

## The Institute Museum

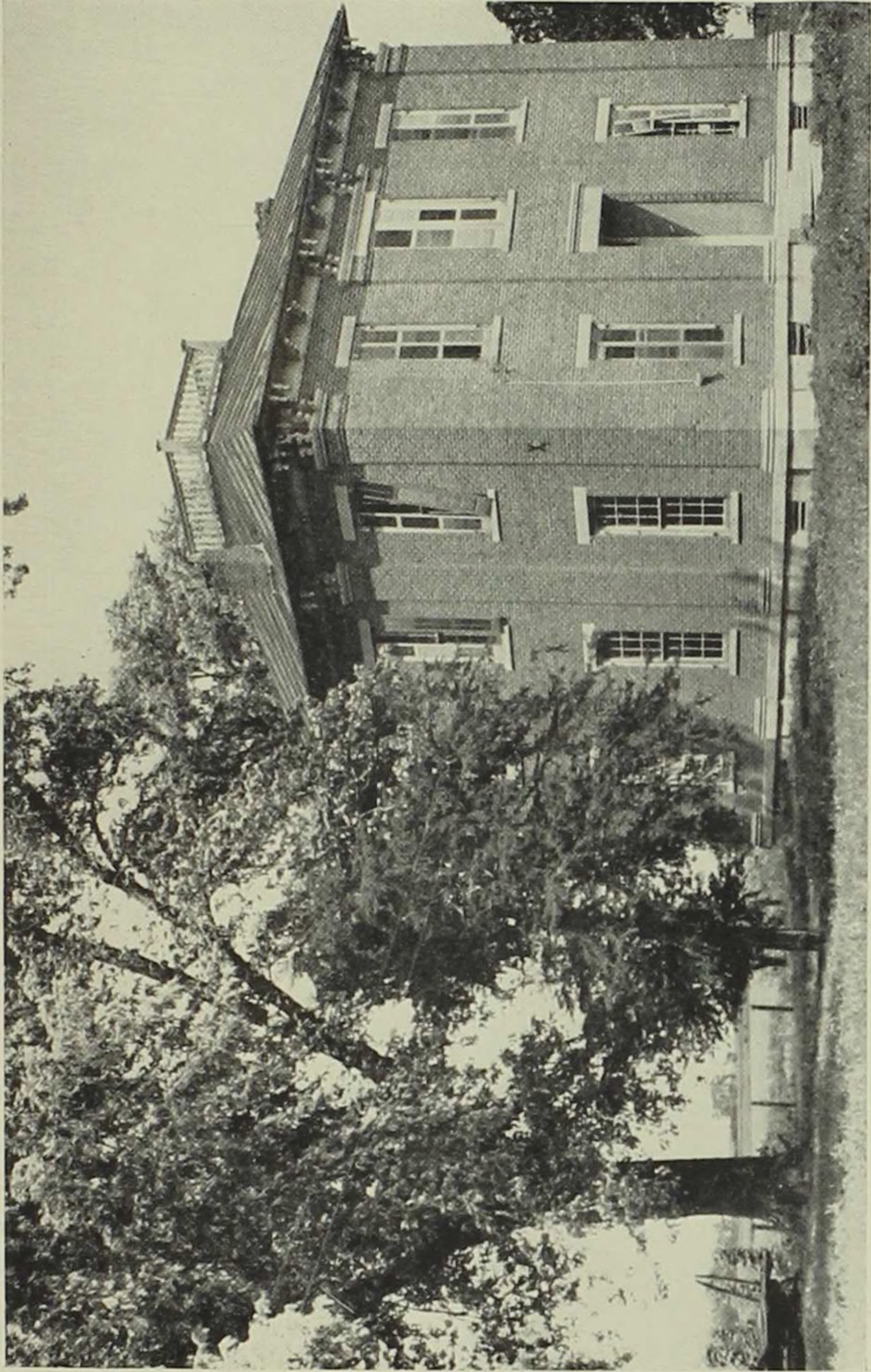
George Miller had always been interested in mineralogy, geology, and botany, and had collected specimens in each of these fields of science. Upon the completion of the Henry County Institute building, he not only placed his private library in the new hall but also donated his collection of scientific specimens to the new Institute. The space on the second floor was shared by the museum and the library.

His gift was followed by many others from students of science interested in the new organization. Each time a gift was presented to the Institute the name of the article and the donor were recorded in the secretary's minutes. Only a few of the many gifts can be mentioned here. In 1873 Thomas Roberts of Fremont County, Iowa, donated a stone hatchet. The next year a turtle shell and a coffee-tree pod were presented to the museum. Several months later, A. B. Montgomery contributed a "rock that the Iowa State House is built of". John P. Jones in 1877 gave the Institute the scalp of a Sioux Indian. A varied collection was received the next year when friends presented wampum, rattlesnake rattles, sea lion

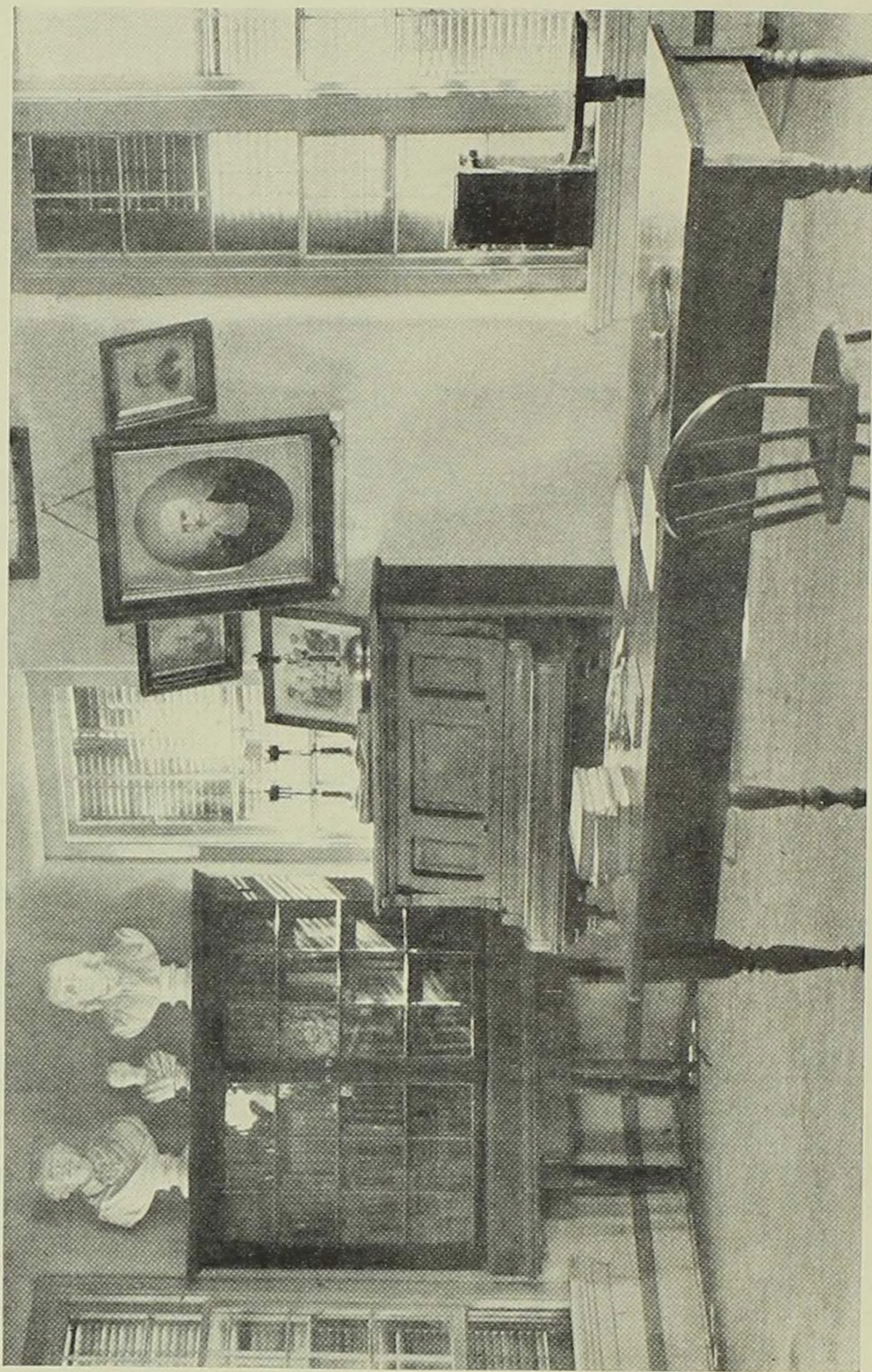
whiskers, Indian arrow heads, a large butterfly, and a section of railroad iron from the first narrow-gauge railroad of Colorado. A few years later specimens of petrified wood, coke, mica, stalactites, coral, a whale's tooth, and a sturgeon scale were added to the collection. Earlier in 1880, the Institute had purchased from Mr. McCray for three dollars a mounted jack rabbit.

Sometimes articles were donated because of their historical value rather than because of their intrinsic worth. In 1886 "a donation of a piece of bark was received from P. J. Crawford; it was taken from a limb on which three murderers were hung at Medicine Lodge, Kansas". The corresponding secretary was "instructed to return thanks for the same". A year later Mrs. Turney gave to the museum a "vial of sand from Minnehaha Falls." It too was accepted with a vote of thanks. Earlier in the history of the organization it was decided "to instruct the museum committee to accompany all specimens obtained by them hereafter by the proper scientific and historical description and to obtain such description for all specimens now in the museum."

Those interested in science occasionally were given the opportunity to listen to lectures delivered in their hall by men who were authorities in their fields. In February, 1874, the Institute au-



THE HALL OF THE INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE



IN THE LIBRARY OF THE HENRY COUNTY INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE

thorized the corresponding secretary to communicate with their three lecturers and thank them for their services. In December, 1883, Mrs. Dr. Spaulding was granted the use of the lecture room for a "Scientific Lecture". Seldom do the minutes disclose the exact subject of the lecture, but in 1872 Mrs. Cowles "at early candle lighting" delivered a lecture on "Temperamentology". The lecture of H. P. Philpott, in November, 1887, was entitled "Dead Men's Tales".

To encourage music in the meetings of the Institute, an organ was purchased in 1882. The purchasing committee was limited to \$95. A month later an additional five dollars was requested but the Institute refused to increase the amount originally promised. Later in the same year, the hall was rented to a theatrical company in order to raise funds for the purchase of a stereoscope. The entertainment netted the Institute only \$25.35, which was not enough to pay for the thirty-five dollar machine purchased some time later. With the stereoscope came one hundred pictures, which could be placed in position for viewing by the turn of a knob. This instrument is still in good condition.

The interesting collection of statuary in the library room of the Institute building was acquired in 1878. At that time, busts of Franklin, Web-

ster, Byron, Scott, Milton, Burns, Shakespeare, and Dickens were purchased at a cost of \$20.31.

At various times framed pictures were presented to the Institute library. Dr. William Findley gave to the library a picture of himself, since he was the first practicing physician in Trenton, Iowa, being located there from 1839 to 1844. Several times the Institute purchased pictures to be hung in the library room. For example, in 1875 they expended fifty dollars for that purpose.

Perhaps the most conspicuous picture in the library room is the large portrait of George Miller on the south wall. In September, 1884, a committee of three was appointed to have Mr. Miller's picture enlarged. By the following February the committee reported that they had ordered the picture at a cost of \$33. The portrait shows the Institute's patron as an aged man with snowy white hair and a full, white beard. But his features do not suggest the weakness of old age; rather he appears to be a man of vigor and of keen intellectual power.

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