

IOWA'S OLDEST LIBRARY

On June 12, 1838, Martin Van Buren dashed his pen across the document which officially made Iowaland the Territory of Iowa. About a month later Robert Lucas was named its first Governor. An Indian fighter, an officer in the United States army, an outspoken supporter of Jacksonian Democracy, and twice Governor of Ohio, Robert Lucas had already attained national recognition. Although his activity in Indian affairs, in land sales, and in the Missouri-Iowa boundary dispute have been duly recorded, this astute executive has never been fully credited with the character of the books chosen for the Territorial Library of Iowa.

In his inaugural address to the First Legislative Assembly of Iowa at Burlington on November 12, 1838, Robert Lucas declared that, with the help of "several literary friends",¹ he had selected the books which the subsidy provided by the Organic Act of 1838 had made possible. The old Latin proverb *cognitur amicis*, a man is known by his friends, can be applied literally to Robert Lucas and the advisers to whom he entrusted the choice of books for the Territorial Library of Iowa. The quality of these books reflects the executive's care for the needs of the new Territory, as it does the taste and intelligence of his literary friends whose names can not today be identified with certainty.

After the lapse of a century this library possesses significance, because by this initial grant the Federal government

¹ See the First Annual Message of Governor Robert Lucas, November 12, 1838, in *The Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa* (Compiled and edited by Benj. F. Shambaugh), Vol. I, p. 90.

made possible, almost imperative, the beginning of culture in the Territory of Iowa.

The official history of Iowa's Territorial Library had its genesis in the Organic Act. Among its twenty provisions, Congressional sponsors allotted a specific grant of five thousand dollars for a library, specifying furthermore that the books were for the use of the Territorial legislators and officers of the law.² An examination of the catalogue of this library indicates that any legislator who chose to master even a part of its contents could have secured a liberal education. More than that, on almost a moment's notice he could have had in his own hands not only legal and governmental aids but standard and contemporary works in history, science, and literature.

In 1836, when Wisconsin Territory (including the area of Iowa) had been set out from the jurisdiction of Michigan, Congress had made a similar grant to Wisconsin for a Territorial Library. Its collection of fifteen hundred books was distributed over numerous classifications of *belles-lettres*, history, and politics. Eight hundred books in Wisconsin's Territorial Library centered attention upon jurisprudence

² Shambaugh's *Documentary Material Relating to the History of Iowa*, Vol. I, p. 115. Section 18 of the Organic Act reads in part as follows: "That the sum of five thousand dollars be . . . expended . . . in the purchase of a library, to be kept at the seat of Government, for the accommodation of the Governor, Legislative Assembly, judges, secretary, marshal, and attorney of said Territory, and such other persons as the Governor and Legislative Assembly shall direct."

That certain citizens felt a genuine need for a library in the Territory of Iowa is clear from a comment of Editor James Clarke of the *Iowa Territorial Gazette and Burlington Advertiser*, earlier Territorial Librarian of Wisconsin and subsequently the last Territorial Governor of Iowa. Noting a persistent rumor that John Jacob Astor had recently made a donation of \$350,000 to the New York Public Library, Clarke wrote on September 1, 1838, "If Mr. Astor has any more money to spend in this way, we hope he will think of Iowa — 'poor benighted Iowa,' so far at least as books are concerned. Ten thousand dollars spent in the same way here, will do more to perpetuate his fame, than fifty times that amount spent in New York. By way of a hint we mean to send him this paper."

or closely allied fields with a proportion of approximately two for legalistic literature to one for broadening informational material.³ On the other hand, books of general culture in the Iowa library outnumbered jurisprudence in a ratio of about three to one.

Credit for the speedy translation of this five thousand dollar Congressional grant into a shelved and catalogued library belongs jointly to Governor Robert Lucas and to Theodore Sutton Parvin, his private secretary, then twenty-two years old. In the brief interim between the signing of the Organic Act on June 12, 1838, and the arrival of Governor Lucas at Burlington in the Territory of Iowa on August 15, 1838, Robert Lucas had fulfilled as far as possible the provisions of the Organic Act relating to the Territorial Library. These efforts Lucas described in his inaugural address to the First Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Iowa gathered in the Methodist Church in Burlington on November 12, 1838:

An appropriation of five thousand dollars was made by Congress to be expended, under the direction of the Governor, in the purchase of a library for the Territory. Previous to leaving Ohio, in June last, (with the assistance of several literary friends,) I made out a catalogue of such standard works as are deemed most important as the foundation of a public library, and put the catalogue into the hands of an agent in Cincinnati to make the purchase for me. Those books that could be procured in the western country, have been purchased and have been at Cincinnati for some time, waiting to be forwarded [at] the first rise of water in the Ohio river. By advices from Cincinnati, I learn that the agent has been for some time in the eastern cities, where he will complete the purchases to the extent of the appropriation. As soon as the Ohio

³ Johnson Brigham's *A Library in the Making*, pp. 4, 5. This citation contains a reprint of an article possibly written or at least suggested by James Clarke, Librarian of the Wisconsin Territorial Library, for the *Burlington Gazette*. This had been reprinted by Thomas Gregg, the editor of the *Western Adventurer and Herald of the Upper Mississippi*, and published at Montrose, Wisconsin Territory, in the issue of August 5, 1837.

river is navigable, we may expect the arrival of those books that have been purchased, and the remainder of the library as soon thereafter as practicable.⁴

Theodore S. Parvin may well have been one of the literary friends who assisted Lucas in the selection of these books.⁵ His diary for 1837 contains many references to his perusal of law books and to his refreshing his mind with biography, history, and religion.⁶ In later life Parvin declared that he had assisted with the selection of the books, though the contemporaneous records in his diary say nothing about this activity. It would be a tempting hypothesis to assume that William Holmes McGuffey of the famous *Eclectic Readers* may have been a third in the selection of books, for Parvin was associated with McGuffey in Cincinnati.⁷ Both men were connected with Cincinnati College, Parvin as a student and McGuffey from 1836 to 1839 as president.

Although in early life Governor Lucas had not been privileged to enjoy close contact with books, he recognized with considerable astuteness the value of libraries and assumed with seriousness his obligations for this particular responsibility. In the summer of 1838 while on his way to Iowa, Lucas met young Parvin in Cincinnati. Gladly availing himself of the opportunity proffered by Lucas of participat-

⁴ Shambaugh's *Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa*, Vol. I, p. 90. The Iowa Masonic Library at Cedar Rapids possesses an original broadsheet of this inaugural address.

⁵ John C. Parish's *Robert Lucas*, p. 322. Parish shows that early records indicate that Lucas rather than Parvin selected the books; however, the Governor admitted assistance and Parvin later insisted that he had aided in the final selection.

⁶ Joseph E. Morcombe's *The Life and Labors of Theodore Sutton Parvin*, p. 33.

⁷ *Diary of Theodore Parvin* (Ms.), June 26, 1838. This diary is in the possession on the Masonic Library at Cedar Rapids. See also Henry H. Vail's *A History of the McGuffey Readers*, p. 25; Harvey C. Minnich's *William Holmes McGuffey and his Readers*, pp. 22, 23.

ing in the life of the new West and becoming the Governor's private secretary, Parvin accompanied him from Ohio to Iowa. In his diary Parvin duly recorded their voyage down the Ohio and up the Mississippi, noted the books that he and Lucas read, and detailed many of their conversations. In September of 1838, several weeks after their arrival at the temporary Territorial capital, Parvin was dispatched by the Governor on a return mission to Cincinnati. Part of his duties consisted of supervising the shipping of the books for the Territorial Library to be located at Burlington.⁸

Young Theodore Parvin brought to Iowa a respect for books. His diary for August 16, 1838, contains a note to this effect, "Posted my accounts found myself in the possession of \$135.00 a good & extensive wardrobe and a Library of near 50 Law & 250 Miscellaneous vols. worth \$500.00."⁹ Other entries indicate familiarity with past and current political, historical, and poetical works.

By the ninth of April of 1839 most of the volumes for the Territorial Library had arrived. In order that the books could be made available for the legislators of the coming Legislative Assembly, a room was secured in a building owned by John S. David in the vicinity of the Methodist Church in Burlington, and immediate preparations were made for cataloguing the books.

On April 10, 1839, Governor Robert Lucas, fully cognizant of his secretary's reading, his love of books, and his recent assistance in establishing a library in Cincinnati, very wisely appointed Theodore Sutton Parvin, probably then the best read man in Iowa, Territorial Librarian with orders to prepare a catalogue for the ready use of legislators.¹⁰ The young librarian was placed under bond for five

⁸ Morcombe's *The Life and Labors of Theodore Sutton Parvin*, p. 106.

⁹ Brigham's *A Library in the Making*, p. 9.

¹⁰ Governor Lucas "made a selection of volumes which he deemed suitable

thousand dollars and his annual salary fixed at two hundred and ten dollars. Today the Iowa Masonic Library in Cedar Rapids stands as a lasting monument to Theodore Sutton Parvin's interest in libraries.

Robert Lucas's literary friends to whom he assigned credit must have given considerable and careful thought to their selection of the fifteen hundred volumes. Parvin's catalogue indicates a catholicity of interests with the balance between the ancients and the moderns strongly inclining toward the former. No doubt the firm of Edward Lucas & Company, booksellers in Cincinnati, had volumes on hand and suggestions to offer but the entire collection shows care both in the selection of books and in their distribution over various interest areas.¹¹ The possibility exists that the Edward Lucas of this firm was a relative of the Governor. Edward was the Christian name of Robert Lucas's grandfather and of his own son.

At work almost four decades before Melvil Dewey simplified library procedures with his Decimal System, Theodore S. Parvin shelved the books in alphabetical order in their walnut cases under the following headings: Biography, 45 volumes (an "Indian Portrait Gallery in sheets 10 Nos." was also included here); Education, 25; History, 130; Jurisprudence, 113; Reports (English 91, United States 39, States 155), 285; Laws (including pamphlets), 45; Medicine, 34; Miscellaneous, 150; Periodicals, 317; Politics, etc., 172; Poetry, 106; Science, 95; Theology, 57; Voyages and Travels, 11. The grand total was 1585. There were 26 maps.

for the needs of a pioneer government and left the list with Edward Lucas & Company, booksellers."—Parish's *Robert Lucas*, p. 161. See also Brigham's *A Library in the Making*, pp. 6, 10, 13, 20, 21, and Morcombe's *The Life and Labors of Theodore Sutton Parvin*, pp. 72, 80.

¹¹ Parvin's Catalogue of the Iowa Territorial Library has been printed in Brigham's *A Library in the Making*, pp. 61-72.

After a hundred years this library list throws considerable light on the literary taste of Robert Lucas and his unidentified advisers. Books designed for general information seemed foremost in the minds of the committee. Although the four newspapers functioning in Iowa in 1838 — the *Iowa News* (Dubuque), the *Iowa Sun* (Davenport), the *Fort Madison Patriot*, and the *Iowa Territorial Gazette* (Burlington) — carried many agricultural articles and items of advice for breaking sod and for preventing rust in wheat, the Territorial Library of Iowa did not contain a book designed for the promotion of agriculture on the prairies. The only possible exception among the 1585 catalogued volumes was one entitled *British Cattle*.

Among the more than two dozen maps listed only four refer specifically to the topography of the newly opened Territory. Parvin listed the first as a "Manuscript map of Wisconsin and Iowa", the second as an "Engraved map of Wisconsin and Iowa", the third as a "Map of Iowa", and the last he designated as a "Manuscript Map of the separate surveyed Townships of Iowa, sectionized (very valuable), 2 volumes."

JURISPRUDENCE, with its allied fields of LAW and POLITICS, naturally held the chief place of importance in a library designed for the builders of law and order in the Territory of Iowa, yet, as noted earlier, these divisions comprised only one-third of the total. Parvin's list included Tomlin[s]'s *Law Dictionary*,¹² six books by Joseph Chitty — *Blackstone's Commentaries*, *Bills*, *Criminal Law*, *Medical Jurisprudence*, *Pleadings*, and *Practice* — and Hilliard's *American Law*.¹³ Under LAWS were shelved tomes containing the

¹² Sir Thomas Edlyne Tomlins, an English jurist. The first American edition of his *Law Dictionary* appeared in 1811.

¹³ Probably Francis Hilliard who wrote many books on law. This book may have been his *Elements of Law* published in 1835. Most of his books were written after 1838.

statutes of the United States, Indian laws, and a dozen copies of State laws in Commonwealths as widely separated as Maine, Maryland, Illinois, and Michigan. Rather significant is the fact that the majority of these laws had been issued for the years 1837 and 1838.

Except for forty-five volumes of the *English Parliamentary Debates* and *English Parliamentary History*, the majority of books which Theodore Parvin allotted to POLITICS obviously dealt with the American scene, such as *American Constitutions*, *American Archives*, *American State Papers*, and a copy of the Census for 1830. This heading also included a few books with a pronouncedly literary flavor, such as Woodfall's *Junius*,¹⁴ one volume of *The Federalist*, five volumes of *Eloquence of the United States*, and two volumes of Daniel Webster's *Speeches*. Perhaps the most outstanding inclusion outside of legalistic writings was Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, a popular, perspicacious, arresting, and not wholly flattering survey of the young American republic viewed with the dispassionate eyes of a Frenchman visiting in the United States in 1831. It was published in 1835. Another volume which, though scarcely legalistic in subject matter, has retained a high place in public esteem was the *Essay on Population*, by Thomas R. Malthus.

With a quota of one hundred and thirty volumes, HISTORY covered a time range from Josephus's *History of the Jews*, Arthur Murphy's translation of *Tacitus*, and William H. Prescott's *Ferdinand and Isabella* to Caleb Atwater's *History of Ohio*. The choice of the last named volume, just off the press in 1838, may quite safely be credited to Robert Lucas whose youth had been given over to wars fought in Ohio during Indian uprisings and the War of 1812, and

¹⁴ The *Letters of Junius* were reprinted in 1772 by Henry S. Woodfall, the editor of the London *Public Advertiser*, the paper in which they originally appeared.

whose maturity had been devoted to civic responsibilities including the governorship of the State of Ohio. Caleb Atwater had moreover been a political ally of Robert Lucas.¹⁵

The spatial range of choice in this section extended from Abbé Raynal's *Indies*¹⁶ and John Gillies' *History of Greece* to Humphrey Marshall's *History of Kentucky*. As might be anticipated English and American histories outnumbered all others. Included in the list were Lord Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*,¹⁷ Gibbon's *History of England*,¹⁸ Thomas Carlyle's *History of the French Revolution*, and John Winthrop's *History of New England*.

Lucas and his friends displayed a marked preference for individual State histories. They may have hoped that farmer-legislators in a new land would profit from the experiences which had confronted earlier pioneers and which had been overcome in laying foundations for New England Commonwealths and for those of the newer West. Here appear William Smith's *History of New York*,¹⁹ Robert Proud's *History of Pennsylvania* (1797-1798), Bradford's *History of Massachusetts*,²⁰ Jeremy Belknap's *History of*

¹⁵ Parish's *Robert Lucas*, pp. 84, 85.

¹⁶ Apparently this was *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*, by Guillaume Thomas F. Raynal.

¹⁷ *History of the Rebellion and Civil War in England*.

¹⁸ Although Brigham's *A Library in the Making* lists this item as in Parvin's Catalogue, there is evidently an error somewhere. Edward Gibbon did not write a *History of England*.

¹⁹ This was, apparently, one of the many editions of Smith's *The History of the Province of New-York*, first published in London in 1757. Smith was a prominent loyalist and died in Canada. He had, however, some part in formulating American governmental machinery for his parliamentary plan of union is said to have been consulted by the drafters of the Constitution. One edition of Smith's book appeared in 1829. He died in 1793.

²⁰ This may have been Alden Bradford's *History of Massachusetts to 1820*, published 1822-1829. When complete, it had three volumes, but Parvin lists only two. It may have referred to one of William Bradford's histories.

New Hampshire (1784-1792), Samuel Williams' *History of Vermont*²¹ (1794), François Barbé-Marbois's *History of Louisiana* (1830), William D. Williamson's *History of the State of Maine* (1832), and Atwater's *History of Ohio*, mentioned above.²²

Lucas's literary advisers evidently realized that biography was the handmaid of history. From the Mediterranean world they included four volumes of Plutarch's *Lives* and Washington Irving's *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*. The latter had been published some ten years before, in 1829. French memoirs included those of Napoleon and Cardinal de Retz. For a Territory upon the prairies where the English tongue dominated, English and American writers naturally held first place. Clarke's *Life of Wellington*²³ portrayed the heroic side. Two volumes of James Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson* and a life of Robert Greene, the rival of Shakespeare at the Globe Theatre and Mermaid Tavern, represented English literary biography.

American biography scored far ahead of British. Here were shelved the two volumes of the *Life of Arthur Lee*, written enthusiastically but not wholly accurately by Richard Henry Lee and published in 1829. Arthur Lee had acquired literary fame by imitating the epistles of his English contemporary, and by signing himself "Junius Americanus". The library included a biography of Commodore Joshua Barney, who had commanded armed merchant ships during the Revolutionary War and according to reports

²¹ The correct title is *The Natural and Civil History of Vermont*.

²² A number of these are now out of print, listed as rare books. Barbé-Marbois's *History of Louisiana* had been written in French by a French peer under Napoleon, and translated in 1829.

²³ This item is now apparently little known. A three volume *Life of the Duke of Wellington*, by H. Clarke, may have been the one listed. The Duke lived until 1852.

had engaged in twenty-six combats against the British.²⁴ Robert Fulton's biography displayed his advocacy of the freedom of the seas and described the history-making voyage of the *Clermont* in 1807 as, with its steam engine in full view on the open deck, it was propelled from New York City to Albany and back.²⁵

A life of Edward Livingstone, an authority on criminal jurisprudence and Secretary of State under Andrew Jackson, appears and also one of a Mr. Watson, possibly Elkanah Watson, an early advocate of canals for the State of New York and of cattle shows in the East.²⁶ Two contrasting memoirs were William Wirt's *Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry* (1817), a laudatory and eulogistic biography of a hero of the Revolution, and the *Memoirs* (1826) of Lindley Murray, the Quaker grammarian whose *English Grammar* ran into two hundred editions totalling over a million and a half copies before 1850.²⁷ Whatever this handful of American lives lacked in polished and artistic writing, it did supply readers with vivid examples of Yankee ingenuity and of men who triumphed over nature and believed in the gospel of progress.

In 1838 America had not envisioned an age of science or

²⁴ This book, though listed by Parvin without the biographer's name, was probably *A Biographical Memoir of the Late Commodore Joshua Barney: From Autobiographical Notes and Journals*, edited by Mary Barney, 1832.

²⁵ See Cadwallader D. Colden's *The Life of Fulton* (New York, 1817).

²⁶ The Library of Congress lists under the name of Elkanah Watson *A History of the Rise, Progress, and Existing Conditions of the Western Canals in the State of New York, from September 1788 to . . . 1819* (1820). No biography of him has been found which was published before 1856. He was also author of *History of Agricultural Societies on the Modern Berkshire System* also published in 1820. On the other hand this volume may have been an autobiography (1817) of Richard Watson, who defended Christianity against criticisms by Edward Gibbon and Thomas Paine.

²⁷ R. L. Lyman's *English Grammar in American Schools before 1850* (1922), p. 80. The complete title of the book listed is *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Lindley Murray; in a Series of Letters Written by Himself with a Preface, and a Continuation of the Memoirs by Elizabeth Frank* (1826).

of machinery. In making his classification, Parvin apparently considered the term "science" in the classical sense of the Latin *scientia* or knowledge. To the young librarian "science" implied a liberalizing knowledge not only of the flora and fauna of the world but of mind-enlarging ideas now relegated to the departments of psychology and philosophy. Under this head Parvin catalogued a half dozen standard works of philosophical nature such as John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, the collected *Works* of William Paley, and Joseph Priestley's *Lectures* (on natural philosophy).

In 1838 the subject of phrenology held a higher position of honor than it does today; genuine scientists would elevate their eyebrows if they discovered among recommended treatises on science a copy of Andrew Combe's *Phrenology*. Who knows with what respect the year 2038 may accept the brain wave experiments of 1938. Neither would supercilious critics approve of the two volumes of misinformation entitled *A History of the Earth, and Animated Nature* which Oliver Goldsmith assembled in 1774 when he was performing hack work in London. However, many book lovers might desire these volumes today as collector's items because of their calf-skin bindings tooled in gold and their expensive copper engravings.

Today literary critics endeavor to differentiate between rhetoric as the science and composition as the art of writing, but they would be amazed to find John Quincy Adams's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory*, George Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, and Lord Kames' *Elements of Criticism* on shelves captioned SCIENCE.

More truly in accord with twentieth century concepts of science were books which served as textbooks in eastern schools such as Neil Arnott's *Elements of Physics*, Amos Eaton's *Manual of Botany*, Timothy Flint's *Geography*

(1825), Eastman's *Topography*,²⁸ Henry's *Chemistry*,²⁹ and Michael Faraday's *Chemical Manipulation*. Perhaps with a premonition of the coming age of steam and applied mechanics, Parvin entered under SCIENCE Francois Marie Pambour's *A Practical Treatise on Locomotives*.

Apparently the idea that legislators beyond the Mississippi might very easily run into situations which required a knowledge of anatomy and physiology had entered the minds of Lucas's advisers. Under MEDICINE were shelved three volumes concerned with diseases of women, by William P. Dewees, several popular treatises for the layman such as James Ewell's *Medical Companion*, James Rush's *The Philosophy of the Human Voice*, and Benjamin Rush's *Diseases of the Mind*.

Robert Lucas, as citizen of the Territory of Ohio and Governor of the State of Ohio had watched frontiers as they constantly receded westward and year after year he had seen unbroken prairies or wooded sections turn into cultivated areas. He knew that as soon as the settlers secured food, clothing, shelter, law, and order, they would insistently demand a system of education for their children. Lucas also knew that each newly laid out township on the map described by Parvin was a potential school district. Parvin catalogued twenty-four volumes under EDUCATION. Unfortunately he entered these with the most sketchy of titles. Under the general heading he listed such representative scions of pedagogy as Locke, Barrows, Caldwell, Genlis, Spurzheim, and Hamilton.³⁰ A strong moral tone

²⁸ Possibly *A Treatise on Topographical Drawing* (1837).

²⁹ This may have been William Henry's *The Elements of Experimental Chemistry* (1822).

³⁰ These are probably John Locke, the philosopher; William Barrow, author of *An Essay on Education* (1802); Charles Caldwell, author of *Thoughts on Popular and Liberal Education* (1836); Stéphanie, Comtesse de Genlis, a governess in the French royal family; Johann Gaspar Spurzheim, a German phrenologist; and Elizabeth Hamilton, author of *Letters on Education* (1801-1802).

permeates their educational treatises. Hannah More's pietistic *Strictures on Education*³¹ was included and an anonymous book with the provocative title, *Progressive Education*.

Young Parvin also employed the term THEOLOGY in a broadly generic sense. Under it he shelved two Bible dictionaries, four sets of Bible commentaries, including Alexander Cruden's *Concordance*, four collections of sermons, a copy of the Holy Bible, and also one of the Koran, the latter translated and edited by George Sale. No doubt Governor Lucas himself, good Methodist that he was, ordered the seven volumes of Wesley's *Prose Works*, Wesley's *Explanatory Notes Upon the Old Testament*, and a copy of the *Methodist Discipline*. In addition four volumes of Bishop Gilbert Burnett's *History of the Reformation of the Church of England* found a place near Johann Lorenz von Mosheim's *Church History*,³² translated from the Latin in the very year of the organization of the Territory of Iowa.

Under THEOLOGY, Parvin classified the literary reflections of James Hervey, presumably his *Meditations Among the Tombs*, and Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying* with their rhythmic cadences and rich imagery. Without a place among his major entries for fiction, Parvin rightfully entered the allegory of the Christian life, John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* under THEOLOGY. This edition had been edited by the poet, Robert Southey, and printed in 1820.

For Parvin as well as for other librarians, the term MISCELLANEOUS fulfilled the small boy's definition of a lie — an ever-present help in time of trouble. Theodore Parvin found some books difficult to classify and he very much

³¹ *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*.

³² *An Ecclesiastical History, Ancient and Modern*.

needed a fourteenth heading to which he could easily have given the designation of BELLES-LETTRES. Under MISCELLANEOUS, Parvin filed such diverse volumes as *British Cattle*, *Fisheries of the Mississippi*, Crabbe's *Synonimes*,³³ Rowlet's *Interest Tables*, and Webster's *Dictionary*.

Among semi-literary items which Parvin felt it necessary to consider as MISCELLANEOUS appear twelve volumes of the *Works* of George Washington, a *Manual of Classical Literature*, and *The Letters of a Turkish Spy* in eight volumes, purporting to represent a Turk's observations on the defects of Christian nations. Holding the most conspicuous place, however, forty-seven volumes of Sir Walter Scott's prose and poetry attest the popularity of the poet and novelist who had died but six years before. They also represent the only large item in the library devoted to fiction. Next in number came the fifteen volumes of the then popular Mary Martha Sherwood, who followed in the pious and pedagogical trail blazed by Maria Edgeworth in *Parents' Assistant*. Mrs. Sherwood wrote a hundred pious tales and tracts. Most of these belonged to a *genre* known in the nineteenth century as the Sunday-school-library type. Generally these tales combined an anecdote with a very obvious moral lesson, *in totum* a thinly disguised sugar-coated sermon.

Hannah More, a similar but better writer, was represented by seven volumes. Although the ubiquitous Hannah More ventured into the fields of drama, novel, short tale, and essay, everything she touched was adorned with a pietistic coloring. The works of Mary Martha Sherwood and Hannah More became widely disseminated among American readers between 1840 and 1870 when the American Tract Society supplied Sunday school libraries throughout the West and South with highly moral literature. In a

³³ George Crabb's *English Synonyms*.

somewhat modified form William Holmes McGuffey was soon to incorporate many stories of this type into his famous *Eclectic Readers*. Such stories as "Old Dog Tray", "Where There's A Will There's A Way", and "Meddlesome Mattie" resemble those of Maria Edgeworth, Hannah More, and Mary Martha Sherwood.

Under MISCELLANEOUS, British and American essayists found representation in Joseph Addison, Lord Bacon, Lady Mary Montague, and in the essays of Samuel Johnson, the "cham" of late eighteenth century letters. The American essayists included were John Jay and Benjamin Franklin. Just why Parvin chose to put Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* under MISCELLANEOUS instead of under the quasi-philosophical books listed by Parvin under SCIENCE or under MEDICINE remains a question. Nearly a century later William Osler called it the greatest treatise on insanity written before the nineteenth century. A late contemporary of Shakespeare, Burton had filched from classic and renaissance literature all case records which had reference to insanity, particularly the types superinduced by religion or by love. With its mosaic of quotations bearing on insanity and rules for health Parvin might with due propriety have listed *The Anatomy of Melancholy* under EDUCATION or THEOLOGY or MEDICINE or SCIENCE.

The three hundred and seventeen calf-bound periodicals must have added weightily to the cost of transporting the books for the Territorial Library from Cincinnati to Burlington. Lucas's searchers for books had located sixty-two volumes of the profound and critical *Edinburgh Review*, fifty-one of its London rival, the *Quarterly Review*, and twenty-two of the then less formidable and less literary though substantial *American Quarterly Review*, and four of the *American Review*. These four sets, numbering one hundred and thirty-five volumes would have thoroughly ac-

quainted any ambitious reader with the progress of science, criticism, and literature during the first third of the nineteenth century. In addition a legislator, ambitious to distinguish himself in oratory or rhetoric, would have found in these magazines models of style so that he could have imitated the plan later used by Robert Louis Stevenson when he cultivated his own style by imitating "the sedulous ape".

Other periodicals indicate that Lucas and his literary friends chose magazines with a diversity of readers in view. They had used a share of the five-thousand-dollar appropriation to purchase eight volumes of the *Annals of Education*, three of the *Western Christian Advocate*, thirty-four of Silliman's *Journal of Science*, now the *American Journal of Science*, and fifty-eight of *Niles' Register*, a weekly magazine founded in Baltimore in 1811, which remained in existence down to 1849.³⁴ Its articles and editorials are now considered valuable first-hand sources for scholarly work in American political history.

Except for the romances of Sir Walter Scott and the allegory of *The Pilgrim's Progress* no prose fiction was selected for Iowa's Territorial Library. But if these literary advisers felt that fiction would little profit Iowa legislators in subduing miles of virgin prairie to their iron-edged plows, they must have believed that poetry filled a genuine need in life. Almost to an exact count the one hundred and six volumes of poetry constituted, numerically speaking, fifteen per cent of the entire library. Their bulk was not great, for many of the separate items without doubt were printed in small duodecimos. A grand collection, entitled *British Poets*, filled fifty volumes.³⁵

Of the remaining fifty-six volumes, ten anthologies in-

³⁴ Van Wyck Brooks' *The Flowering of New England, 1815-1865*, pp. 64, 65.

³⁵ The British Museum Catalogue lists a series of duodecimos with forty-four volumes published between 1773 and 1776.

cluded selections from two or more poets. Small in size such volumes belonged to the popular "Gift Book" genre and filled a popular demand in America from 1800 to the time of the Civil War. For these, editors often culled poems typifying devotion, or affliction, or sentiment from such authors as Mark Akenside, Francis Thompson, and William Cowper. In this library, verses from such minor poets as Charles Churchill, William Falconer, and James Grainger filled one volume while the poems of Thomas Mickle and two eighteenth-century brother poets of England, John and Thomas Wharton, formed another collection.

The British poets of the eighteenth century held dominance. With the exception of Joel Barlow's *Columbiad*, a very sincere if not wholly successful effort to write the great American epic with a moral purpose which would excel that of Homer, no American poet figured in this group. Before 1838, Philip Freneau had written verse, and N. P. Willis, James Fenno Hoffman, and Joseph Rodman Drake were already publishing their verses while William Cullen Bryant and John Greenleaf Whittier were rising into fame.

It is rather puzzling that, with the exception of Leigh Hunt and Sir Walter Scott, no poet of the Romantic Period appears on the list. William IV of England had died in 1837 and Victoria sat on the throne. By 1838 Shelley, Keats, Byron, and Coleridge were dead, and Wordsworth had long since published his poems of lasting merit, yet except as their poems appeared in the series called *British Poets*, not one of these found a place in Iowa's first library.

A wide range of eighteenth-century poets from Dryden to Cowper found representation, although a few foreign and English classics antedated the year 1700. In translation Theodore Parvin catalogued Leigh Hunt's rendering of *Tasso*, William Julius Mickle's version of *The Lusiad*, Carey's *Dante*, and Mitchell's *Aristophanes*. The last of

these seems to be the only admission of drama into this library. Chaucer alone represents the period of Middle English while from the Renaissance appear such outstanding poets as Edmund Spenser, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, William Drummond of Hawthornden, Abraham Cowley, and Samuel Butler. Strangely enough there was only one copy of Shakespeare to catalogue, possibly his sonnets and erotic verse. A Scotchman must have been included among the literary friends of Robert Lucas, for among the authors listed in the anthologies of those represented by from one to four volumes each appear the names of James Beattie, Allan Cunningham, Allan Ramsay, Sir Walter Scott, and Robert Burns.

It is evident that the eighteenth century with its high priests of prose and reason, its pseudo-classical style, its artificial approach to Nature, and its churchyard poetry held the dominant place among those who had exercised the power of purchase. First came John Dryden. Although he died in 1700 his influence, on account of his critical theories, his admiration for the heroic couplet, and his "purification of the English language", lasted throughout the eighteenth century. Alexander Pope was represented by four volumes while some works of the poets whom Pope had twitted in his *Dunciad* were shelved side by side with his own poems.

It seems somewhat strange that the verses of Samuel Johnson appear in only one of the anthologies. Several of the poets whom he rescued from oblivion in his *Lives of the Poets*, however, appear either in the anthologies or in separate volumes. Among them were Savage and Churchill. Representative of the eighteenth century's delight in precision, formalism, and nature arrayed in orderly fashion, were such poets as Jonathan Swift with his satires, Mark Akenside, John Gay, Matthew Prior, and William Shenstone with their society verse and heroic stanzas, James Thom-

son of "The Seasons", James Parnell with his "Churchyard verse", and Thomas Gray of "The curfew tolls the knell of parting day" fame. The later years of the eighteenth century were not forgotten. Copies of Christopher Smart with his "Song to David", Cowper with his didactic and religious verses, Goldsmith with his "Deserted Village" and Young of "Night-Thoughts" reputation found places upon the shelves.

In his annual report, dated November 5, 1840, Morgan Reno, the second librarian of the Territory of Iowa reported favorably on the quality of the books chosen and urged the enlargement of the library. He also commented on the conservatism and efficiency of the work of Lucas and his advisers.

The present library is comparatively small, the selection made by his excellency, Gov. Lucas, is chaste and circumspect, a more appropriate selection with the same amount of funds could not well have been made.

The curious words "chaste and circumspect" describe rather accurately the character of these fifteen hundred odd books.³⁶

This first Territorial Library bears witness more to the character of the men who aided Governor Robert Lucas in his selections and to general literary trends than it does to the level of culture in the Territory of Iowa in 1838 and 1839. In the rented room near Zion Church, Iowa's first legislators — whether or not they exercised the privilege — had the opportunity of examining contemporary statute books and textbooks on education, medicine, and science. If they had so chosen they could have slipped into their leather jerkins or wolfskin coats copies of James Thomson's "Seasons", or "Kit" Smart's "Song to David" to read by snapping hickory logs in open fireplaces.

³⁶ Brigham's *A Library in the Making*, p. 73.

This library formed the nucleus of Iowa's State Library. Many books were carried away and others were lost in the transfer to Des Moines. Its contents show that opportunities for broad culture were inherent in the Organic Act and that Section 18 was faithfully carried out by Robert Lucas and his literary advisers.

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