

NOTES AND COMMENT

Dr. Dan E. Clark, who served as Associate Editor of the State Historical Society of Iowa from 1911 to 1918, and has been Professor of History at the University of Oregon since 1921, has recently been appointed head of the department.

J. Hyatt Downing, a resident of Sioux City, is the author of a novel *Sioux City*. It was published by G. P. Putnam & Sons. Although Mr. Downing has published two other historical novels, this is the first one with an Iowa background. He was born at Hawarden, Iowa, but the family later moved to South Dakota.

Charles W. Storms, former Auditor of State, died in Des Moines on February 12, 1940. He was born at Fort Madison on October 12, 1870, and was in business and in politics there until 1932 when he was elected State Auditor. Following his retirement from this office, he served as one of the commissioners to adjust the Iowa-Missouri boundary line.

James B. Weaver, Jr., an Iowa attorney and a pioneer in many civic activities, died at his home in Des Moines on May 11, 1940. Mr. Weaver was the son of General James Baird Weaver of Civil War fame and a presidential aspirant on the Greenback and Populist tickets in 1880 and 1892. James Bellamy Weaver was born at Bloomfield, Iowa, on August 19, 1861. He attended the common schools and the Southern Iowa Normal and Scientific Institute at Bloomfield, and the law school at the State University of Iowa where he was graduated in 1882. He practiced law in Des Moines for more than fifty years, specializing in corporation, banking, and real estate law. Meanwhile he was active in many political and social interests. He was a member of the Iowa General Assembly for three sessions, from 1917 to 1923. He was a leader in the movement for good roads in Iowa, and a loyal supporter of education in all its broader aspects. He was a life member of the

State Historical Society of Iowa, and a member of the Board of Curators from 1910 to 1920.

Hamlin Garland, known as the "dean of American letters", died on March 4, 1940, at Hollywood, California. Although he was not born in Iowa and spent almost none of his working years in this State, Hamlin Garland was associated with Iowa because he lived here for twelve years of his boyhood, visited and lectured here, and drew some of his material from Iowa and nearby States.

He was born at West Salem, Wisconsin, on September 16, 1860. His family moved to Iowa in 1869, living for a time in Winneshiek County and later in Mitchell County. At the age of sixteen Hamlin Garland entered the Cedar Valley Seminary at Osage, Iowa, paying his expenses by working on a farm between terms of school. His *Main-Travelled Roads* and the "Middle Border" books were based on life in Wisconsin and Iowa during this period. Later Mr. Garland went east and then traveled extensively, but his reputation as a man of letters rests to a great extent upon that portion of his writing which reflects life in the middle western States, particularly Wisconsin, Iowa, and Dakota. Three of his most famous works, *A Son of the Middle Border*, *A Daughter of the Middle Border*, and *Trailmakers of the Middle Border* were largely autobiographical. The author was an important factor in the development of the "realism" tendency in American literature. In 1899 Hamlin Garland married Zulime Taft, a sister of the sculptor, Lorado Taft.

In 1908, at the request of his children, Professor Nathan R. Leonard, for many years head of the Department of Mathematics and Astronomy in the State University of Iowa, at Iowa City, wrote a brief sketch of his early life in Des Moines County, Iowa, and in this sketch is the following account of the organization of the "Know Nothing" party in Des Moines County.

"In politics my father and all his people were Whigs. About 1850 the slavery question created serious divisions in this party. Father was somewhat conservative, but grandfather and Uncle Aaron openly espoused the ideas of the progressive leaders of the

day. Father was surreptitiously, I may say, captured about the year 1854, by the 'Know Nothing' party, a capture for which I was partly responsible.

"Without his knowledge, or grandfather's, I had joined the new party which was then strictly a secret organization. Having a retentive memory, it was but a short time until I knew by heart the ritual of the order, the tedious and grandiloquent formularies for the initiation and instruction of members, and all the rest of it, and was made a sort of factotum for the organization in that part of the country.

"Plans were soon set on foot for a movement which would sweep our whole community into the new party. In ways too tedious to mention, we got a man who stood well in the esteem of such men as my father, father-in-law, and others in the community who thought they were themselves the leaders of the public sentiment, and had these agents of ours interview them cautiously and ply them with the stock arguments of the day in favor of the new party or society. More easily than we had expected, they were won over, and agreed to become members of the party if, when properly enlightened, they considered it the right thing to do.

"I remember well their initiation. It took place in the old brick Academy building which is still standing at Kossuth. The candidates were admitted into a little entryroom. There was a large class of them, as many as the room would hold by close packing. Father, father-in-law, and other leading men were among them. After waiting a suitable length of time the 'factotum' appeared, attended by a young man to hold a candle for him. You can imagine how those grave elderly men looked when they saw that young chap appear in that rôle. However they felt, they maintained a sort of quizzical silence as they were gravely advised as to some of the leading principles of the order, but none of its secrets. They were then told that if, after this presentation of outlines, they still desired initiation, the formal ceremony would proceed in the adjoining room. If not they were at liberty to retire and keep to themselves, as in honor bound, all that had thus far been divulged to them.

"It was a critical moment. At first it seemed possible that they

would rise up in rebellion, but the situation had some philosophical as well as comical features, and they finally concluded that they were in for it whatever it was, and bowed in acquiescence to the solemn exhortation to prove themselves worthy to be countrymen of Washington and the immortal heroes of the Revolution. So they were all initiated. At the next election, men nominated in the secret councils of the party, and not publicly proclaimed as candidates were triumphantly elected, making a clean sweep of the county.

“That victory was a surprise to the outsiders. Grandfather was not in the secret, and was the implacable enemy of secret societies, but he never said a word to me about it. He was wise enough to see what it would lead to, and was satisfied.

“What transpired in our county was transpiring everywhere. The new party grew like Jonah’s gourd, but it was formed of such incongruous materials that its continued existence was impossible. However, it was the means of emancipating a large mass of men from allegiance to an old and honorable party, and thus made it possible for the new Republican party which started about the same time to attain a wonderfully rapid growth; for this reason, if for no other, the ‘Know Nothing’ party deserves mention in a history of these times.”

CONTRIBUTORS

RUTH A. GALLAHER, Associate Editor of the State Historical Society of Iowa. (See THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS, October, 1939, p. 440.)

ERNEST W. CLEMENT, Floral Park, New York. Born at Dubuque, Iowa, on February 21, 1860. Educated in the (old) University of Chicago (B. A. in 1880; M. A. in 1883). Member of Psi Upsilon, Phi Beta Kappa. Teacher in U. S. A., 1881-1887, 1891-1895; teacher of English in Japan, 1887-1891, 1895-1927 (retired). Twice Acting-Interpreter U. S. Legation, Tokyo. Librarian, Secretary and Vice President of the Asiatic Society of Japan. Special correspondent *Chicago Record* and *Daily News*, 1895-1920. Editor *Japan Evangelist*, 1899-1909. Author of various works (books, articles, etc.) on things Japanese.

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