# The Palimpsest

JUNE 1941

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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 JOHN ELY BRIGGS

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## Off to the War

*During the summer of 1861 loyal citizens realized that the southern rebellion could not be easily suppressed. In the name of national defense thousands of Iowa men volunteered for three years of military service and marched off to the war with patriotic fervor. This account of the enlistment of Benjamin F. Thomas is based upon his Civil War diary and adapted for* THE PALIMPSEST *from his recollections of* Soldier Life *as privately published in 1907.*—The Editor.

I was not inclined to soldiering; but now it seemed to me it would be necessary for all young men situated as I was to enlist. Early in September William H. Stivers, a young attorney of Toledo, received a commission to recruit a company in Tama County. In the latter part of September, 1861, he held a meeting at Buckingham in the Scotch settlement to raise recruits. John Gaston, Peter Wilson, and I had been talking of this matter for some days and now decided we would enlist. I wrote my name first, then Wilson, and

then Gaston. After each one wrote his name the crowd cheered loudly. It was indeed a very exciting time. A few days later John R. Felter and John E. McKune enlisted, also Robert and Matthew Clark who lived just north of Six Mile Grove.

We remained at home till the twenty-second day of October when we went to Toledo to join the company. A number of our Buckingham friends went with us that far. When we arrived at Toledo the streets were full of people and they cheered us lustily and shook hands with us vigorously. After a time the company was formed in line and marched to what was then the new Baptist church, where the ladies of Toledo had spread for us and our friends a bountiful dinner. Being soldiers, and very new soldiers at that, we assayed to demolish that dinner. But lo! we were filled full and the half had not disappeared. It is said "The way to a man's heart is down his throat" and I believe it for certainly those ladies won our warmest regards by that generous dinner.

From Toledo we went in lumber wagons to Marengo, which was then the nearest railroad station. The first night out we stopped at Irving. This was the home of a number of our boys. There were about fifty of us all told, and we were distributed among the citizens for lodging.

Had breakfast at half past four and at daylight were off for Marengo, where we arrived about eleven o'clock the same morning. There was much enthusiasm manifested here as there was wherever we went. Great cheering and much hand shaking. We took dinner at the two hotels and some private houses. After dinner we marched out to the depot which was half a mile from town, and were ready to take the cars as soon as they came.

Soon we were on the train and off for Davenport. Slow the train seemed to move and the trip was tedious indeed. Just before dark Captain Stivers handed out a large, mysterious looking box, and upon its being opened we found it filled with "goodies" from the dinner table the ladies had furnished at Toledo. Our stomachs were again replenished and our hearts again softened and some eyes were dimmed by the memory of the kindness of those we had left behind.

Finally we arrived at Davenport. Cheering, cheering, cheering on every side. Two other companies who came from the western part of the State were on the train with us. We were all dismounted from the cars and formed into line, and, headed by a brass band, marched out to Camp McClellan. This was a new camp about two miles from Davenport on the bank of the Mississippi.

After a time we were assigned to a barrack. These barracks were about seventy feet long and twenty-four feet wide; boarded up and down with rough boards; cracks battened; shingle roof; no ceiling; no plastering. In each end there were two doors situated at the corners. There was a passage along each side from door to door four feet in width; a partition through the center of the building from end to end; and then tiers of bunks one above the other with heads next the partition and feet next the passage.

This was our parlor, sitting room, and dormitory. Our dining room was as big as all out-of-doors. The table was made by driving stakes into the ground; on top of these were nailed cross pieces and on these three boards were laid side by side and extending as long as the barrack. The heavens were above and the earth beneath. No chairs nor stools of any kind. The cattle of Iowa, today, have far warmer quarters than we had then, and fully as good feeding troughs.

On the morning of October 24th the boom of the morning gun aroused us and we rushed out of the barracks to see what was the matter. We found the older companies all in line and the Orderly Sergeants calling the roll. As soon as the roll-call was over the companies were marched to the river to wash and then marched back to

their tables and had their breakfast. We were hungry at once; but our table was bare. When our Captain went to the Commissary for rations he was told that we were not legally known there and that we must report to headquarters down in the city. So Captain Stivers went to the city to give in his report. When it was received at headquarters he was given an order on the Quartermaster for rations for his men. When he found the Quartermaster, that officer in turn gave him an order on the Commissary. The Commissary being found issued the rations but there was no means of transporting them to camp. So Captain Stivers again found the Quartermaster and from him got an order on the Wagon Master for a wagon and team to transport the goods. Finally the government teamster drove into camp with his government mules hitched to his government wagon loaded with government rations for the government troops. The consequence was we were ready for breakfast just as the other companies were served their dinner. This was our first meal in Camp McClellan. We received our coffee in tin cups; our beef, beans, or potatoes in tin plates; had white bread, but no cream for our coffee nor butter for our bread.

The rules of the camp were for us to arise at six o'clock A. M., answer to roll-call, then march

down to the river and wash our hands and faces in the mighty Mississippi. Just think of it, the Father of Waters for a wash bowl! Return to camp. Breakfast call. After breakfast, sick call and guard mount and then company drill for two hours. Then squad drill for another two hours. By this time we were ready for dinner. After dinner was company drill again, and at sunset dress parade.

Every man able to saw a board or drive a nail was called a carpenter and set to work building more barracks. The weather was quite cold, especially the mornings. Ice frequently formed on still water. Many of the boys had severe colds and I could hardly see how we were to improve while in such open barracks. We had straw in our bunks and a double blanket each, so by sleeping two together we had one blanket below and three above us. We hoped to move south soon.

October 29th. The day was quite cold with drizzling rain and sharp gusts of wind. We huddled together as best we could to keep warm, for we had no stove in the barracks. Just as it began growing dark a more severe gust of wind blew the roof off the barracks in which the Benton County boys were. We called them into our barracks and shared our roof, our bunks, and our blankets with them.

The company in the barracks next ours was mustered into the United States service and two of their men refused to take the oath of allegiance. They were ordered to be drummed out of the camp. Thirty of their comrades formed a hollow square with the two men within. A martial band followed playing the "Rogue's March". They marched through the principal streets of our camp and to the main entrance. Then the officer in charge gave each of the "Rogues" a lusty kick and bade them "be gone". Poor fellows! The band then returned to their quarters playing "Yankee Doodle" with all the vim their instruments were capable of.

November 2nd. Captain Stivers told us to get ready to be sworn into the United States service. So we went, every man, Captain, cook and all, but when we got to the place where we were to be mustered the Adjutant ordered us to return to our quarters because we had not men enough to fill the company to the minimum required. When we returned to the barracks some of our men said if we were not sworn into the Thirteenth Regiment they would return home. Others were willing to abide till the number could be secured. Captain Stivers came again and ordered us to march back to the parade ground. He said we were to be sworn in at once. We understood he had by

some means got more men. So back we went to the parade ground and stayed there all forenoon. By this means we drew no rations for the day, for rations are issued in the morning.

About noon we were examined by the surgeons. There were four of them. They stood two on each side of the parade and we marched singly between them; holding our hands above our heads and moving our fingers. This was all the physical examination we ever had. I am told that in most camps they strip the soldier naked and carefully examine him in every respect. Four of our men were rejected. We now had but seventy-two men. Finally, however, we were sworn into the United States service on Saturday, November 2, 1861, to serve for the term of three years or during the war.

Each regiment that was fully organized had dress parade by itself. But all the companies not included in these had dress parade together. Sometimes there were fifteen or twenty companies in this line, but very few of them had men enough to organize a full company. Sometimes several of these companies joined together, as we did some days ago, and formed one company. There had to be not less than 83 men nor more than 101 men in a company. As soon as ten companies had enough men to organize they were formed into a regiment

and the other companies and squads formed the nucleus for a new regiment. It was in this way we were supposed to belong to the Thirteenth Regiment and were dropped into the Fourteenth where we were still striving to hold our own.

Thursday, November 7th. The Eleventh Regiment commanded by Colonel Abraham M. Hare marched down to Davenport and paraded the principal streets and returned to camp at noon. It was one of the grandest sights I ever saw. Near a thousand men, all dressed exactly alike, in light blue uniforms, their hats with feathers flowing, bright brass trimmings on their hats, shoulders and belts, bright guns on their shoulders reflecting the refulgent rays of the sun. This with the music from ten fifes, ten snare drums, and one bass drum, the field officers on their horses dressed in what seemed the most gorgeous uniforms, and the silk flag and banner flying in the breeze, taken all together as a first view of real military life it sent a thrill through our nerves that we will never forget. Since this I have seen many regiments and armies of men, but never since have I felt the joy I did in seeing this my first regiment. And as I look back it seems to me they were the noblest looking men I ever saw.

Captain Stivers left for home again this evening. He was after more recruits. Before going

he told us that any of us that wanted to could have a furlough for a few days. So next morning John Gaston, Peter Wilson, and I got furloughs and started for Long Grove where Wilson had an uncle, Mr. McCosh. It was very pleasant to us to sit at table again for our meals with our hats off and nice, clean, white dishes filled with wholesome food. Golden butter and rich cream. We did not wipe our plates with our hands before putting our food upon them as we had fallen into the habit of doing in camp.

Stayed several days at McCosh's. Helped him finish corn picking and also attended a "Corn picking Bee" to help a preacher named Hartsell pick his corn. Mr. Hartsell thought we were doing wrong in going to war because all war was wrong. Had a party at McCosh's the evening before we went away and had a very pleasant time.

"General" Wood of Buckingham had visited the boys during our absence and brought a letter for me from home. Just then I longed very much for a letter from a friend who lived near my home. She had given me a small Bible when I came away and I had sent her one in return from Davenport when I arrived there.

Monday, November 18th. This morning we began drawing our uniforms and clothing. We

each drew coats, hats, pants, shirts, drawers, socks and shoes. We did not get clothing here as at home. Our names were called, we stepped up to the desk and signed a receipt, and the Quartermaster handed us each of the above named articles. Any one of the articles might be too large or too small. Therefore if the coats, pants, etc., were any one of them a misfit we went to trading with some one who might have the size we wanted. One would call out, "A pair of pants to trade 'sight-unseen'." This challenge might be accepted by a big man who would get the smallest sized pants, and his plight created much merriment. Sometimes it took several days to get the proper garments and men together. Occasionally it was necessary to make over some of the clothing in order to get a fit, but generally by judicious "swapping" all were suited.

A company of the Thirteenth Iowa Regiment that came from Benton County was in the barrack just across the street from us. To this company belonged Buren R. Sherman and Ward Sherman, his brother, and some other boys we know well. They had a space in their barrack large enough to dance in and frequently had us over there to dance with them. A boy with a handkerchief tied around his arm represented a girl. One of our boys from Toledo, Josiah Luke, was about the best violinist

I ever heard. He frequently made the music for us. Card playing was the principal pastime for the boys, but I did not play.

November 20th. Our first episode of real military life occurred last night. The Thirteenth Regiment was ordered to march today. Many of their men took the opportunity to run the guards and spend the night in a carousal in Davenport. Captain Stivers was officer of the day, which fact gave him command of the camp. When he learned of the boys escaping to the city he thought he would have some fun. He came to our barrack about eleven o'clock and called ten of us to go with him and arrest everyone we could find. The Captain took us to a place where he expected to find some of the boys. In a large room several girls finely attired were playing cards or chatting with a number of soldiers and citizens. We compelled the soldiers to show their passes which everyone did. From there we went to many other places of like character. At one house as we entered we saw some soldiers run up the stairs. Eleazar Stoakes and I followed them and when we got to the top of the stairs they ran into two of the bed rooms. I followed one and caught him. Stoakes lost his man but when he thrust his gun under a bed the man called out that he would surrender. About this time my prisoner got mad and

swore at us in a terrible manner. But he had to go just the same. These, with some the other boys caught, were marched back to camp and placed in the guard house.

Letters from home were quite abundant but not the one I most wanted. We were now fully fitted out with our uniforms so we packed our citizen's clothing and sent it home.

We had been organized into a regiment, or part of one, for some days. We had but seven companies. A, B, and C of our regiment were the three companies sent to Fort Randall some time before. We had the other seven companies, and we were Company G of the Fourteenth Regiment Iowa Volunteers. Colonel William T. Shaw of Anamosa was our Colonel. He had served in the Mexican War, and seemed to be an old man. Was crippled so he walked quite lame. Swore like a sailor. The Lieutenant Colonel was Edward W. Lucas from Iowa City, brother-in-law to Governor Kirkwood. Our Major's name was Hiram Leonard, but we knew nothing of him except that he was also related to the Governor. Our Adjutant was N. N. Tyner of Davenport; Surgeon, George M. Staples of Dubuque; Chaplain, Rev. Heber. One Lieutenant of Company K, William W. Kirkwood, was a nephew of the Governor. We were called "Kirkwood's pets".

November 26th. N. B. Baker, who was Adjutant General of the State, drove through the camp and told us to bank up the barracks and make them comfortable for we would remain here all winter. He said the Government at Washington had ordered him to send no more troops till further orders. This made us feel blue. To think of spending the winter here when we might as well be doing some good at the front.

November 27th. This evening I was lying in my bunk reading when the Captain came to the door and called for me. I sprang to the floor and passed to the door when I was greatly surprised to meet John Hopkins. I was truly very glad to see him. He had heard that we were about to move down the river and came down from Wilton Junction to see us before we went. And he was just in time. For yesterday we had been told by the highest military authority in the State that we would remain in this camp till spring. Now, today, we received orders from Washington to be ready to march at once.

We were to leave at three o'clock P. M. on the steamer *Jennie Whipple*. Four companies of our regiment, including ours, were marched down to Davenport to take the boat to St. Louis. When we arrived at the wharf the captain of the boat decided he would take only three companies, so

our company was ordered to return to the barracks. Many of our men procured liquor while in Davenport and by the time we again reached camp some were pretty drunk. The officers all went back to town and the boys raised a regular "jamboree" in camp. It was a dismal night we spent. No stove in which to make a fire to keep us warm. No food to eat and no officers to give the semblance of authority in keeping order, and many of the boys wild with liquor. Doubtless Camp McClellan never saw another night the equal of this.

November 28th. This morning we arose early with shivering bodies and aching limbs with no prospect of any breakfast in camp. Many of the boys had run the guard during the night and were now in Davenport, still carousing and drinking. Finally Captain Joseph O. Shannon of Company E came out and found us without rations. He went to the Commissary and ordered him to issue rations to us at once, enforcing his order by interspersing many oaths and threats. The Commissary then proceeded to issue rations for us. The Commissary was following the letter of the law in withholding the rations, for he had no authority to issue them except on the written order of a commissioned officer. We received the rations and had a meal prepared but it was noon before this was accomplished.

After noon we again prepared to move south. When we remembered how grandly the Eleventh and Thirteenth Regiments had marched down the hill from the camp with their banners flying and bands playing it was somewhat humiliating for us to go a part at a time with no grand display like they made. We had no government regimental colors, which consist of a silken flag of stars and stripes about six feet wide and nine feet long, and a blue silk banner the same size with a large eagle embroidered with gold thread upon each side, both flag and banner finished all round with a wide gold fringe. The three companies that went to Fort Randall took our colors with them. We had a cotton flag about two-thirds the size of the regulation flag that one of our companies had brought with it from home. So the difference between the display of the other two regiments and ours was very great.

At three o'clock P. M. we again left the camp for Davenport. That is, the four companies that were then there. We went to the depot and then waited till six o'clock P. M. when we took the cars for the south. Crossed the mighty Mississippi on the only bridge that then spanned that stream, and glided over the prairies of Illinois in the darkness of the night.

Morning light found us at Joliet. This journey

was made in regular passenger cars which I here mention because it was the last trip we had in passenger coaches till we were discharged. There were guards placed at each door of each car to prevent the boys getting out. Not that they feared desertion, but that they would all get off every time the train stopped and were likely to get hurt or left if allowed this liberty. We expected to arrive at Springfield before night but six miles before reaching the city we came up with a freight train with one car derailed. It was after dark before they got it on again. Then we followed them slowly into Springfield.

Arrived at Alton about ten o'clock at night and immediately went aboard the steamboat for St. Louis. The boat would not start till morning, so we spread our blankets where we could about the deck and lay down to sleep. The next morning we were up stirring about early because we were cold and needed exercise. Racing, boxing, and jumping soon took the chill off of us. But it was too cold for comfort. Started before sunrise, soon passed the mouth of the Missouri River with its great flood of muddy water pouring into the clear water of the Mississippi, and knew that our trip to St. Louis was ended.

BENJAMIN F. THOMAS

# Pioneering in Iowa*

My first real memory of the Iowa prairies is vivid and sweet. It is of the days in May, 1869, when the breaking-plow gang was at work to turn the virgin soil in preparation for cultivation. The plow was drawn by three yoke of oxen driven by a man who walked to the side and forward, cracking a long whip and giving loud and continuous commands to the oxen. On the beam of the plow was a tool box, and the man who held the plow allowed me to sit on this box from morning till night. This was one of the greatest joy rides of my life.

To this day I can hear the ringing, crackling sound of the continuous cutting of tough roots, I can see the solid slice of soil about twenty inches wide roll over gracefully in a continuous fold, I can see and smell the May flora which covered that soil like a blanket in exquisite array of colors, I can re-experience the strain of the beasts against the plow and the plow against the resistant soil.

I felt myself in command of the prairie, the plow, the oxen, and the workmen. The memory

*Preprinted from the manuscript of the author's "Pioneering in Psychology", now in preparation.

of those days comes to me with a glow and always comes to mind when I lecture on the resources, vividness, and persistence of mental imagery. Here, possibly for the first time, I was impressed with the grandeur in nature, the joy of conquering, the mastery of natural resources, and a feeling of awe bordering on the sublime. What play days these were for the young boy — playing all day, associated with powerful men and animals, with the thrill of satisfaction in seeing things done on a large scale. This in many respects was an introduction to the countless experiences of the grandeur in pioneer life. It was play at its best; the joy of conquest.

This pioneering experience of life on the challenging prairie was my first and unforgettable lesson in asking questions of nature by the progressive method in nature's kindergarten. It was the beginning of a life of exploration and investigation. I was then three years old.

My father, Carl Gustav Seashore (Seashore being a literal translation of the Swedish Sjöstrand) and my mother, Charlotta, bringing me and my one-year-old sister, Emma, had arrived from Sweden early that spring after a six-weeks' voyage across the ocean during which time my sister and I both had the measles. The last eighteen miles of our trip were made with an ox team.

Our destination was the future farm in Grant Township, Boone County, Iowa, the pioneer home-to-be. The 80-acre farm had been judiciously selected by my uncle, Alfred Seashore, who had preceded us to the same locality. There the pioneer life immediately began with plans for the cultivation of the soil and the building of a house. The original siding is still on the house which stands on the top of a hill overlooking an ideal plot of Iowa farm land.

The next fourteen years on the physical frontier in Iowa were eventful in my education; full of opportunities, ventures, and thrills. I saw and had a hand in the turning of the wild prairie plot into a well-appointed homestead. It was a simple life, close to nature in all her wealth, hardships, and economies. In this frontier with but little capital to invest, we had to learn self-help and the art of making a self-supporting unit from resources at hand. As a boy, I had to learn to do everything that could and should be done in home-building — sowing and reaping, feeding and breeding, branding and butchering, breaking horses and opening markets, planting trees and grafting them, knitting and candle dipping, music and handicrafts in family, social, educational, and religious life, all calling for initiative, forethought, ingenuity, and economy — a great school.

It was hard work. There was little or no machinery. I recall the primitive scythe, with its grain cradle. I started to plow when I had to reach up instead of down to grip the plow handle and could not lift the plow at the corners but had to train the horses to turn it correctly. To the barefoot boy, the soft smooth furrow stretching across the field was a magic carpet. I early set the pace for the hired man at work. Vacations were unheard of. There was no time or companion for the city kind of play. Everybody worked hard, early to rise and early to bed.

We had to fight grasshoppers with kerosene, we had to patrol the seeded ground against the clouds of game birds — ducks, geese, cranes, swans, and prairie chickens — which were pests because they would pick up the sprouting wheat and corn and at times darkened the sky like a cloud. Snowstorms were a serious menace on the treeless and wind-swept expanse. I rode horseback one whole night lost in a cold blizzard. At one time we had to dig a tunnel between the house and the cattle shed. Prairie fires were a dreadful threat. I have seen a cloud-like gigantic torch advancing at tornado speed toward our prairie-grass surroundings. Clearings and backfire were our protection; yet at one time I saw the flames jump this and set fire to our woodpile. Snakes

and other pests were rife, a menace to the barefoot boy who went around with a hoe trying to eradicate them.

There was at first no school, no church, no communal life — all had to be built up. But we were healthy, hardy, and brave, and the mastery of each hardship had the promise of victory.

The rich black loam of Iowa responded and led to productive farming, and we were grateful to say that "it always rains in Iowa before it is too late" and that "if it does not go very well, it will go very well anyhow."

The rich heritage which our family had carried from the eugenic stock in Sweden with health, morals, practical wisdom, and religion was transplanted in a fast-growing community of immigrants from the same section in the mother country. Father stood out among them as a master builder and leader in all that was good. He built the schoolhouse with his own hands and became its first director. To facilitate acquisition of the English language in our family, we boarded the school teacher. Father built a church with his own hands and became its first preacher. He planted trees for a park as a center for community picnics. In the meantime much responsibility was thrown upon his oldest son on the farm and in the home.

"In retrospect," as I have said in my autobiography, "my boyhood education was of a primitive sort, meager in formal book learning, but rich and powerful in the challenge to cope with big situations. The freedom for vegetating in out-of-door responsible activities of rich and varied interests was a valuable substitute for pressure in brain work in a formal school training and confinement. Ours was a prolonged kindergarten set in reality with necessity as a teacher."

The physical frontiers have passed. It is now conventional to speak of other frontiers, many of which embody the same elements of pioneer life. My more than forty years in an active learned career in Iowa have been spent at a mental frontier, breaking ground for the new science of psychology. As an introduction to my account of the pioneering in psychology I speak of these early experiences at the physical frontier because as I look back upon my life, there is a very close parallel between these experiences at the physical frontier and those at a virgin mental frontier.

CARL E. SEASHORE

# A Man of Character

The best-remembered incident in the life of James W. Grimes is that which occurred in the Senate of the United States on May 16, 1868, at the impeachment trial of President Andrew Johnson. By a single vote the verdict as to whether the President was guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors in office was turned to a denial of the charges. In the tense situation created by the closeness of the decision, the conduct and character of James W. Grimes, Senator from Iowa, stood out conspicuously.

Senator Grimes declared his conviction of "not guilty" from the Senate floor to which he had to be carried due to an attack of paralysis several days before. Far from using his illness to avoid the issue, he insisted upon recording his judgment in spite of the severe criticism of friends and even the calumny of political opponents which he anticipated and received.

His decision in the matter was clearly impartial. No personal loyalty influenced his judgment, for he did not admire the President and he had had no personal contact with the chief executive for two years before the trial. Nor did he agree with

him in policy. While acting in a judicial capacity during the trial, he stated: "Nor can I suffer my judgment of the law governing this case to be influenced by political considerations. I cannot agree to destroy the harmonious working of the Constitution for the sake of getting rid of an unacceptable President."

The speeches of Senator Grimes on bills before the Senate and the letters written by him to his friends bring to light instances of this same capacity for disinterested judgment and, with it, the courage to act decisively, which have contributed in making him an example of greatness in public service. His vote in the impeachment trial was the act which in his whole public life gave him the most satisfaction. And if distinterestedness may be interpreted as an expression of a strong sense of justice, it is evident that that characteristic was as much a habit of mind as it was a principle.

Toward a man less prominent than the President, Senator Grimes had earlier demonstrated this quality of justness and of courage. When General John C. Fremont was accused of fraud and was threatened with the loss of his military position, Senator Grimes studied the case thoroughly and found insufficient evidence of guilt to justify the humiliation contemplated for the General. Despite the fact that he himself doubted

Fremont's capacity for high military authority and believed that he had at times acted unwisely and extravagantly, Senator Grimes was aware of political implications and he urged "strenuously and persistently", at whatever cost to his own career, that General Fremont receive complete justice.

The inevitable conflict between abstract principles and partiality for his constituents was recognized by Senator Grimes. What, for example, was the course of action to be taken when opportunity for State prestige and political patronage was balanced against his sense of economy and the general interest?

A United States marine hospital had been established at Burlington where Senator Grimes had lived since coming from New England to Iowa at the age of twenty. Among the officials at the hospital he had many friends. However, in urging economy as he did on many occasions, he stated frankly that, as the hospital had proved of little benefit to the government, its existence was no longer justified and he advocated that it be discontinued. In regard to other Federal offices, such as custom houses, he said: "I do not wish the State to be dotted over with Government offices and buildings, and filled with Federal offices. I do not wish the General Government to be aggrandized at the expense of the States."

His force and effectiveness as a person and as a speaker, the logic and the knowledge implied in his speeches in the Senate and earlier as Governor of Iowa were well recognized by his associates. He obviously was devoted to the practical aspects of a situation, to directness and firmness in action. On these qualities which he had observed with respect in another person he once commented, "There is nothing ornate about his style, no figures or tropes, no husks, all solid meat."

"No figures or tropes" also ruled his taste in social life. After he began his life in Washington he wrote to Mrs. Grimes: "You cannot imagine how I dislike this fashionable formality. It is terribly annoying, and I think I shall repudiate the whole thing." And after his introduction to Washington social life, he gave the same evidence of his tastes in his appraisal of one of its leaders: "Though a rather elderly lady, Mrs. Crittenden is one of the leaders of the *ton* in Washington. . . . She is a very kind, amiable lady, but there is so much precision and mock dignity about everything she says and does, that intercourse with her is not so pleasant as it would be if one could only persuade himself that her heart would come gushing out of her mouth once in a while." Although Mr. Grimes did not mingle in Washington society more than his position demanded, it can

easily be imagined that his appearance alone made him a presentable figure in it. He was tall and handsome, and his experience in public life added much in grace and suavity to his natural dignity.

A reserved manner manifested toward some with whom he was unacquainted or for whom he had no liking was sometimes taken for an unsympathetic nature. But an anecdote told of him during his first years in Burlington supports a contrary opinion. Mr. Grimes as a young attorney attended a sheriff's sale at which a farmer, because of financial difficulties, sold his land and cattle. Grimes himself bought the property, but a few days later he returned the cattle to the farmer because, he said, having sold the land again for enough to reimburse him, the cattle had cost him nothing and therefore the former owner should have them again. "My father", wrote the son, who told the incident, "was simply a chance acquaintance who never figured in politics."

If reasons for such habits of mind are to be sought, there is some explanation to be found in the ancestry and early life of James Wilson Grimes. Born on October 20, 1816, in New Hampshire of Scotch-Irish descent, he first lived in a community of intelligent and independent farmers. The youngest of seven children, he is said to have resembled his father in temperament

and appearance, who was a man of "unpretending goodness, warmly attached to his family, hospitable and kind to all, of thrifty habits . . . highly esteemed among his neighbors in the surrounding region for sterling integrity and worth." And from his mother, Betsey Wilson Grimes, he apparently inherited energy and determination.

James Grimes attended Hampton Academy in New Hampshire and then Dartmouth College for two and one half years before beginning the study of law. All the self-reliance, independence, and determination of his cultural and inherited background came to his aid when, in 1836 at the age of twenty, he left home to go West. In Ohio and Illinois his attention was directed to the new town of Burlington in the "Black Hawk Purchase", then in Michigan Territory, where he arrived on the fifteenth of May and began as attorney-at-law to take part in business and civic life, but his abilities and interests soon led him to enlarge the scope of his activities to include politics. One of his earliest public offices was that of city solicitor. Afterward he served as Representative in the first Territorial Legislative Assembly in 1838 and again in 1843; in the General Assembly of the State in 1852; as Governor of Iowa from 1854 to 1858; and finally in the Senate of the United States from 1859 to 1869.

His political career presents an odyssey in public service. His unusual success, however, did not develop such a love of public life that he was loathe to leave it. This was most obvious when he handed in his final resignation upon realization that his health would never be fully restored. He declared that he did not care to go back to the Senate even if he regained his health. "Why, the war has corrupted everybody and everything in the United States", he wrote in 1869. "Just look at the senatorial elections of the last winter! . . . It is money that achieves success in such affairs nowadays. Thank God, my political career ended with the beginning of this corrupt political era!" Of his own career he wrote: "There are no events in my life worthy of record. I have done nothing to distinguish me above the great mass of my fellow men."

His attitude toward public life was perhaps modified by the particularly fortunate circumstances of his personal life. Often he expressed his desire to live quietly at his home. He had married Elizabeth Sarah Neally in 1846 at Burlington.

Aside from the associations he formed in his political career, personal friends played a large part in his life. A striking relationship was that between Senator Grimes and Senator William P. Fessenden, who was ten years his senior. At the

time of parting, Grimes wrote to his friend: "I need not tell you that for six years I have been drawn toward you by an invisible power, magnetic it may be, that I could never resist, even had I desired to resist it. During the time I have been in the Senate you have exercised an influence over my wayward nature such as was never exercised by any human being except my wife. . . . If at any such moment of my weakness I ever gave you a pang of painful feeling, I now most sincerely crave your pardon, begging you to remember that the recollection of any and every intemperate declaration of mine gives me more sorrow than it can possibly give to you."

In a letter of response, Mr. Fessenden professed the same friendship: "I wish to assure you, my dear friend, that there are few people in this world for whom I have so high a regard as for yourself. There was no man in the Senate with whom I was on such close terms of intimacy, or who knew so much of me as you did. . . . I want your aid and counsel more than ever, and trust you will not withhold either."

Perhaps the most intimate friend of Senator Grimes in Burlington was Lyman Cook, to whom he wrote, upon his retirement from public life, while traveling abroad in search of better health. From Paris, Berlin, London, and from the moun-

tains of Switzerland he gave his views of events in America. He reveled in the natural beauty which he found and enjoyed the repose he had in spite of the intense suffering which his illness caused him.

Returning to America in the fall of 1871, he came home to Burlington but lived only a short time. He died on February 7, 1872. Echoes of the impeachment trial could still be heard, but the sentiment of the country had already turned to approval of his attitude. His integrity was not only recognized but vindicated within his lifetime.

MARIE HAEFNER

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