

IOWA REACTIONS TO WENDELL PHILLIPS, 1867

By *Waldo W. Braden*

The lecture season of 1866-1867 was a busy one for Iowa audiences. The successful conclusion of the war, the availability of numerous eastern lecturers, a better arrangement for booking,¹ the comparative ease with which lecturers could now reach many Iowa towns by railroad, and the general postwar prosperity insured Iowans of a full season of entertainment and enlightenment. As a result, local groups were able to choose from a list which included Wendell Phillips, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Theodore Tilton, Horace Greeley, Frederick Douglass, W. H. Milburn, P. T. Barnum, Bayard Taylor, Carl Schurz, Grace Greenwood, John B. Gough, John G. Saxe, Henry Vincent, John S. C. Abbott, Clara Barton, and Anna Dickinson.

Of those who came, perhaps the most controversial and the most widely advertised was Wendell Phillips, the irrepressible lawyer-agitator, who at the time was fighting the administration of Andrew Johnson and its program of reconstruction. Phillips had been in the public eye for twenty-five years as an abolitionist as well as a lyceum lecturer.² His hatred of slavery had been so intense that he had often denounced the Constitution, because it protected that institution, and had consequently advocated a peaceful dissolution of the Union.³ The sharpness of his tongue and the bitterness of his attacks upon slaveholders had brought him wide publicity and had sometimes aroused threats of mob action.

With the secession of the southern states and the coming of the conflict, Phillips, in spite of his previous abhorrence of violence, supported the war

¹ See Hubert H. Hoeltje, "Notes on the History of Lecturing in Iowa, 1855-1885," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, 25:62-131 (January, 1927); Luella M. Wright, "Culture Through Lectures," *ibid.*, 38:115-62 (April, 1940).

² Ralph Korngold, *Two Friends of Man* (Boston, 1950), *passim*.

³ The following statement, made in 1842, is typical of his utterances on this subject: "Many of you, I doubt not, regret to have this man [George Latimer, a fugitive slave] given up, but you cannot help it. There stands the bloody cause in the Constitution, — you cannot fret the seal off the bond. The fault is allowing such a Constitution to live an hour. . . . When I look upon these crowded thousands and see them trample upon their consciences and the rights of their fellow men at the bidding of a piece of parchment, I say my curse be upon the Constitution of the United States." Quoted in *ibid.*, 166.

effort and the administration of Lincoln. But emancipation and the triumph of the Union forces had not been sufficient to quiet his agitation. After the war he had merely shifted his emphasis from abolition to equal rights for the Negro and to harsh reconstruction. Joining forces with Charles Sumner and Thaddeus Stevens, Phillips had sought to achieve in the public forum what his colleagues were bent upon doing in Congress, that is, the complete discrediting of the President. The effectiveness of this triumvirate can be ascertained from the remarks of President Johnson. On February 22, 1866, Johnson had said, "Suppose I should name to you those I look upon as being opposed to the fundamental principles of this government, and are now laboring to destroy them. I say Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania; I say Charles Sumner of Massachusetts; I say Wendell Phillips of Massachusetts." Johnson had bitterly lashed out at his three antagonists in a speech which he delivered September 8, 1866, in St. Louis: "I have been called Judas Iscariot and all that. . . . If I have played Judas, who has been my Christ. . . . Was it Thad Stevens? Was it Wendell Phillips? Was it Charles Sumner?"

Phillips had long regarded the lecture platform as an admirable place from which to present his political and social ideas. In the intensity of the new battle he once more looked to his fall and winter lectures as a means of advancing his cause. As a result, he prepared for the season of 1866-1867 a discourse entitled "The Perils of the Hour," a purely political diatribe which permitted him to extemporize at will upon day-to-day developments. After a number of eastern engagements during the fall, he set out on a circuit of twelve thousand miles, which carried him as far west as Iowa, and on which he delivered in all some sixty lectures.⁴ During March and April he addressed thirteen audiences in the eastern half of Iowa:

- March 14: Keokuk
- March 15: Des Moines
- March 16: Mount Pleasant
- March 23: Dubuque
- March 24: Universalist Church, Dubuque
- March 25: Independence
- March 26: Waterloo
- March 27: Cedar Falls
- March 29: Cedar Rapids
- March 30: Clinton

⁴ Lorenzo Sears, *Wendell Phillips* (New York, 1909), 265.

April 5: Muscatine
April 6: Washington
April 8: Iowa City

In spite of the fact that he was an excellent drawing card, Phillips presented a real problem to the nonpartisan lecture association whose primary objectives were entertainment and instruction. It was probably Phillips' reputation as an agitator rather than as a lecturer that explained the current interest in him. Although the program committees recognized that the people wanted to see and hear the abolitionist who had been fearless in his utterances and who had not been deterred even by mobs, the program planners were also aware that to permit him to present his incendiary political views was likely to stir up discord among the patrons, particularly if the membership included many Democrats. In short, the program committees faced the dilemma of whether they should invite Phillips to speak upon reconstruction and related problems, and risk criticism, or whether they should play safe and ask him to repeat one of his familiar lectures of the past.

When it was learned that he had been engaged to come to Keokuk, the advisability of his appearance immediately became a subject of bitter debate there. The Keokuk *Gate City*, a Republican paper, boldly argued that it would be a mistake to ask Phillips to throw aside a lecture "upon stirring and engrossing questions with all the splendor of his eloquence" and substitute one of "his musty manuscript lectures" such as "The Lost Arts," which "he threw aside years ago" and which was "as dead as the lost arts whose mortuary record it commemorates."⁵ The Democratic journal took exception to the point of view of the rival paper and countered:

If he be the traitor that he is represented to be . . . and we have no doubt of it, then we say it is an insult to all Union-loving citizens of the city to invite him here to bleat his treason under the endorsement of our Library Association. And any democrat who would go to hear him, would, in our opinion, disgrace himself and the party to which he belongs.⁶

Even the neighboring Fort Madison *Plain Dealer* joined in the controversy. "Wendell Phillips has a national reputation, and we go to hear him as we would go to any other show. As to the propriety of lecture associa-

⁵ Keokuk *Gate City*, March 2, 1867.

⁶ Keokuk *Daily Constitution*, March 3, 1867.

tions inviting men of extreme views, to address them — that is another matter, about which we have our own opinion. . . . We are off for Keokuk.”⁷ There can be little question that many attended the lecture in a spirit similar to that of the Fort Madison editor; they went for the show.

Evidently the Republicans in the Library Association prevailed, for Phillips was invited to speak on “The Perils of the Hour.” On the night of March 14, the auditorium of the Chatham Square Church was “filled to overflowing with eager listeners.” They gladly paid the admission fee of fifty cents in order to hear a speaker whom the *Gate City* had declared to be “the first of American orators.” One source estimated that the sponsors cleared on the evening about two hundred dollars.⁸

Usually Phillips spoke extemporaneously. Consequently the remarks that he made in Keokuk, as well as those he made to other Iowa groups, were reported only in part. The *Daily Constitution* was dismayed with Phillips for placing the responsibility for the recent war upon the South. It quoted Phillips as saying, “It was Faneuil Hall against the slave barracoon, and Faneuil Hall having won we have a right to cram Faneuil Hall down the throat of the South.” To accomplish this goal he was quoted as advocating the use of military force until the South “was fully and thoroughly reconstructed on the basis of northern civilization and northern ideas.” He denounced President Johnson as a “traitor” and demanded the President’s removal.

The *Constitution* observed that “much that the lecturer said was warmly applauded by the radical portion of the audience, especially his denunciation of the people of the South and the President of the United States. His invective against Gen. Grant was received in silence when the infamous slanderer ought to have been hissed and hooted out of the hall.”⁹

In many ways Phillips disappointed his Keokuk listeners, in that he did not live up to what they anticipated of a “terrible abolitionist” and a “fierce radical.” The *Constitution* “presumed” that “a great many” were “somewhat disappointed.” The *Gate City* conceded that “at least eight-tenths of the audience” did not find him as “eloquent as they expected.” Phillips “talked to the audience; didn’t storm at it.” The Fort Madison *Plain Dealer* described his manner as “mild, polished, and indicative of perfect self pos-

⁷ Fort Madison *Plain Dealer*, March 14, 1867.

⁸ *Ibid.*, March 21, 1867.

⁹ Keokuk *Daily Constitution*, March 16, 1867.

session." Almost with regret the editor said, "One looks in vain for the wrinkles, or violent gestures or querulous tones naturally attributable to a radical reformer. . . ." ¹⁰ Emphasizing the same characteristics, the *Gate City* gave a more complete picture of the man:

One is struck by the sincerity and earnestness of Mr. Phillips. But numberless other men are sincere and earnest. His great strength, that which distinguishes him from every other man that we ever heard speak upon political topics, is his transcendent apprehension of principles, and his clearness in stating them. . . .

Gray haired, benignant-featured, mild, the moral faculties as largely developed as the reflective, this placid countenanced, benevolent, quietly-speaking old gentleman, who has a cordial shake of the hand and a hearty greeting for even the youngest boys — this can scarcely be the terrible Abolitionist and fierce Radical who has been the best abused and most ill-abused man in the country for a quarter of a century. ¹¹

Seemingly the Keokuk lecture-goers thought of oratory and eloquence in terms of the spread-eagle variety and envisioned an abolitionist as a man with satanic countenance. In their opinion the calm manner and the conversational style, for which, incidentally, Phillips was famous among orators of the period, did not conform with what they thought oratory should be. They were willing to concede that he was a "good talker," but they did not think him truly eloquent.

On March 15 Phillips journeyed to Des Moines on the Des Moines Valley Railroad, arriving at six p.m., just an hour and a half before the time of his scheduled appearance. ¹² In an effort to avoid unpleasant bickering, the Lecture Association had invited Phillips to present "The Lost Arts," a perennial favorite which he had first delivered in 1838 and which he had repeated many times. In this lecture Phillips' objective was to improve his listeners by "knocking" out of them any "self-conceit" which had arisen from their undue pride in the accomplishments of their own age. He showed in his talk that the lost arts of the past had contributed much to modern living. Of course this lecture contained nothing to which anyone could object and it provided what many thought was culture, the goal of each lecture group.

¹⁰ Fort Madison *Plain Dealer*, March 21, 1867.

¹¹ Keokuk *Gate City*, March 20, 1867.

¹² Des Moines *Iowa State Register*, March 15, 1867.

At the close of his announced lecture, someone asked him to speak a few words on "the live issues agitating the country." This request, giving him an opening, permitted him to lash out at the administration. Unfortunately, no report of what he said was made, but the reporter stated that the audience showed its approval by "enthusiastic applause." He further reported:

To attempt a description of the great Extremist of the right in speaking on the subject that calls forth the entire power and sublime eloquence of the champion of universal liberty, requires more room and time than we now have. Suffice to say, it showed to all who heard it that the name of Phillips is entitled to all the honor ever paid it. . . .¹³

The editor's rhetoric may have been an attempt to satisfy the admirers of Phillips and at the same time to avoid the publication of ideas which might have been resented by some of the readers of the paper.

From the financial point of view, Phillips' engagement proved indeed profitable for the Des Moines group. His lecture, the ninth and final one of the series, drew the largest crowd of the season.¹⁴ After paying Phillips his fee of \$110, the Association earned a sufficient amount to pay a deficit and to finish the year with a small profit.

On the following night Phillips spoke under the sponsorship of the Mount Pleasant Young Men's Association.¹⁵ For this audience Phillips attempted a double lecture, giving a portion of "The Lost Arts," and concluding with "The Perils of the Hour." He often resorted to this strategy when a committee was unable to decide whether it wanted a cultural discourse or a political discussion. He hoped, of course, to elicit a friendly hearing by the first in order that he might attempt to win converts by the second.¹⁶ Phillips accomplished neither of these goals with his Mount Pleasant listeners. The *Journal* reported, "The vast audience congregated . . . to hear this distinguished Orator . . . manifested but little enthu-

¹³ *Ibid.*, March 16, 1867.

¹⁴ The income from the several lectures was as follows: John G. Saxe, \$144.50; P. T. Barnum, \$192.50; President Magoun, \$22.00; B. S. McVickers, \$42.00; Clara Barton, \$105.00; Frederick Douglass, \$153.50; Judge Wright, \$9.00; Ralph Waldo Emerson, \$60.00; Wendell Phillips, \$265.00. *Ibid.*, April 20, 1867.

¹⁵ Waldo W. Braden, "The Y. M. A. of Mount Pleasant," *The Palimpsest*, 29:76-86 (March, 1948).

¹⁶ See essay by Edward Everett Hale, "Lectures and Lecturers," in Ashley H. Thorndike (ed.), *Modern Eloquence* (New York, 1923), 8:ix-xxii.

siasm. Numbers were half asleep. . . . Phillips is a dry, lifeless lecturer."¹⁷ Nevertheless Phillips did draw a good crowd. Only Anna Dickinson and Frederick Douglass spoke to larger gatherings that year.¹⁸

A week later found Phillips delivering "The Perils of the Hour" under the auspices of the Dubuque Young Men's Library Association. Although the report on his speech said that he was "one of the first orators of the nation," it added with some qualification that he was "a radical to the degree of never being satisfied with any good that is, but always experimenting for an imaginary good." The writer concluded, "Mr. Phillips hates everybody, or if not hates certainly does not love anybody. He abuses the President to make more pointed his attack upon Grant."¹⁹ As was often his custom, Phillips remained in Dubuque over Sunday in order to speak on temperance at the Universalist Church.

During the next three days Phillips traveled along the Dubuque and Sioux City Railroad, filling engagements at Independence, Waterloo, and Cedar Falls. At each of these places he repeated "The Perils of the Hour." The Independence *Buchanan County Bulletin* pointed out, concerning his appearance there, that those who came for oratory "doubtless went away disappointed. Instead, they saw . . . an intellectual giant, whose very presence, in its noble dignity, commanded respect, and whose words flowed forth in a golden stream from an inexhaustible fountain."²⁰ At Waterloo he drew "one of the best audiences of the season" in spite of a snowstorm which prevented the rural members from attending.²¹ Again an observer thought "that the majority of the audience was much disappointed in Phillips," but the writer conceded that the lecturer was "much milder [than anticipated] and did not descend to that low abuse that many expected he would."²²

At Cedar Falls Phillips apparently met a favorable reception. According

¹⁷ Mount Pleasant *Journal*, March 22, 1867.

¹⁸ The receipts for the lectures were as follows: Abbott, \$87.25; Dickinson, \$386.00; Tilton, \$81.25; Grace Greenwood, \$134.65; Douglass, \$306.00; Phillips, \$246.25; and Vincent, \$95.00. *Ibid.*, April 26, 1867.

¹⁹ Dubuque *Herald*, March 24, 1867.

²⁰ Quoted by Hoeltje, "Notes on the History of Lecturing in Iowa," 90-91. The Independence correspondent for the Dubuque *Herald*, March 29, 1867, reported: "Phillips disappointed all his hearers, both in the matter and manner of his lecture."

²¹ Waterloo *Courier*, March 28, 1867.

²² Waterloo correspondent for the Dubuque *Herald*, April 3, 1867.

to the paper, he held the attention of a large audience for an hour and a half. Said the reporter, "His fierce denunciation of the 'weathercock' of the White House, the brainless 'Seward,' the wavering 'Beecher,' called forth united applause of his hearers. The severe criticism of General Grant's dangerous neutrality course, although just, was hard to swallow by the General's many friends."²³ Phillips proved to be one of the most popular lecturers of the season. Of the six persons whom the Cedar Falls Lecture Association sponsored that season, Phillips ranked second only to P. T. Barnum.²⁴

At Cedar Rapids, March 29, Phillips once more attempted to deliver a double bill, dividing his time between "The Lost Arts" and "The Perils of the Hour." He met a response similar to that which he had encountered at Mount Pleasant. The *Cedar Valley Times* stated, "We confess that in common with many others we were disappointed. . . . There seemed to be something wanting—a skipping about from point to point, leaving the interstices incomplete and unsatisfactory, a hurrying through as if he had more to say in a given time. . . ."²⁵ The following night Phillips spoke at Clinton, probably en route to Illinois.²⁶

Before going east Phillips returned to Iowa for three more engagements. On April 5, he spoke for the Library Association in Muscatine, where he previously had appeared as early as 1856.²⁷ For this occasion he varied his offering and gave a lecture called "Street Life in Europe," another of his time-tested efforts which he had prepared shortly after his return from Europe in 1842.²⁸ At the conclusion of his announced program he discussed in part "The Perils of the Hour."

As in other Iowa towns, the "majority of the audience" thought that Phillips had failed to live up to what they had anticipated in a radical orator. Paralleling other statements concerning him, the *Muscatine Journal* added that the listeners beheld "a wonderful exhibition of that energy of

²³ Cedar Falls *Gazette*, April 5, 1867.

²⁴ The proceeds from the various lectures were as follows: Barnum, \$234.50; Whiting, \$102.25; Tilton, \$142.70; Milburn, \$76.30; Emerson, \$62.85; and Phillips, \$177.70. *Ibid.*, April 5, 1867.

²⁵ Cedar Rapids *Cedar Valley Times*, April 4, 1867.

²⁶ DeWitt *Observer*, March 27, 1867.

²⁷ Hoeltje, "Notes on the History of Lecturing in Iowa," 73.

²⁸ Sears, *Wendell Phillips*, 94.

elocution which drives all before it" and they saw "an intellectual giant, conquering by the strong force of reason."²⁹ Phillips and Theodore Tilton were the only two lecturers of the season to attract a sufficient number to make a profit for the struggling Muscatine Library Association.³⁰

Throughout the year Phillips challenged the policies of Johnson not only through his lectures but also by frequent editorials. While he was in Muscatine he outlined a three-point program of reconstruction in a letter to the New York *Anti-Slavery Standard*. This program, quoted below, is probably similar to what he had been presenting to Iowa audiences.

Our duty is to press constantly on the nation the absolute need of three things:

1. The exercise of the whole police power of the government to hold the South quiet while the seeds of republicanism get planted.
2. The constitutional amendment securing universal suffrage in spite of all state legislation.
3. A constitutional amendment authorizing Congress to establish schools in every state destitute of them at state expense.³¹

On Saturday, April 6, Phillips appeared at Washington, Iowa, again discussing "The Perils of the Hour." Once more he denounced Johnson and his program:

The necessary thing to be done is to impeach and remove the traitor from the White house [sic] who blocks the wheels of government. Men say that we are vindictive when we say this, they say we ought to be conciliatory. My friend Beecher says, he wishes the radicals would be "magnanimous," that we should "conciliate the South." I never heard any northern magnanimity that proposes to sacrifice any of its own rights! Beecher's magnanimity consists in sacrificing the negroes to conciliate the South, but it does not propose to sacrifice a shred of his own rights. . . . Beecher is willing to lay on the altar of Southern conciliation, the

²⁹ Muscatine *Journal*, April 6, 1867.

³⁰ Muscatine *Journal*, April 13, 1867, gives the fees paid each performer and the profit or loss incurred. These figures have been combined below to give the total amount received. In parentheses the fee is given. Abbott, \$30.50 (\$75); Barnum, \$99.00 (\$100); G. F. Magoun, \$15.50 (\$50); Clara Barton, \$26.95 (\$50); Vincent, \$44.25 (\$100); Gough, \$191.00 (\$200); Tilton, \$80.50 (\$75); and Phillips, \$209.45 (\$110).

³¹ Letter dated April 5, 1867, bearing the heading, Muscatine. Reprinted in the *Dubuque Herald*, April 18, 1867.

negro, but he does not lay himself thereon. It is no time for conciliation; 1860 was the time for conciliation! We have marched over too many graves to yield any chances of reconciliation. I do not want to punish the President, I want his room. Dangerous to impeach the President! To be sure it is. Was there ever a battle that was not dangerous? . . . Let a united Congress, with the nationality of revolution behind it, impeach any man, and his power sinks collapsed that instant before the will of the people!³²

Phillips' emotion-laden words and ideas, which summoned up pathetic reinforcement of the recent war hysteria, must have appealed to the people of Washington. The *Washington Press* praised Phillips without qualification. In fact, it was one of the few Iowa papers of 1867 to do so. The report said, "Phillips has no equal as an orator. How quiet he is! He simply talks to you but with a charm of thought, expression, and voice which will not let you sleep afterwards. . . . He is probably, however, not a favorite of the West. Western people ask for demonstration, like to have a man turn himself wrongside out on the stage, or at least, tear the lapels of his coat or split it down the back, as Rufus Choate often did in his fury." The same reporter went on to chide the neighboring Mount Pleasant paper for calling Phillips' lecture "dry." He thought that Phillips' poor showing in Mount Pleasant was due to the fact that "the citizens of the 'Athens of Iowa'" were "so unwise to 'mix liquors' [referring to Phillips' double bill]. We took ours 'straight' and got pleasantly 'set up' by the draught."³³

Phillips' appearance on Saturday night in Washington gave him Sunday to travel to Iowa City for a Monday night engagement. He had hoped to hire someone to drive him overland to Iowa City. Unable to find a conveyance, and in the absence of a regularly scheduled train, he induced the local railroad officials to take him to Muscatine on a handcar. After getting an intimate view of the countryside between Washington and Muscatine, Phillips arrived in time to make his Iowa City connection. Nothing could be permitted to interfere with the lecturer's schedule.³⁴

The *Iowa City Republican*, aware of what other Iowa papers had reported, warned the Iowa Citizens that Phillips would not deliver "a tearing, ranting discourse." Instead, it said, they would hear "a polished, calm,

³² *Washington Press*, April 10, 1867.

³³ *Ibid.*, April 10, 1867.

³⁴ *Muscatine Journal*, April 8, 1867.

artistic eloquent presentation of the great and vital truths."⁸⁵ The Democratic *State Press* gave Phillips a different type of advanced publicity. It urged its readers to remember "that up to 1860 he [Phillips] always repudiated the Constitution of the United States and refused to ever take an oath which required him . . . to support it. . . . We give him ovations and \$200 per night for telling us how he hated the old union and constitution."⁸⁶

Doubtless, the Republicans went to hear a calm presentation, while the Democrats attended to see how traitorous Phillips could be. Sponsored by the Iowa City Y.M.C.A., Phillips limited his remarks to the lecture "Street Life in Europe." As usual the house was crowded. Only Frederick Douglass and Anna Dickinson had drawn larger crowds that season in Iowa City.⁸⁷

The Republican paper showed little enthusiasm over Phillips' talk, saying that it "met the expectations of the hearers generally. . . . His lecture was very entertaining and instructive. He, like most travellers in Europe, seemed to be enamored with traits of character which we think he failed to impress upon his hearers as desirable."⁸⁸

The other report of his lecture suggests that he did not confine himself entirely to his subject. The Democratic paper noted that "now and then" Phillips mixed into his development "a stray sentence upon the negro, again a whole paragraph on slavery, and so on." The writer continued:

Wendell is a man of great mind, but upon the negro he is not sane. Did you ever spend a painful hour with a person of real brain whose reason was gone, or who was daft upon some particular theme, be it religion or what not? — If so have you not noticed how upon all subjects save the crazing one that the person might talk and talk well, but how the poor unbalanced mind seem[s] tethered to a post and doomed to travel in a circuit, ever and anon reaching the crazy part, as it 'swung round the circle?'

Even so is it with Wendell. Upon Art, life, and manners . . . he can talk like an Archangel. Upon the negro and abstract polit-

⁸⁵ Iowa City *Republican*, April 3, 1867.

⁸⁶ Iowa City *State Press*, April 3, 1867.

⁸⁷ The Iowa City Y. M. C. A. netted the following upon their various numbers: Abbott, \$6.00; Barnum, \$95.00; Horace Greeley, \$65.00; Tilton, \$70.00; Gough (two lectures), \$250.00; Douglass, \$225.00; Phillips, \$129.00; Dickinson, \$260.00. This amounted to a total profit of \$1,100 on the eight lecturers. Iowa City *Republican*, April 17, 1867.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, April 10, 1867.

ical questions his is the silly patter of a fool or the insane rambling of a lunatic.³⁹

The newspaper reports with one exception gave little indication of what Phillips thought of Iowa audiences or how he reacted to the press comment which he had received. The *Iowa City Republican*, the exception, revealed that Phillips was "greatly in love with the West. Its life, energy, rapid progress, independence and especially its radicalism" impressed him. Phillips noted that western audiences were "much less demonstrative than eastern," but they criticized "a speaker much more keenly" and demanded "of him much more action in his delivery."⁴⁰ Seemingly the lawyer-agitator had taken note that many Iowans found his oratory disappointing.

It is evident that Phillips' reputation as an agitator and the advance publicity that he received worked to his disadvantage before Iowa audiences. His thoughtful, conversational delivery did not conform to western tastes nor to what his listeners anticipated from an abolitionist. However, in each of his Iowa appearances Phillips proved to be a profitable venture for the sponsoring organizations. At each of his bookings he probably spoke to from three to five hundred persons, an attendance sufficient to provide a sum large enough to pay Phillips his fee and to make the sponsoring organization a profit. During a season when Iowa lecture associations were particularly fortunate in procuring famous and effective performers, Phillips ranked near the top in his ability to attract a crowd. Only Anna Dickinson, Frederick Douglass, P. T. Barnum, and John B. Gough attracted larger gatherings in some Iowa communities.

The reactions to Phillips' lectures during March and April, 1867, gave many important side lights on Iowa public opinion of 1867. Many program committees were eager to avoid alienating Iowa Democrats who were outspoken in their opposition to Phillips and to radical reconstruction. On the other hand, Republicans did not object to hearing Phillips advocate harsh reconstruction and the impeachment of Johnson, but they reacted negatively to his criticisms of their hero, General Grant. Phillips failed to discredit the Union general or to dim his prospects as a presidential hopeful.

³⁹ *Iowa City State Press*, April 10, 1867.

⁴⁰ *Iowa City Republican*, April 10, 1867.