

# The **P**ALIMPSEST

JANUARY 1947

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## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

THE PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

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## THE MEANING OF PALIMPSEST

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY RUTH A. GALLAHER

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NO. 1

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## Deadlock on Senators

On December 26, 1848, two men walked down the aisle in the Senate Chamber at Washington, D. C. One was Jefferson Davis, Senator from Mississippi; the other was Augustus Caesar Dodge, Senator-elect from Iowa. Senator Davis presented Dodge's credentials and the first Senator from the State of Iowa took the oath of office. Senator Dodge then presented the credentials of his colleague, George W. Jones. It was almost exactly two years since Iowa had been formally admitted as a State. The explanation for this delay in choosing the first Iowa Senators is a long and involved story.

Advocates of statehood had argued that the admission of Iowa to the Union would mean two Senators and at least one Representative in Congress. The day following the adoption of the State constitution Congress voted to give Iowa an additional Representative.

The two Representatives chosen at the first



general State election, held on October 26, 1846, were Shepherd Leffler, a farmer, and S. Clinton Hastings, a lawyer. Senators, however, were at that time chosen by a joint convention of the two houses of the General Assembly. The first session of the Iowa General Assembly was to meet on November 30, 1846. Iowa was not yet formally admitted as a State, but no one worried about that; political leaders were concentrating on the choice of Senators. These two positions were the most coveted of the entire list of offices, both from the standpoint of salary and prestige.

Party leaders studied the line-up anxiously. On the face of the returns the Democrats outnumbered the Whigs in the State Senate 12 to 7, while the Whigs had a majority of 20 to 19 in the House. In a joint convention this meant a party vote of thirty-one Democrats to twenty-seven Whigs, a safe majority for the Democrats, it appeared. But the majority party soon learned that statistics could not be trusted. One Senator and two Representatives listed as Democrats had, in fact, been elected from Lee County on an independent ticket, representing the settlers on the Half-breed Tract. It was rumored that these Independents, or "Possums", could not be counted as reliable party members. If they could be persuaded to vote with the Whigs, the Democrats



would lose the Senators, although they had a majority of the popular vote.

Both parties maneuvered for position as the date for the meeting of the General Assembly drew near. The early skirmishes were fought in the newspapers, Democratic and Whig editors going into action. On November 20th the editor of the Whig *Bloomington Herald* noted that the Democratic *Iowa City Reporter* had charged that the Whigs intended to refuse to participate in the joint convention, thereby frustrating the chance of the Democrats to choose the Senators. This, he claimed, was not true, but he suggested that it was just what the Democrats had in mind, if they could thereby prevent the election of Whig Senators.

"They did it in Indiana two years ago — they did it in Tennessee a few years since, and from the desperate character of Locofocoism in this new State they would, beyond a doubt, act out the constitution defying course so congenial to the lawless propensities of Locofocoism."

The election of Iowa Senators in 1846 was complicated by several issues which cut across party lines. There was, for example, a keen rivalry between the northern and southern sections of the new State. There was also, either openly or below the surface, a cleavage based on the attitude towards slavery. Ten years later this was to pro-



duce a new party line-up. There were personal and community enmities which had arisen from the debates over boundaries and statehood.

At least two of the would-be Senators — Charles Mason and Thomas S. Wilson — were members of the Territorial Supreme Court. They and their supporters were determined that Senators should be elected before the Supreme Court Judges. Defeated for the more desirable office, a man might still secure one of the coveted Supreme Court seats.

So there was tense excitement as the General Assembly convened in the Stone Capitol on November 30, 1846. Candidates and their supporters thronged the halls and greeted the legislators. The Democratic members of the House and Senate held a caucus and decided that they would support Judge Thomas S. Wilson of Dubuque and Augustus Caesar Dodge of Burlington, then Delegate to Congress, as their senatorial candidates. The Whigs seem to have agreed on Jonathan McCarty of Lee County, a former Democrat and a favorite of the settlers on the Half-breed Tract, and Gilbert C. R. Mitchell of Davenport.

Party and factional leaders at once began jockeying for position. The Democrats, with one senatorial nominee a receptive candidate for the Supreme Court if defeated for a Senate seat, in-



sisted that Senators should be elected first. The Whigs, apparently to be contrary, insisted that the Supreme Court Judges should be elected first, arguing that the Court was supposed to meet on January first. They blandly disregarded the fact that Congress was already in session and that the Senators were to be seated as soon as the State of Iowa was formally admitted. Incidentally, Iowa's two Representatives took the oath of office on December 29, 1846.

With the organization of the First General Assembly there began a series of intricate political maneuvers. On December 5th a resolution was introduced in the House providing for a joint convention with the Senate on the following "Monday the 8th instant" to elect United States Senators. Monday, however, was the seventh and on that day the resolution was amended to provide that the joint convention was to meet on December 11th to elect "one Chief Justice, and two Associate Judges of the State, and two United States Senators".

The amended resolution was adopted and sent to the Senate. The Democrats in the Senate removed the provision for the election of Judges and the Whig House refused to concur. To add to the turmoil, charges of bribery were made. Nelson King, a Whig member of the House, claimed



to have been offered a bribe if he would vote for the Democratic candidates.

After some two weeks of bickering the Senate and the House agreed to meet in joint convention on December 18th to elect Senators and, on the following day, to elect Supreme Court Judges. At eleven-thirty A. M. on the 18th, the nineteen members of the Senate crossed the hall and filed into the House chamber on the south side of the Capitol. Speaker Jesse B. Browne presided, with the support of the Whigs, although by custom the President of the Senate would have presided. Every member of both houses answered as the roll was called. Thomas H. Benton, Jr., of the Senate, and G. W. Bowie, of the House, were named tellers. The crucial hour was at hand.

Amid tense silence Silas A. Hudson, secretary of the House, acting as secretary of the joint convention, called the list of names and each member named his choice for Senator. When the votes were counted it was learned that Jonathan McCarty, the Whig candidate, had received twenty-nine votes and Thomas S. Wilson, the Democratic candidate, had twenty-eight. The three doubtful Democrats from Lee County had voted for the Whig candidate, but one Whig, Senator Samuel Fullinwider of Des Moines County, had voted for Gilbert C. R. Mitchell, a Whig, but not the



Whig candidate selected for this seat. Thirty votes were needed for an election. The Whigs, of course, were thunderstruck. Their opinion of Fullinwider may be imagined, although there is a hint that his vote was part of a political maneuver.

The Democrats were quick to see that if the Whig members had a chance to talk to the wayward Senator Fullinwider and he voted for McCarty on the second ballot, Iowa would have at least one Whig Senator. Acting on the old adage that he who fights and runs away may live to fight another day, they made motion after motion to adjourn and when these were defeated they threatened to walk out of the convention. Josiah Clifton and Reuben Conlee, the two independent Democrats in the House — who had voted for the Whig candidate but now feared he was to be dropped — sided with the Democrats and a motion to adjourn until January 5, 1847, was finally adopted by a vote of thirty to twenty-eight. Later the General Assembly adjourned until January 4, 1847.

The struggle for power went on during the recess. One of the Independents in the House, Reuben Conlee, died during the interim and his seat was taken by a "regular" Democrat. The two remaining Independents decided to take advantage of their strategic position and Senator Jacob



Huner threw his hat in the senatorial ring. The Democrats rejected this offer, although some were willing to substitute Ver Planck Van Antwerp for Augustus Caesar Dodge. Log-rolling offers sprang up and died.

The General Assembly reconvened on the fourth of January and the following day the House announced that it would receive the Senate that afternoon to elect two United States Senators, as agreed in the convention. The hour came but no Senate appeared. The chief clerk was sent to remind the Senators of the meeting but without result. The Democrats had found no formula for the election of Democratic Senators and they did not propose to play a losing game.

Day after day passed and Iowa had no Senators and no Judges of the State Supreme Court. On February 24th a Democratic Representative introduced a resolution including an offer of the Democrats to resign if the Whigs would promise to do likewise. The Whigs countered with the statement that they were willing to meet in the convention in order to elect the Senators and Judges and that those who were not willing to perform their constitutional duties should resign. No one resigned. No one expected that any one would do so.

On February 25, 1847, the First General As-



sembly adjourned without having named either the United States Senators for Iowa or the Justices of the State Supreme Court. The only definite action taken was the adoption of a general law, signed by Governor Ansel Briggs on February 23rd, which outlined the procedure for electing Senators, but provided no assurance that both houses would be present to perform the task.

For a time Iowa concentrated on local affairs and the Mexican War, but late in the fall of 1847 there were rumors that Governor Ansel Briggs intended to call a special session of the General Assembly so that the school law might be amended and Senators chosen for the session of Congress beginning in December. Candidates sprang up like mushrooms after a rain — Augustus Caesar Dodge, Ver Planck Van Antwerp, Thomas S. Wilson, Charles Mason, J. C. Hall, Joseph Williams, Stephen Hempstead, Thomas H. Benton, Jr., James M. Morgan, and others.

The Governor, however, did not issue his proclamation calling a special session of the legislature until December 3, 1847, and the General Assembly did not convene until January 3, 1848. The Democrats were hopeful. One Whig Representative had been replaced by a Democrat, giving that party an apparent majority on a joint vote. The Whig members were urged by one editor to make



an attempt to elect Whig Senators, but if unsuccessful, to support the best Democrats possible — Democrats who opposed the 1846 tariff and the Mexican War and favored the Wilmot Proviso and internal improvements.

The day after the General Assembly convened charges were made that a Representative and a Senator, both Democrats, were not residents of the districts they represented. Two other Democratic Senators were challenged on the ground that they held lucrative offices. The House, with its Whig majority, thanks to the vote of Josiah Clifton, the remaining Independent Representative, unseated John N. Kinsman, who had, it was claimed, moved from his district and offered his resignation, but the Democratic Senate seated all three of its challenged members. The line-up now stood nineteen Whigs and nineteen Democrats in the House (including one Independent) and twelve Democrats (including one Independent) and seven Whigs in the Senate. On a joint ballot this gave the Whigs only twenty-six votes from their own party, while the Democrats were sure of twenty-nine and could win without the Independents. The Whigs could not win unless both of the challenged Democratic Senators were unseated and both Independents voted with the Whigs.



The Whigs in the House, having a majority there (with Clifton's help), refused to join the Senate in the election of Senators so long as at least two of the Democratic members who had been challenged remained on the roll. Neither house would budge an inch and on January 25, 1848, the special session of the General Assembly adjourned without a choice of Senators or Supreme Court Judges.

It was not until the Iowa election in August of 1848 that the Democrats secured a definite majority in the General Assembly and on December 7, 1848, were able to name Augustus Caesar Dodge and George W. Jones as United States Senators from Iowa. The long deadlock, the only one of its kind in the history of the United States, was over and Iowa was finally represented in the Senate of the United States.

The seat then taken by Augustus Caesar Dodge has since been occupied by James Harlan, Samuel J. Kirkwood, William B. Allison, Albert B. Cummins, David W. Stewart (interim), Smith W. Brookhart, Louis Murphy, Guy M. Gillette, and the present incumbent, Bourke B. Hickenlooper. A much longer list follows the name of George W. Jones, ending with George A. Wilson, the present incumbent.

RUTH A. GALLAHER



## Charles Mason and Federal Aid to Agriculture

In his "eminently practical and patriotic address" opening the State Fair at Burlington in 1864, Judge George G. Wright, the president, expressed gratification at Iowa's achievements in supporting the troops at the front and in the total outstanding contribution which his State had made to the common effort.

As an official pronouncement of Iowa's agricultural priority, Judge Wright read a letter from the new Federal Commissioner of Agriculture, the Quaker dairyman of Philadelphia, Isaac Newton: "The reports of the average yield of the crops throughout the country, for the present year, clearly show that your State has the honor of being placed at the head of the list. . . . It not only speaks volumes of praise in behalf of the enterprise and industry of your rapidly growing and thriving population, but it seems very clearly to indicate that you are peculiarly blessed with an adaptation of climate and soil, unsurpassed, if equaled, by any other State in the Union. . . . With this astonishing growth of population and wealth, a boundless career of influence and im-



portance awaits the futurity of your noble state."

This rather verbose tribute was a marked understatement, both as regards the productive achievements of Iowa and its influence upon national policies respecting that interest. The State's participation in all of the achievements which stemmed from the basic acts of the sixties is generally known. What is not so well known and appreciated is the long ante bellum campaign of agitation and preliminary organization that eventuated in the "Civil War Agricultural New Deal".

In these preliminary labors the youthful State participated in definite ways that forecasted future leadership. Iowa was a center of the movement in the West which had the interrelated objective of establishing agricultural colleges and creating State and Federal bureaus to promote agriculture. Suel Foster, reformer and horticulturist, and William Duane Wilson, reformer and agricultural journalist, were among the many Iowans who championed the cause of the farmers and urged that the government assist in the promotion of agriculture. Among those who did valiant service in helping to organize the Federal agencies dealing with agriculture was Charles Mason, most versatile of Iowa pioneers.

In March, 1853, Charles Mason was appointed Commissioner of the Patent Office. It was, in



some respects, an unusual choice, for Mason had had only incidental experience with such work, but a casual glance at his activities reveals his varied interests. A native of central New York, he had graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point at the head of his class — a class which included Robert E. Lee and Joseph E. Johnston. He had later studied law and served as editorial writer on the staff of the *New York Evening Post*. In 1836 he came to Belmont, Wisconsin Territory, and in 1838 had been appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the newly created Territory of Iowa, serving with distinction until June, 1847. Later he served as one of the commissioners who drafted the *Code of 1851* and was a candidate for United States Senator and for Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Judge Mason brought to his new office a wide variety of experiences and interests. In addition to his military and legal education he had considerable mechanical genius and he was interested in farming and machinery having to do with farming, including steam tractors and harvesters. He was also a practical farmer on a large scale and a heavy investor in Iowa and Wisconsin lands.

At the time of Mason's appointment, the Patent Office was included in the Department of the Interior, having been established in 1836 to take



over the patent registration duties in the office of the Secretary of State. It was transferred to the Interior Department in 1849. In addition to its proper business of issuing and supervising patents, including patents on agricultural implements and machinery, there was an irregularly administered, indifferently housed, and inadequately financed division devoted to the collection of agricultural statistics and studies of various agricultural productions and problems. How came the Patent Office to have such a division?

The story goes back to Henry Leavitt Ellsworth, appointed the first Commissioner of the Patent Office. Like Charles Mason, Ellsworth was a man of varied interests. When he took over the Patent Office in 1836, it was a ward of the State Department and the new Commissioner became interested in the collection of seeds and plants via the consular service. He then distributed them for trial in the United States. This dabbling in agricultural affairs was looked upon with suspicion in some quarters, but in 1839 Congress appropriated \$1,000 "out of the patent fund, to be expended by the Commissioner of Patents in the collection of agricultural statistics, and for other agricultural purposes".

The work grew. The appropriation act of 1847 granted \$3,000 of the patent fund for agricultural



purposes, with the proviso that the Commissioner's report on agricultural subjects must not exceed four hundred pages. The appropriation from the Patent Office fund for agricultural purposes in 1853 was \$5,000.

Mason brought system and efficiency into the Patent Office, improving personnel by dismissing incompetents and political schemers and employing women clerks on an equal status. His own strict regimen as set down in his diary for December 29, 1856, suggests that of John Quincy Adams: "Rise at 6 — read or write until breakfast. Go to office a little before 9. Remain steadily at work until 3:30 — then home to dinner. After dinner read hour to daughter — then walk for an hour — go to office for an hour or two — return home at 8 — call on friends or receive visits for an hour — read for 2 hours and go to bed at 11 P. M. In this way I am accomplishing a good deal in the course of a day." One would think that he was, indeed! Possibly Mason's life-long habits of order and application were a hold-over from the long, regimented days at West Point.

While Judge Mason's general administration of the Patent Office was highly efficient, his promotion of agricultural activities was to have the most permanent significance. Expert scientists were brought to the service either as regular staff mem-



bers or as collaborators. The immediate direction of the agricultural work, including the editing of the agricultural report, was placed in charge of Daniel Jay Browne, who after study at Harvard had been a farmer, farm editor and writer, and an extensive traveler.

The beginning of a corps of permanent investigators was made in 1854 with the employment of an entomologist, Townend Glover. He remained with the Patent Office until 1859 and served continuously with the Department of Agriculture from 1863 to 1878. His appointment may be regarded as the beginning of a career service in agriculture. Chemists and botanists were employed on a temporary basis and an arrangement was made with the Smithsonian Institution for regular weather observations and reports. Thus were established the rudimentary bases of the "line agencies" of what became the Department of Agriculture.

The annual reports on agriculture were systematized and made more definitely informing. Senator James W. Grimes complained to Mason, his fellow townsman, in June, 1853, that the "letters from Tom, Dick, and Harry amount to but little. Occasionally there is one of some value, but the greater part of them are not worth as much as the paper upon which they were written." The



drawings of feral animals and similar embellishments were, Grimes felt, of no practical value and he suggested such subjects as the breeds of cattle. Elaborate essays on the latter subject as well as on methods of planting and cultivating crops and on farm machinery were prepared by Browne and some of the leading scientists. To make room for these papers the former regional correspondence was condensed and the long tables of agricultural "statistics", admittedly unreliable and therefore of little value, were abandoned.

Mason's interest in scientific agriculture soon showed results. By this time, too, the influence of farm journals and agricultural societies was making an impression on the members of Congress. Federal purse strings were being loosened. Previous to 1854 the agricultural appropriations had been taken from the Patent Office fund. In May of 1854 an appropriation of \$10,000 was made to the Treasury Department from the general fund for the collection of agricultural statistics and the distribution of seeds and cuttings, all such work to be under the supervision of the Commissioner of Patents — Charles Mason. In August of 1854 Congress made another appropriation for agricultural work, this time for \$25,000. From that time on, the appropriations were made directly from the Federal treasury and in 1855 the Patent Of-



fice was reimbursed for funds used for agricultural purposes to the extent of \$40,078.

With more funds available the work of collecting and testing new plants and seeds was extended and systematized, but the conscientious Commissioner was greatly concerned to avoid the wastes and abuses which had brought discredit and contempt upon this branch of the service. "It certainly was never the purpose of Congress", Mason wrote in his final report, "to convert this office into a common seed-store, intended to supply the public at large gratuitously with the means of planting their ordinary gardens." Should the government resort to such gifts it would come to be regarded "as the fountain of favors and benefits. The people would be gradually parting with that self-reliance which is the parent of energy and the mainspring of success in every undertaking, and which is so necessary to the preservation of individual self-respect, and therefore of personal, and finally of national, independence."

But there was more emphasis on experimentation and the search for new agricultural products. Among the importations of especial importance were Chinese yams, Chinese sugar cane or sorghum — which led to the establishment of the Federal propagation garden and, finally, to an extensive and hopeful cultivation in the Middle



West during the Civil War — and the tea plant, whose acclimation was to be a leading interest of the Commissioner of Agriculture under President Hayes. Of far greater value to the nation's economy than these exotics were the new and superior grasses that were introduced.

With his assured standing as an engineer, farmer, and jurist, Mason had the respect and confidence of agricultural leaders in all regions. He corresponded and advised with such key men in the movement for an agricultural department and colleges as Charles B. Calvert of Maryland, John Delafield and Benjamin F. Johnson of New York, Henry F. French of Massachusetts, and many others. He carried on his seed and plant testing through State and local agricultural societies and secured the good will and support of the influential United States Agricultural Society. Appropriate interrelations with the Smithsonian Institution and its great director, Dr. Joseph Henry — which were to be greatly extended under departmental organization — were auspiciously started.

But in spite of his success as Commissioner of Patents and agricultural promoter, Charles Mason was not entirely happy in his Washington office. For one thing, the salary of \$3,000 paid to the Commissioner of Patents was hopelessly inade-



quate for a man with Mason's business interests and professional ability. He was confident that he could secure at least double that compensation from a Chicago firm of patent attorneys and his later professional career fully verified this estimate. In the summer of 1855, he returned home with the expectation of retiring from office, but after characteristic deliberation he determined to continue to the end of the existing administration — and live strictly within his salary.

For a bureau chief, he was on terms of considerable intimacy with President Franklin Pierce, who apparently felt that the western leader might influence his State's delegation in favor of a re-nomination. But Mason was never an effective politician, either for himself or the organization. His judicial temperament and disciplined mind were naturally opposed to the political "game" as conducted in his day. He came into sharp disagreement with Buchanan's Secretary of the Interior over removals and appointments and on August 1, 1857, he resigned from an office that, in the judgment of all impartial observers, he had conducted with signal credit and effectiveness. At various times he was mentioned for Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, created in 1862, and for Secretary of the Department of the Interior, but his ambition for public employment was



not sufficient to bring the requisite maneuvers and concessions.

Amid the barrage of criticism of "patent office agriculture" and the demands for an organization more in keeping with the dignity and relative importance of the occupation, no one was more aware of the anomalous and uncertain status of the inadequate agricultural agency than the Commissioner himself. But while others made vague suggestions for some sort of a bureau or department with functions largely unspecified, he proposed a specific, economical, decentralized plan of action in which emphasis was to be placed upon the aims rather than upon control and direction.

In his final report — for 1856 — he pointed out that the great objective of scientific investigation might be carried on in one of two ways. One would involve the establishment of regional experimental farms. Such a plan might be feasible for the Old World, but it involved a centralized bureaucracy that would not be tolerated under the American system. The preferable alternative was to coördinate existing State and local agencies through the supervisory activity of an "experimental agriculturist" who could arrange with individuals and societies for conducting experiments and make an annual report of the results. The annual expense of such an official with two assis-



tants would be, Mason estimated, about six thousand dollars.

To the possible objection that such appropriation was "beyond constitutional warrant", the Commissioner argued that it was as fully justified as the provision for training for defense, the promotion of commerce, and the protection of manufactures. What the agricultural interests sought, he argued, was parity treatment: let the government serve all interests or disregard all.

It seemed "manifestly just and proper that commerce, manufactures, and agriculture — the three great branches of national industry and wealth — should be regarded with equal favor by Congress." The farmers looked not "for any special favor," but had a "right to expect equality." If all interests were to be unaided they would be satisfied to take their chance with the rest, "but, while, at the common expense, the favor of government is almost lavished upon the other great branches of industry, they expect something for themselves. This expectation is so reasonable, that the favorable consideration of Congress is confidently invoked."

Even so reasonable and modest a proposal went too far for a State-rights administration and congressional majority. The realization of the aims of the pioneer champions of agriculture on a parity



basis awaited the necessities and organized pressure of a more fully commercialized and class-conscious occupational interest and the consequent broadened conceptions of the functions of government in promotion, regulation, and direction.

All the same, the foundations were being laid. Considering the rudiments of organization established and the precedents of service inaugurated, the Patent Office agricultural division may be regarded as the beginning of the Department of Agriculture and Charles Mason may properly be classed as the forerunner of Iowa's distinguished and influential heads of what has become "one of the largest agencies of government in the world."

EARLE D. ROSS



## Phoebe W. Sudlow

A bronze marker at the Sudlow Intermediate School of Davenport bears this inscription:

PHEBE W. SUDLOW

1831 – 1922

SUPERINTENDENT

DAVENPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

1874 – 1878

FIRST WOMAN CITY SUPERINTENDENT

OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

IN THE UNITED STATES

This plaque, presented to the school by the Hannah Caldwell Chapter of the D.A.R. on October 1, 1936, pays tribute to an earnest, faithful teacher who taught in Iowa for more than a quarter of a century. To Phoebe W. Sudlow belongs the honor of having been elected first woman principal and the first woman superintendent of public schools in the United States. In addition, she was the first woman to serve as president of the Iowa State Teachers Association.

Phoebe W. Sudlow was born at Poughkeepsie, New York, on July 11, 1831, the daughter of Richard and Hannah Sudlow. With her family she moved to Ohio while she was yet a child.



There the Sudlows settled near the town of Nelsonville and there Phoebe grew to womanhood. She received her elementary education at a little country school near her home, and later attended an academy at Athens, Ohio. At fifteen she began her teaching career in the small log schoolhouse near her home where she herself had studied as a child.

The Sudlows moved to Iowa in 1856 and settled at Round Grove in Scott County. There Phoebe resumed her teaching career, instructing pupils at the Round Grove school until her work attracted the attention of Abram S. Kissell, Scott County superintendent of schools and superintendent of the Davenport city schools. Mr. Kissell was instrumental in bringing Phoebe Sudlow to Davenport in the fall of 1858 to become assistant in sub-district No. 5.

The following year Miss Sudlow was named assistant principal at Grammar School No. 2 and District School No. 3, with an annual salary of \$350. A year later she became principal of these schools — reputedly the first woman principal of a public school in the United States — at an annual salary of \$400. She continued in this position until 1866, when she turned her full attention to serving as principal of Grammar School No. 3.

On April 21, 1869, a convention composed of



about forty county superintendents and as many more public school superintendents, principals, and teachers met in Des Moines to consider current educational problems. Abram S. Kissell, then serving as State Superintendent of Public Instruction, presided over this meeting and Phoebe W. Sudlow presented an "illustrative" lesson on the teaching of language in the schools.

Miss Sudlow took another step in her teaching career when she became principal of the Davenport Training School for Teachers in 1872. Her experience and long service in various grades of school work and her tact and skill as a teacher made her well fitted for this position. In 1873 she also served as principal of Grammar School No. 8. By this time her annual salary had increased to the fabulous sum of \$1200.

The year 1874 was a highlight in Phoebe Sudlow's career, for on June 19, 1874, she was unanimously chosen city superintendent of schools by the Davenport board of education. The idea of a "lady" superintendent seems to have been a novelty to Davenport citizens, but Miss Sudlow soon proved herself capable of carrying her responsibilities with such marked ability that the townspeople were generous in their praise of her. A booklet published by the Citizens' Association of Davenport in 1874 stated: "All the public schools



of the city are now under the charge of a *lady* Superintendent, who is fully competent for her responsible duties."

Additional honors came to Phoebe Sudlow while she was serving as Davenport superintendent. In 1876 she was elected president of the Iowa State Teachers Association, winning over two highly respected men candidates, Professor Henry Sabin, city superintendent from Clinton, and Professor Amos N. Currier of the State University of Iowa. As the first woman president of the I.S.T.A. she presided over the 1877 meeting held at Cedar Rapids on December 26-28. In her inaugural address at the opening session she spent some time in discussing the importance of kindergartens in the public schools, the value of industrial and technical education, the advantages of good lighting in the classrooms, and the place of women in the educational system.

At the 1878 commencement services at Cornell College, Miss Sudlow was again honored when she was awarded the honorary degree of Master of Arts. That summer she resigned from the Davenport superintendency to become professor of English Language and Literature at the State University of Iowa. Her resignation was accepted with regret and a Davenport editor wrote: "We do not hesitate to affirm that at no period during



the past twenty years has there been such absolute freedom from complaint, disaffection, jealousies or friction among the teachers as during the years in which Miss Sudlow has been Superintendent. Certainly, also, our schools have never given better evidence than now of thoroughly efficient instruction, or of real progress, on the part of pupils."

The *Iowa Normal Monthly*, published at Dubuque, July, 1878, said:

"Miss P. W. Sudlow, the lady who has so successfully conducted the Davenport schools for the past few years, has been elected to a professorship in the State University, with the full rank and pay of other professors. Every institution of this kind should have at least one lady in its faculty; and we know of no one more worthy to fill the place than Miss Sudlow."

Phoebe Sudlow taught at the University until 1881 when she was forced to resign because of ill health. At her leaving, members of the University faculty held an informal meeting and expressed regret at her retirement. On behalf of the faculty President Josiah L. Pickard presented her with a Paris clock, a token of friendship and appreciation.

After Phoebe Sudlow returned to Davenport in 1881 she seems to have held an interest in the



Fluke & Co. Bookstore. The Davenport city directories for 1882-1883 and 1885-1886 indicate that W. H. Fluke and Miss P. W. Sudlow were joint owners of a store at 317 Brady Street. In 1888 Miss Sudlow was again called into service in the Davenport public school system as principal of School No. 1. She appears to have taught only one year. After that she retired from school life to devote her time to her home and community.

In 1889 she organized "The Club of '89", one of the first women's organizations to be formed in Davenport, and for some time she served as president of this group. She was also active in the Ladies' Industrial Relief Society, serving as its president for fifteen consecutive years. She was a loyal member of the Methodist Episcopal Church and devoted much time to the Women's Missionary Society and to the church's Sunday school.

On June 14, 1921, when Phoebe Sudlow was nearing her ninetieth birthday, the Davenport board of education voted to change the name of "East Intermediate School" to "Phoebe W. Sudlow Intermediate School" in her honor. This was to be "a memorial befitting her superior character, her ennobling influence and her dignified example". The action came about following a resolution filed by the Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, the



Chamber of Commerce, the Women's Club, and the Club of '89.

One year later, on June 8, 1922, Phoebe W. Sudlow died at her home in Davenport. An obituary in the Davenport *Times* paid tribute to this woman who had expended so much time and energy in serving her community. She had been more than a teacher. She had reached out to the community as a whole and had given much to her city in unselfish service.

The story of Phoebe Sudlow's life would not be complete without a brief consideration of her attitudes and beliefs — the ideals by which she lived. She always maintained the attitude of a student. Although her formal education had been limited, her favorite reply to the question, "Where did you receive your education?" was, "All along the way."

Phoebe Sudlow was a vigorous exponent of women's rights. When she was first appointed to the principalship of School No. 3 in Davenport, the matter of equal salaries for men and women arose. Miss Sudlow took the ground that women doing equal work with men should receive equal salaries. The Davenport school board was at first unconvinced by this argument, but at Miss Sudlow's insistence finally acquiesced, thus setting a precedent which had influence not only in Daven-



port, but throughout the Middle West. Further evidence of her belief that men and women should have equal rights as educators is found in her inaugural address as president of the Iowa State Teachers Association, when she stated: "I cannot understand why equal attainment, equal culture, and equal strength of purpose and will should not have equal influence whether in man or woman."

In this same address Phoebe Sudlow gave her own aims in teaching: "Woman, in professional work, must learn to separate herself more from other seeming duties; to invest more as capital; to expect less in the present, and to provide more wisely for future usefulness and preferment. She must continue the work of preparation till her views shall be more comprehensive, and her professional aims and plans more far-reaching. She must be more eager to *become* than to *have*, must understand that *being* rather than *doing* is the 'better part', must tarry longer in the upbuilding and furnishing of a true and noble self-hood, not for self, but for service."

Herein are embodied the ideals which made Phoebe W. Sudlow a worthy teacher, a valuable citizen, and a distinguished woman.

CORNELIA MALLETT BARNHART



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