartoons as Commentary: Three Decades at The Register* (Des Moines: Des Moines Register and Tribune Company, 1983); and Brian Duffy, *More of Duffy: Editorial Cartoons* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1995).



**STUMP SPEECH:**

Fred Foster argues his points to an attentive audience, Iowa Falls, 1896. Fred's father photographed his children, Iowa Falls, and the surrounding area at the turn of the century. For another Foster image, see page 97.

# One in a Million

Amidst the James Baird Weaver Papers in the State Historical Society of Iowa are letters from such notables as Samuel Gompers, William Jennings Bryan, and Eugene Debs. You'll also find two letters from Iowan Edward H. Gillette. Both Greenbackers, Weaver and Gillette served in Congress, 1879-1881. (See article in this issue.) After their terms ended, Weaver stayed in politics. Gillette left public life in 1880, but his admiration for Weaver never ended, as these letters reveal.

In the first letter, dated September 5, 1897, Gillette writes to Weaver: "The contents of this epistle may surprise you, but this is an age of surprises, ... I write to ask a favor, ... that you shall preach my funeral sermon upon my front porch if the weather permit, otherwise in a church or hall at Valley Junction. I desire to be buried in the 'Jordan Cemetery.' I want the services well advertised, especially the fact that you are to preach the funeral sermon, not that I care to have any body see the wreck of the house I lived in (because I could not get any better) but because I want every body to hear you. I suppose you would naturally give a short account of my feeble efforts for reforms in the interest of the common people, to secure their simple justice."

Gillette continues his instructions: "Speak loud please, and give me a front seat, so if any life remains I will shout Amen! or kick the casket in my enthusiasm, but if I do not respond you may know that I am dead as Julius Caesar.

"... You better keep this letter for reference. I desire to have my esteemed neighbor, Charles Ashworth attend to the details of my burial if he is still on earth. I wish no expensive equipments. A plain coffin made to order would be fully as comfortable as a trust casket, and I desire that what little money I may possess shall go to my dear children." Gillette also asked Weaver to select the pall bearers, "about as many women as men to indicate my idea of equality of the sexes, that they should pull together everywhere."

Gillette also wrote to Weaver in June 1908, apparently referring to talk that Weaver, then 74, might again run for Congress. The one-page letter (below) again reveals Gillette's candid style and deep admiration for Weaver's bold and passionate leadership in Congress before the turn of the century.

In the end, Weaver didn't speak at Gillette's funeral. After several heart attacks, Weaver died in 1912, age 78. Gillette died in 1918, age 77. He was buried in Valley Junction's Glendale Cemetery. —The Editor

JAMES BAIRD WEAVER PAPERS, SHSI (DES MOINES)

Cloverhills Ia. June 8<sup>th</sup> 08  
Hon. J. B. Weaver:  
Dear Gen:  
Dum it! Confound it! The Devil take it! Hang it! Daus it! Slam bang it!! Didn't you know that the man who silenced the Speakes (Sam Raudall) and sent him to the Choke room for a drink; the man who opened Oklahoma; the man who exposed the Va Bankers to the contempt of mankind, and made the fakies and Trusts tremble is a marked man, and when he shows his head it gets hit? Did you imagine they'd ever let you into a legislative Assembly again? Did you imagine they had forgotten? Not much! Don't be a target for 'em but hit 'em again!  
Your old Colleague  
E. H. Gillette