

GOOD TEMPLARS IN IOWA

The temperance question is as old as civilization and as widespread as the lands which are inhabited by civilized people. The question came to America with the earliest explorers, traders, and pioneers. It has come to the fore in every State in the Union, and almost every legislative session is confronted with some phase of its development. It became an important issue in territorial days in Iowa and in early statehood it was a significant political as well as social and economic problem. Among the organizations founded chiefly upon the question of temperance was the Independent Order of Good Templars which flourished in Iowa from 1853 to the end of the century.

The Independent Order of Good Templars, now the International Order of Good Templars, was a world-wide fraternal society, having for its object the promotion of total abstinence for the individual and prohibition for the State, the nation, and the world. This lodge has been described as "an outgrowth of a desire to unite all the members of a family in one order, and with the laudable object of 'saving the fallen and preventing others from falling'."¹

The organization had its beginnings in New York, but the early history is somewhat obscure. A lodge, known as the Knights of Jericho, is said to have started at Oriskany Falls in 1850. This order was pledged to temperance, but it had social and mutual aid features in addition. When a similar lodge was started at Utica in 1851 it was decided to change the name to the Order of Good Templars and to limit its activities to temperance work. By the summer of

¹ *The New International Encyclopaedia*, Vol. X, p. 135; *History of Hardin County, Iowa* (1883), p. 975.

1852 fourteen of these lodges had been started in Oneida and Onondaga counties and a convention was called to meet at Utica for the purpose of organizing a "Grand Lodge". At this convention two leaders disagreed and Leverett E. Coon, Worthy Chief Templar of Excelsior Lodge No. 14 of Syracuse, withdrew and reported the affair to his lodge. The members voted to support him and resolved to form an "Independent Order of Good Templars". As a result, Excelsior Lodge No. 14 became Excelsior Lodge No. 1 in the new Order. The original Order of Good Templars soon died out.

The motto of the Independent Order of Good Templars was "Faith, Hope, and Charity". There were three degrees in the ceremonial ritual—"Heart", emphasizing duty to oneself, including temperance; "Charity", which emphasized duty to others; and "Royal Virtue", setting forth the obligation of reverence and obedience to God. Much of the ritual was secret and a pass word was required. The purpose of the organization was limited to temperance.

A meeting to organize a Grand Lodge was held at Syracuse on August 17, 1852. The first charter issued by the Independent Order of Good Templars was that given to Forest City Lodge No. 3. It was this lodge which in August, 1852, admitted three women to membership and thus opened the Order to women as well as men. At the June session in 1853, a ritual for subordinate lodges was authorized.²

Early in 1853 Seneca Chief Lodge of Seneca Falls, New York, was organized, with Dexter C. Bloomer of that city serving as Worthy Chief Templar. Mrs. Amelia Bloomer, wife of the Worthy Chief Templar, and widely known advocate of temperance and of women's rights, was at that time editor and publisher of a newspaper called *The Lily*,

² *Standard Encyclopedia of the Alcohol Problem*, Vol. III, p. 1333.

which was devoted chiefly to temperance and reform. Very soon after the establishment of the lodge at Seneca Falls, a copy of *The Lily*, containing a story relative to the new lodge, came into the hands of interested friends at Alliance, Ohio. A lodge was instituted there, but its life was of brief duration.

Later, Mr. and Mrs. Bloomer moved to Mount Vernon, Ohio, where they helped to establish a lodge of Good Templars — one of the first successful lodges of that Order in the State of Ohio. In 1854 the Good Templars of Ohio held a State Convention at Alliance, and Dexter C. Bloomer was elected Grand Worthy Chief Templar. At a meeting of the executive council of the Grand Lodge of Ohio in March, 1855, the resignation of Mr. Bloomer was read — “he having removed with his family to Iowa.” Thereafter, the Bloomers were known for many years as prominent citizens and temperance workers at Council Bluffs, Iowa.³

The New York Grand Lodge was looked to for national leadership until 1855 when a meeting was called at Cleveland, Ohio, and the Right Worthy Grand Lodge of North America was established. Delegates from the Grand Lodges of nine States — New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa — and Canada were present at this meeting. Iowa was represented by Worthy Vice Templar W. G. Fearris of Washington, who was chosen Right Worthy Grand Outside Guard.⁴

³ Isaac Newton Peirce's *The History of the Independent Order of Good Templars* (English edition, 1873, edited, revised, and re-written by Silvanus P. Thompson), pp. 34, 54, 55, 65, 77; D. C. Bloomer's *Life and Writings of Amelia Bloomer*, pp. 184, 191. On the cover of the Peirce book the secondary author's name is given as Thomson.

⁴ Peirce's *The History of the Independent Order of Good Templars* (English edition), pp. 15, 41, 68, 69, 71; *Standard Encyclopedia of the Alcohol Problem*, Vol. III, pp. 1332-1335.

But this is somewhat ahead of the Iowa story. According to an early account a man named Lyman Allen brought the Good Templars organization to Iowa in July, 1853, and established the first lodge in Iowa at Iowa City. The purpose of the lodge is set forth in its pledge which stipulated that:

“No member shall make, buy, sell, or use as a beverage, any spirituous or malt liquor, wine or cider, and shall discountenance the manufacture and sale thereof in all proper ways.”

Both males and females, over the age of twelve years were eligible for membership in the lodge, but no person was admitted to membership “who does not possess a good moral character, or who is in any way incapacitated from earning a livelihood, or who has no visible means of support.” Dues were one cent per week, to be paid four times a year, in advance.

The elective officers of the lodge as set forth in the constitution published at Iowa City in 1853 were: Worthy Chief Templar, Worthy Vice Templar, Worthy Secretary, Worthy Treasurer, Worthy Inside Guard, and Worthy Outside Guard. The appointed officers were “Worthy Chaplain, Worthy Assistant Secretary, Worthy Financial Secretary, Worthy Marshall, Worthy Deputy Marshall, and Righthand and Lefthand supporters.”⁵

By 1854 twenty or more local lodges had been established in Iowa. A petition seeking a closer unity among the lodges having been sent to D. W. Bristol, Grand Worthy Chief Templar of the New York Grand Lodge, he sent notices to all the lodges of Iowa to elect representatives to meet at Iowa City to form a Grand Lodge for the State of Iowa. This meeting was held on November 24, 1854. The Grand

⁵ *Constitution and By-laws of Iowa City Lodge No. 1, of the Independent Order of Good Templars*, pp. 3, 4.

Lodge officers elected at that time were: J. S. Porter, Grand Worthy Chief Templar; A. Marshall, Grand Worthy Counselor; W. G. Fearris, Grand Worthy Vice Templar; Isaac Whittan, Grand Worthy Secretary; W. C. Smith, Grand Worthy Treasurer; G. W. Marley, Grand Worthy Chaplain; Levi Leland, Grand Worthy Marshal; N. P. Chipman, Grand Worthy Deputy Marshal; Allen W. Woods, Grand Worthy Inside Guard; and B. M. Starkey, Grand Worthy Outside Guard.

Before adjournment it was agreed that the Grand Lodge should meet again at Fairfield in April, 1855, but there is no record that it convened at the appointed time. The next meeting recorded was held at Iowa City on October 3, 1855. Grand Worthy Chief Templar J. S. Porter called the session to order and made temporary appointments. After the reception and initiation of representatives, the following officers were chosen: Lyman Allen, Grand Worthy Chief Templar; Thomas Martin, Grand Worthy Counselor; Samuel W. Stewart, Grand Worthy Vice Templar; E. J. Leech, Grand Worthy Secretary; and Reuben Joy, Grand Worthy Treasurer.⁶

The main interest of the Good Templars was personal temperance, but legal prohibition was also an objective. In territorial and early statehood days there was much interest in the temperance question and Governor Robert Lucas and other political leaders were ardent advocates of temperance, but there was in general a feeling that the question of using intoxicating liquor should not be injected into politics. As late as 1853 the editor of the *Burlington Daily Telegraph* expressed this attitude in impressive language:

As a citizen, and as head of a family, we feel the deepest solicitude in the universal and permanent success of the temperance

⁶ Peirce's *The History of the Independent Order of Good Templars* (English edition), pp. 53, 54, 75.

cause — but as a voter we shall ever feel impelled to resist any attempt to make such an organization pander to the necessities of any political party whatever. Such a combination could only be degrading to the one, while it would be disastrous to the other. We have lived long enough in politics to know that any party which ties itself to any ism, or seeks to draw to itself any particular set of outsiders, is bound to go overboard at the ballot box.⁷

About the time the Independent Order of Good Templars started work in Iowa, however, there was a change of attitude. In December, 1853, a State Temperance Convention had been held at Iowa City and a resolution had been adopted endorsing the movement for a prohibitory law and expressing a determination to vote “for no man to make and execute our laws who is not decidedly and unequivocally in favor of the passage and enforcement of a law prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors as a beverage.” Furthermore, every person had been urged to use “all honorable and lawful means” to ensure the enforcement of the existing law until a more stringent one could be enacted.⁸

In his second biennial message, in December, 1854, Governor Stephen Hempstead repeated an earlier recommendation favoring a license law. In the campaign of 1854 the Whig Party selected James W. Grimes as its candidate for Governor and the Democrats nominated Curtis Bates. These men were asked by the temperance forces to state their attitudes toward the manufacture and sale of liquor. Bates said “he would not veto a prohibitory law” if one were passed, but obviously he was not a strong advocate of prohibition. Grimes, on the other hand, had for some years been committed to the total abstinence cause and expressed

⁷ *Burlington Daily Telegraph*, September 9, 1853, as quoted in THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS, Vol. VI, p. 67.

⁸ *The Sunbeam* (Keokuk), January 2, 1854, as quoted in THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS, Vol. VI, pp. 66, 68.

a decided preference for prohibition. Grimes was elected and under his leadership a rigid prohibition law was passed in 1855, with a provision that it should become operative only if approved by a vote of the people.⁹

In the campaign for State prohibition, the Good Templars took a definite stand. At the meeting of the Grand Lodge held at Iowa City on October 3, 1855, a resolution was passed which hailed the prohibitory law of the State as an encouraging sign. At the same time the lodge passed a resolution which declared that even the medical use of intoxicating liquors, except under direct medical prescription, was a violation of the pledge of the lodge. At this meeting, too, it was decided that the drinking of cider, or the signing of a license was a violation of the constitution of the lodge. That the lodge had attained considerable voting strength by this time is witnessed by the fact that there were, in 1855, seventy-nine active local Good Templar lodges operating in Iowa.¹⁰

By 1855 the Independent Order of Good Templars was showing considerable strength in the various local communities of Iowa. During that year Crystal Fount Lodge, No. 33, at Dubuque published a pamphlet containing its constitution and by-laws, with a preface which appealed "TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF AMERICA." This appeal read in part as follows:

Among the sacred trusts bequeathed to your charge, is the TEMPERANCE REFORMATION. It owns an existence no longer than yours. Thirty years ago, this movement was restricted to a few earnest spirits, who, farther up the mount of progress than their fellows, had caught the rays of the early dawn before it had

⁹ Benj. F. Shambaugh's *The Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa*, Vol. I, pp. 461, 462; *Laws of Iowa, 1854-1855*, p. 70; *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. VI, pp. 66-73.

¹⁰ Peirce's *The History of the Independent Order of Good Templars* (English edition), p. 75.

reached the plains below. An abstract principle, once confined to a few sagacious minds, has since walked into the halls of legislation, and in many of the sovereign States it now sits upon the bench of Justice, crowned with the majesty of Law. . . . Opinions grow slowly. Let us put our trust in truth rather than in majorities. The prohibitory law movement was not long ago, in a minority of one; but the Lord of Hosts stood with that one, and the victory was with the right. Galileo with his telescope, and Columbus with his compass, stood up alone against the world, but they both at length brought over the whole world to their positions. May it not be, also, that before the century closes, the law of Maine will become the law of Christendom? ¹¹

It was also in 1855 that the *Constitutions of the Grand and Subordinate Lodges of the I. O. of Good Templars of Iowa* was printed in Keokuk by Orion Clemens, a brother of Mark Twain. In 1856 Crystal Fount Lodge, No. 33, of Dubuque issued a new pamphlet containing its constitution and by-laws.¹²

The Right Worthy Grand Lodge of North America met in its second annual session at Louisville, Kentucky, on May 18, 1856. Representatives were present from New York, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri — Iowa being represented by Eric J. Leech, Grand Worthy Secretary of the Iowa Grand Lodge.¹³

At a semi-annual session of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, on April 23, 1856, resolutions endorsing the policy of prohibitory legislation in the State were passed, and attempts were made to secure authority to organize and institute lodges in the Territory of Minnesota. The annual session of the Grand Lodge of the Good Templars assembled at

¹¹ *Constitution, By-laws and Rules of Crystal Fount Lodge, No. 33, of the Independent Order of Good Templars* (Dubuque), 1855, pp. 3, 4.

¹² *Constitution, By-laws and Rules of Crystal Fount Lodge, No. 33* (Dubuque), 1856.

¹³ Peirce's *The History of the Independent Order of Good Templars* (English edition), pp. 75, 84.

Keokuk, on October 8, 1856, and was called to order by Grand Worthy Counselor Thomas Martin. Despite the seeming interest in the Order, the meeting at Keokuk was a small one and only seventeen representatives from twelve lodges were present. At this meeting it was reported that for the past six months the duties of Grand Worthy Secretary had been performed by George W. McCrary of Keokuk instead of by Eric J. Leech, who had resigned. There were at this time one hundred and twenty-seven local Good Templar lodges in Iowa, but the total number of members was not recorded.

Officers elected for the ensuing year were: Thomas Martin, Grand Worthy Chief Templar; R. W. Joy, Grand Worthy Chaplain; F. N. Smith, Grand Worthy Vice Templar; George W. McCrary, Grand Worthy Secretary; R. J. Frazer, Grand Worthy Treasurer; and I. G. Boswell, Grand Worthy Marshal.¹⁴

In 1857 there was both a semi-annual and an annual meeting of the Grand Lodge of Iowa — the latter meeting at Oskaloosa on October 15th. It was reported at that time that the number of active lodges in the State had doubled during the preceding year. Before the session adjourned resolutions were passed urging the agitation “to renew the Prohibitory Liquor Law in the State.”

The Right Worthy Grand Lodge of North America met in Canada in 1858 with the Right Worthy Grand Vice Templar, Amanda Clark, of Ohio, presiding. Representatives were present from eleven States of the Union and from Canada. Iowa was represented by Thomas Martin of Keokuk. Reports were read of the activities in thirteen States and Canada, in which there was a total of 945 Good Templar lodges, Iowa ranking fourth among the States in

¹⁴ Peirce's *The History of the Independent Order of Good Templars* (English edition), pp. 91, 92.

the number of lodges. The report was as follows: Illinois, 145; Indiana, 106; Missouri, 102; Iowa, 101; Wisconsin, 79; Ohio, 70; Minnesota, 30; Michigan, 23; Tennessee, 23; Pennsylvania, 22; Arkansas, 17; New York, 15; and Kansas, 15. Canada had 197 lodges. The total membership reported by these lodges was 53,200. Of these, 21,905 were women and girls.¹⁵

In January, 1857, the Sixth General Assembly of Iowa passed a license law, containing a provision that enforcement of the prohibitory statute should be dependent upon a vote of the people. In December of the same year the Supreme Court of Iowa, in the case of *Geebrick v. The State of Iowa* (5 Iowa 491), declared this license law unconstitutional and void. The Good Templar lodges, it appears, had supported the contention that the law was unconstitutional.

The Grand Lodge of Iowa met in annual session in Temperance Hall, Newton, on August 18, 1858. At this meeting it was reported that twenty-nine new lodges had been instituted in Iowa, and that seven old ones had been reorganized. It was also reported that since the last meeting, the Supreme Court of this State had decided against the license law, leaving the prohibitory law in full force, "this great change being attributable to the influence of the Good Templars."¹⁶

By 1859, 131 lodges in Iowa reported their activities, with a total membership of 5,622. This was an increase of more than 2,000 members over the previous year. The following year the Grand Worthy Chief Templar recorded in his report that there were 170 working lodges in Iowa, "with at least 8,000 good members". This, he declared,

¹⁵ Peirce's *The History of the Independent Order of Good Templars* (English edition), pp. 107, 114, 115.

¹⁶ *Laws of Iowa, 1856-1857*, Ch. 221; *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. VI, p. 85; Peirce's *The History of the Independent Order of Good Templars* (English edition), pp. 122, 123.

was "the strongest and most effective Temperance organization that has ever been seen in this State."¹⁷

The Grand Lodge of Iowa, meeting at Iowa City for its eighth annual session in 1861, showed that 88 new lodges had been organized and 13 old ones had been reorganized. At the same time it was reported that owing to so many enlistments in the army, 38 lodges had suspended operation. It was reported, too, that a petition had been received asking permission to organize a lodge for men in military service, which should be and remain under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge. This petition was in the following form:

To the Grand Lodge I. O. of G. T. of the State of Iowa

We the undersigned, Volunteers in the Eighth Regiment of Iowa Infantry, believing the Independent Order of Good Templars to be well calculated to promote the cause of Total Abstinence in the Army, do hereby petition for the organization of a *Camp Lodge*, to be located wherever said regiment may be in service, during the war, and that the Grand Lodge adopt such special rules for our government as will facilitate the working of such Lodge.

The petition was signed by Fred. P. Kettenring, Edw. Yound, J. N. Gardner, and J. J. Stuart, of "Adar Lodge, No. 257, of Rifle Zouaves", by John W. and Whittaker Jayne, M. P. Benton, B. F. Craig, and Sam. F. Patterson, of "Blue Glass Lodge, No. 214, of Rifle Zouaves", and by Thos. H. Cope, Aaron Record, and John Dann, of "Palestine Lodge, No. 79, Company A".

The communication from the men in service also recommended that the following rules should govern the proposed Camp Lodge:

They shall use, as their Constitution, that now used by Subordinate Lodges in this State, so far as the same may be practicable.

¹⁷ Peirce's *The History of the Independent Order of Good Templars* (English edition), pp. 141, 155.

They may adopt such Bye-Laws as their position may require, provided they do not conflict with this Constitution.

The Meetings shall be conducted, in all respects as ordinary Lodge meetings, except wearing regalia, which they may dispense with if they choose; electing officers as other Lodges, and being under the supervision of a Special Deputy. No dues shall be required of said Lodge by the Grand Lodge; and the Lodge may adopt such rules as occasion may require in regard to the payment of dues into its own Treasury by the members thereof.

Said Lodge, at its meetings, may elect and initiate new members, who shall pay such fees and dues as it may from time to time determine; said dues only to be applied to the use and benefit of said Lodge; and Cards from said Lodge are to be received and recognised as ordinary Cards. We further recommend that the Charter, and necessary Books, Odes, Cards, etc., to organise and carry on such Lodge, be furnished free of charge.¹⁸

Despite the work of the Good Templars and despite the interest in temperance in various groups both in and out of the army, there is evidence of the growth of intemperance during Civil War days. One Iowa historian records that in his community during the war "every union victory at the front and at the polls was the occasion of a public jollification, with lager and toddies flowing freely. Often a keg of beer was opened in the postoffice, where the expected crowd was assembled anxiously waiting for war news or election returns."

But the Good Templars were, likewise, very much in evidence. One small Iowa community reported a lodge of one hundred members who were "intensely active". Twenty-eight women members "made an onslaught on a saloon which had but recently commenced operations, wrecked the place and spilled all the liquid refreshments into the road." Another saloon keeper saved his stock by threatening to shoot, while the owner of the only other establishment of the kind was allowed three days of grace in

¹⁸ Peirce's *The History of the Independent Order of Good Templars* (English edition), pp. 165, 166.

which to move himself and his stock out of town. Upon his refusal he was arrested. The first dealer brought suit against the women and their husbands. There was great excitement, many witnesses, and much stirring and eloquent argument in the case, "but the 'gallant' jury inside of ten minutes brought in a verdict of 'not guilty', and this ended the saloon business" in that town for many years.¹⁹

In March, 1864, the *Iowa City Weekly Republican* reported the Independent Order of Good Templars to be in "a very flourishing condition", with 105 local lodges in Iowa. The editor said: "We are glad this organization is thus prospering, and wish they might be multiplied a hundred fold. They are very efficient temperance workers, and doing more, we believe, in that cause, than any other temperance Society."

In August of that year the same paper reported the recent publication of a pamphlet dealing with the history, objects, and workings of the Good Templars. The editor at that time said, this is "about the only agency now at work to stay the tide of intemperance, and we wish it abundant success." He continued:

There was never a time that more needed the labors of such an organization than the present. The drunken sot is often seen in our streets, reeling to his doom.

But if this were all, the case would not be so bad. If no others were following to take his place we would see him pass to destruction with the hope that when gone, we should see no more like him. But, alas! he is closely followed by a long train, aspiring to reel through the streets like him — to roll in the gutter like him — to be hooted through town by a crowd of boys like him; in short, who seem to be ambitious to emulate him in making a perfect wreck of all their manhood and all their hopes and all the hopes of their friends. There is work here — to try to save some of these infatuated individuals — to turn them from their course of certain

¹⁹ Harry C. and Katharyn Joella Chappell's *History of Buchanan County Iowa And Its People*, Vol. I, p. 422.

ruin, and save them to themselves, their friends and the world. This is a special object of the Good Templars.

In 1864 the Good Templars Grand Lodge of Iowa again declared its active interest in politics when it adopted the following resolution:

Resolved, That as consistent Temperance men, it is our duty to demand at the hands of our politicians, that the Candidates offered for our suffrages shall be total abstinence in practice and prohibitory in principle, or they cannot get our votes.²⁰

It was said in the decade of the sixties that Iowa had more Good Templar lodges than any other State in the Union, but it is doubtful that Iowa ever actually ranked in first place in this matter. It frequently held second or third place, however, and for many years it held a place of high rank among the States of the Union both in the number of lodges and in the total membership. In 1862 Iowa had 102 lodges with a membership of 5,000, and was surpassed by only Illinois and Wisconsin. The following year it had 110 lodges, Illinois alone having a larger number. By 1865 Iowa had 171 lodges with a membership of 9,833. But again Illinois and Wisconsin each had a larger number. It appears that Iowa had its largest number of Good Templar lodges in 1867 when the number reached at least 250, and the membership was in excess of 13,000. Indeed, one report indicated a total membership of more than 18,000.

In 1868 there was a decided decline in membership. One editor commented that from the report "it would seem that the 'teetotalers' are not coming on very fast in the matter of numbers, but it is a healthy organization notwithstanding, only one in 520 dying." The State lecturer delivered

²⁰ Peirce's *The History of the Independent Order of Good Templars* (English edition), p. 186.

230 addresses in 59 different counties and the Order had \$1,750 in its treasury.²¹

In 1866 there was a division in the Good Templars Lodge at Iowa City on the basis of color, and on December 5th of that year *The State Press* recorded that "The negroes of the city, under the guidance of Brainard [Brainerd] and others have organized Ethiopian lodge, No. 1, I. O. of G. T." John P. Irish, editor of the *Press*, thought this division was unfortunate. His sarcastic comment was:

We must protest in the name of consistency against this separation on the dividing line of color. Gentlemen those negroes are simply black white men, according to the logic of the day, and should have been admitted on a equal footing into the other lodges.²²

It appears that the color line persisted, however, though perhaps under another name. For in October of the following year, 1867, *The State Press* again noted that:

The Clark Lodge no. 350 I. O. G. T. [Colored] will hold a festival at Metropolitan Hall, on one week from to-day, Oct. 9th.

There will be a concert, music, refreshments and an acceptable and unexceptionable entertainment prepared by the members. The public is invited.²³

The Independent Order of Good Templars divided on the color line in 1874. The section in favor of the admission of colored persons, including one delegate from Iowa, withdrew to form the Right Worthy Grand Lodge of the World, but the two sections were reunited in 1887.

²¹ Chappell's *History of Buchanan County Iowa And Its People*, Vol. I, p. 422; Peirce's *The History of the Independent Order of Good Templars* (English edition), pp. 248-254; *The State Press* (Iowa City), November 25, 1868, p. 3. It was in 1868 that the first lodge of the I. O. of G. T. was organized in England.

²² *The State Press* (Iowa City), December 5, 1866, p. 3.

²³ *The State Press* (Iowa City), October 2, 1867, p. 3.

In 1869 the Grand Lodge of Good Templars for the State of Iowa met at Marion in a three-day session. Grand Worthy Chief Templar E. R. Shankland reported another decided decrease in membership. "In 1867", he said, "the Grand Lodge reported nearly 18,000 members; in 1868 they numbered 13,000; in 1869, only 9,000 members showing a decrease in membership for the last three years of nearly 9,000 members. There is evidently *something* wrong. Either our organization lacks the principle of vitality and thorough progressiveness, or the members of the Order are to blame for this decrease in membership. To arrest this rapid decline in membership should engage our most serious attention during the present session."

To remedy this situation he recommended that a man capable of entering the field as a lecturer should be elected Grand Worthy Chief Templar and that the office be sufficiently endowed to permit him to devote his whole time and attention to the work of the Order.

Grand Worthy Chief Templar Shankland also advocated the establishment of "A Temperance Political party". This, he thought, could be accomplished "more honorably and in much less time, by placing the ballot in the hands of the noble women of our State, who displayed as much patriotism during our late war, in the sacrifice they made in order to encourage their husbands, fathers and brothers in putting down the rebellion as did those who are today entitled to the elective franchise. In this, as in all radical, moral, progressive movements, our young State should lead the van."²⁴

During the next decade there were periods of retardation and periods of advancement among the Good Templar lodges of the State. In the period at the close of the Civil

²⁴ *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Session of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, I. O. of G. T., 1869*, pp. 11, 12. The session was held at Marion on August 31-September 2, 1869.

War temperance workers quite generally advocated a prohibition plank in the platform of the major political parties. Failing in securing this in at least one party, they advocated the organization of a third party avowedly committed to the course of temperance. In May, 1868, the National Grand Lodge of Good Templars met at Richmond, Indiana, and recommended the establishment of a prohibition party. Following this recommendation local prohibition parties were organized in Illinois and Michigan. In May, 1869, the Grand Lodge recommended the calling of a national temperance meeting and in September such a convention was held at Chicago at which the National Prohibition Party was organized. In 1872 the first national Prohibition Party convention was held at Cleveland, Ohio. The Prohibition Party was instituted and fostered by the Good Templars, and by virtue of their mutual interests, the party, in return, gave prestige to the Order and added numbers to the lodge.²⁵

In August, 1871, the Iowa Grand Lodge met at Clinton with Isaac Brandt of Des Moines serving as Grand Worthy Chief Templar, and J. Norwood Clark of Iowa City as Grand Worthy Secretary. The reports which these officers brought were not the most hopeful, yet there was a note of sincerity and a determination to carry on. The Grand Worthy Chief Templar reported:

The past year has been one of those that it seems almost impossible to arouse the people to a proper sense of the dangers of intemperance. A general lull or drowsiness existed, throughout the entire breadth of our State, such as sometimes surrounds individuals in their daily labors, and such as is difficult to account for. Yet with all this, I am happy to report to you to-day: We have made inroads upon our common enemy that will bring forth good fruit in the future. . . .

The object of your Executive Committee was to keep our camp-

²⁵ *The New International Encyclopaedia*, Vol. XIX, p. 248.

fires steadily burning, and if possible to light new ones wherever and whenever it was possible to do so. But owing to the general indifference that exists, we have been unable to make any advancement in our numerical strength during the past year.

The Grand Worthy Secretary also conceded a loss in the membership of the Order. Whereas there had been 9,340 members in 1870, there were at the time of the Clinton meeting only 8,131 members — a loss of more than a thousand members.²⁶

Always hopeful that conditions would improve, and grateful when there was an increase in membership, the Good Templars moved steadily on. But they gained little strength in Iowa in the decade of the seventies. The membership was 9,000 in 1869 and the number fluctuated around that figure for a decade. In 1878 a membership of 10,873 in 217 local lodges was reported and this was an improvement upon conditions that had prevailed in previous years. Indeed, a committee reporting upon the state of the lodge expressed the view that it was “in an exceeding flourishing condition.” A “great tidal temperance wave”, it was reported, “has swept over our State”, bringing in new members “who are alive to the great work of reclaiming and saving men from the great curse of drunkenness”. Moreover, the committee said: “A number of places in our State, that a year ago were strongholds of licensed drunkenness, are today regarded as strongholds of temperance and the consequent suppression of drinking saloons.”²⁷

Despite the note of optimism that seemed always to prevail at the annual meetings, there continued to be a decline in membership. When the Grand Lodge convened at Iowa City in August, 1879, the membership had fallen to 6,540

²⁶ *Proceedings of the Eighteenth Annual Session of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, I. O. of G. T., 1871, pp. 3, 6, 12.*

²⁷ *Proceedings of the Twenty-fifth Annual Session of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, I. O. of G. T., 1878, pp. 9, 56.*

and there were only 188 active lodges in the State, but "Hope springs eternal in the human breast." Grand Worthy Secretary David Brant was still hopeful of better results in the future, saying:

It is well for us not to lose sight of the cardinal principles of our Order, "moral suasion for the drinker, and legal suasion for the seller". It is for us to carry out these points. That can only be done by rightly directing our present lodges in their work, and extending our Order into all parts of the State. I am confident that many thousands can be added to our membership if only the work is properly directed. Let us have a year of united, systematic, labor for our Order, and we shall have an abundant harvest.

At this session, the Grand Worthy Chief Templar read a letter which he had received from Theodore S. Parvin, Grand Secretary of the Masonic Lodge, extending a cordial welcome to visiting Good Templars. The letter was as follows:

Dear Sir and Brother:— I desire, through you, to extend a cordial invitation to the members of your association, sojourning in our city, to visit my office and the library of the Grand Lodge. All will be welcome at any hour. I do this in token of the appreciation of the Grand Lodge and myself of the value of your organization and the usefulness of your labors to and in behalf of our people, of the State, and the land. And in the hope that success may follow your efforts, I am,

Very truly and fraternally,
T. S. Parvin
Grand Secretary.²⁸

In the decade of the eighties the activities of the Good Templars in Iowa seemed to be moving westward. Perhaps more than half of the Good Templar lodges in the State were located west of Des Moines, although lodges were maintained at Clinton, Cedar Rapids, Manchester,

²⁸ *Proceedings of the Twenty-sixth Annual Session of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, I. O. of G. T., 1879, pp. 10, 17, 19, 23.*

Mount Pleasant, and Ottumwa. In 1881 it was reported in Mills County that the Good Templars "have had their day". This seems to have characterized the Order in many parts of Iowa, while in other parts of the State the earlier interest was still maintained. By 1888 the Order had regained some of the losses which it sustained in the late seventies, and the membership had again increased to a little more than ten thousand.²⁹

In 1889 the Grand Chief Templar reported that the meeting for that year had been scheduled to convene at Dubuque, but owing to the fact that "the membership of the Order in the territory about that city was comparatively small", and "the expense of those from remote localities where the lodges were numerically stronger, would be so great if they went to Dubuque", it was decided that the meeting should be held at Fort Dodge instead of Dubuque.

At this Fort Dodge meeting it was reported that membership in the lodge had again declined. There had been 10,230 members in 1888, but the number was reduced to 9,719 in 1889. The number of lodges in the State, however, had increased by one — from 276 in 1888 to 277 the following year.³⁰

At the same meeting the Grand Chief Templar reported that during the past year the cause of prohibition had met with signal reverses in the eastern States. "The almost unlimited use of money by the liquor traffic", he said, "with possibly not sufficiently matured plans on the part of our own forces, have led to these results". But the "temperance hosts", he said, "have neither been discouraged or dismayed." Rather they had become more alert. "Before the smoke of the battles had lifted, the lines were reformed,

²⁹ *Proceedings of the Thirty-sixth Annual Session of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, I. O. of G. T. (Fort Dodge), 1889, pp. 4, 5, 29.*

³⁰ *Proceedings of the Thirty-sixth Annual Session of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, I. O. of G. T., 1889, pp. 6, 29.*

the forces for battle again drawn up and the siege had again commenced." He commented that the last year in Iowa had been "a severe one for Good Templary"—as presidential campaign years usually were. But he was optimistic and hopeful, and expressed the belief that no other temperance organization in the State "has accomplished anything like the good that has been done by the Order of Good Templars."

The report for 1889 indicated also how closely the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, established in 1874, and the Good Templars were associated in their work in the promotion of law enforcement. An illustration in point was one in which during the entire hearing of seven condemnation cases the ladies of these two organizations "were in constant attendance" at the court. The verdicts rendered in these cases resulted "in the destruction of a large quantity of liquors, four temporary injunctions, and \$1,200 fines for contempt of court."³¹

During the first half of the decade of the nineties interest in the Good Templars lodge seems to have remained fairly constant. The Right Worthy Grand Lodge of the Independent Order of Good Templars convened in Des Moines on June 15, 1893. One of the local newspapers on that date reported:

All the delegates are here, and every country in Christendom is represented. There are nearly two hundred delegates and they compose the most cosmopolitan and intelligent body ever assembled in Des Moines.

This was obviously something of an exaggeration, but it appears that there were perhaps one hundred and fifty visiting delegates, including representatives from Canada, England, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, New Zea-

³¹ *Proceedings of the Thirty-sixth Annual Session of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, I. O. of G. T., 1889, pp. 7, 48.*

land, South Africa, and India. The presiding officer was Dr. Oronhyatekha of Canada, the chief international officer, who boasted that he was a full-blooded Mohawk Indian, "and as proud of his nationality as he was of his membership in the order."

At this meeting plans were made to organize an International Juvenile Institute. The question of giving lodge support to the Prohibition Party was likewise discussed, but such support was deemed unwise. A third question of interest was one concerning the use of the Bible in the lodge room. Hindu members of the Order objected to the presence of the open Bible on the altar of their lodge, and asked that they be allowed to substitute for it the Vedas of Brahminism. If any decision was made, no mention of it was published in the newspapers.

Perhaps the most important action taken at the Des Moines meeting was that of changing the name of the Right Worthy Grand Lodge to "International Supreme Lodge of the Independent Order of Good Templars".³²

At the forty-third annual session of the Iowa Grand Lodge held at Des Moines on August 25, 1896, it was reported that in the previous year there was a membership of 9,326, which was only a little less than it had been in 1889. There had been a decline, however, during the past year, and at the time of the meeting there was a total membership of only 7,726.³³

An interesting feature in the program of the meeting at Des Moines was a letter which was read from J. W. Delaplaine who had been elected Grand Worthy Secretary of the lodge at its annual meeting at Independence in 1860 and

³² *The Iowa State Register* (Des Moines), June 16, 1893; *The Des Moines Weekly Leader*, June 15, 1893.

³³ *Proceedings of the Forty-third Annual Session of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, I. O. of G. T.*, 1896, p. 17.

reelected at the meeting at Iowa City in 1861. He had continued to be a member of the Order through all the intervening years and boasted of the fact that there had not been a temperance organization since 1840 to which he had not belonged. He recalled the names of some of his intimate friends "who were in the harness prior to the war". Among the familiar names in that group were Isaac G. Boswell and Mrs. Sarah S. Boswell of Oskaloosa; George W. McCrary, Eric J. Leech, Thomas Martin, and S. A. Duke of Keokuk; J. Q. Detwiler and Mrs. Olivia N. Detwiler of Vinton; William Vaughan and Mrs. Myra Vaughan of Newton; J. Norwood Clark and Mrs. S. G. Cleveland of Iowa City; J. W. Cattell, Mrs. Deborah Cattell, Elijah Sells, and Isaac Brandt of Des Moines; Rev. D. W. Burroughs of Waterloo; Lewis Todhunter of Indianola; and A. Brant, Jr., of McGregor. Concerning these early co-workers in Good Templary, Mr. Delaplaine asked, "where are they now?" After thirty-five years how many of them are "in the land of the living today?"³⁴

In the period from 1880 to 1900 a strong movement for prohibition developed in the Middle West, resulting in prohibitory laws in Kansas, Iowa, and the Dakotas. Toward the end of this period the movement subsided sufficiently in effect to withdraw Iowa from the prohibition column through the enactment in 1894 of the Mulet Law, by which liquor dealers, though operating in violation of the prohibitory law, could, if they complied with certain requirements, be prosecuted only at regular intervals and fined only up to a certain limit — a method intended to transform the prohibition system into a high-license system.³⁵

³⁴ *Proceedings of the Forty-third Annual Session of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, I. O. of G. T.*, 1896, p. 6.

³⁵ *The New International Encyclopaedia*, Vol. XIX, p. 246; *Laws of Iowa*, 1888, Ch. 71, 1890, Ch. 35, 1894, Ch. 62; *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. VI, pp. 596-603.

At the annual meeting of Good Templars in Des Moines in 1896 the Order set forth anew its declaration of faith in favor of: no license in any form, under any circumstances, for the sale of liquors to be used as a beverage; the absolute prohibition of the manufacture, importation and sale of intoxicating liquors for such purposes; the creation of a healthy public opinion on the subject by the active dissemination of the truth in all the modes known to enlightened philanthropy; and the election of good, honest men to administer the laws.

The Committee on Political Action reported that for many years the Good Templars lodge as an organization had "stood steadfastly by this declaration of principles". In accordance with the continued maintenance of this viewpoint, the committee presented new resolutions which declared:

That the obligation of the Good Templar commits him to the doctrine and principles of prohibition.

That in any and every case where the right of suffrage is concerned, it is the duty of every voter in our Order to put his vote where it will do the most good for the suppression of this fearful and soul-destroying traffic.

That whenever the right of suffrage is to be exercised in this country, it is the duty of all minor and non-voting Good Templars to aid by voice and pen the creating of a sentiment that shall procure a clean ballot and wholesome legislation.³⁶

For many years the Order of Good Templars maintained a Junior Department for work among the younger members of the organization. Adhering to the old adage, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure", and believing that "the redemption of the temperance cause and humanity will come through and by the children", the lodge was active in teaching juvenile members the effects of alcohol and

³⁶ *Proceedings of the Forty-third Annual Session of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, I. O. of G. T., 1896, p. 39.*

tobacco on the human system. The junior branch of the work was organized in two groups — the “Bands of Hope”, consisting of the younger members of the organization, and the “Juvenile Temples”, composed of the more mature young folk within the ranks of the Templars. In 1889 the Grand Lodge of Iowa was commended for the high type of work it was doing in this field.³⁷

In the early nineties a new phase of educational work developed in the establishment of the “Good Templar Training School”, or “Good Templar Normal”. This organization made its third annual report at the Des Moines meeting in 1896. In a three-day session there were morning, afternoon, and evening meetings. Some of the subjects discussed were: “What has been gained by the adoption of the training school system?”, “The Good of the Order — How to improve it?”, “How to Build Lodge Homes”, and “When will our Order not be needed?”³⁸

At the session of the Good Templars held at Stockholm, Sweden, in 1902 the official name of the lodge was changed from “Independent Order of Good Templars” to “International Order of Good Templars”. This was in keeping with the change made at the Des Moines session in 1893, when the name “Right Worthy Grand Lodge” was changed to “International Supreme Lodge”. A further reorganization in 1905 provided for a “National Grand Lodge of the United States” and a “National Grand Lodge of Canada”, each in charge of the subordinate lodges in its area.³⁹

The Good Templar lodges appear to have died out in Iowa about 1900. The reason for this is not entirely clear.

³⁷ *Proceedings of the Thirty-sixth Annual Session of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, I. O. of G. T.*, 1889, pp. 8, 18, 35, 36, 67.

³⁸ *Proceedings of the Forty-third Annual Session of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, I. O. of G. T.*, 1896, pp. 44-48.

³⁹ *Standard Encyclopedia of the Alcohol Problem*, Vol. III, pp. 1332-1335.

Possibly the large number of organizations which exist in the State both for farmers and townspeople, is one explanation. The long period of State prohibition from 1883 to 1933, in spite of local nullification under the Mule Law, may have taken away the incentive for a temperance organization. Women, always active in Good Templar lodges, found their temperance activities in the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. Men interested in temperance may have enrolled in the Anti-Saloon League.

The International Order of Good Templars has, however, continued to function in many States and in many foreign countries, with headquarters in West Hartford, Connecticut. According to the National Secretary it is still "a Temperance organization, working for the total abolishment of the liquor traffic, and for a World Peace." Members must be total abstainers and take a pledge, but the Order draws no line as to color, race, or creed, and "men as well as women are welcome to the order."⁴⁰

JACOB A. SWISHER

THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA
IOWA CITY IOWA

⁴⁰ Letter from Alfred Abrahamson, National Secretary of the International Order of Good Templars, dated May 21, 1947.